



Cal/EPA

California
Environmental
Protection
Agency



Air Resources Board

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97 OCT 14 P3:39
October 9, 1997



Pete Wilson
Governor

Secretary for
Environmental
Protection

Mr. Douglas Quetin
Air Pollution Control Officer
Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District
24580 Silver Cloud Court
Monterey, California 93940-6536

Dear Mr. Quetin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the health effects of sea salt and its contribution to PM10 (particles less than 10 microns in diameter) levels at monitoring sites near the ocean. As your letter indicates, the PM10 air quality standard is defined on the basis of particle size and sea salt does contribute to PM10 in the ambient air. Wind sweeping along the ocean surface picks up ocean water to create a fine mist or fog which can ultimately find its way onto PM10 filters.

From a health effects standpoint all small respirable particles are of concern, however, there are no studies that show sea salt presents a health risk based on its chemical composition. In addition, while sea salt may contribute to PM10 violations, there are no air quality planning or regulatory implications. Sea salt is naturally occurring; there are no practical means of reducing exposure.

In terms of addressing PM10 violations, the District should focus on controllable PM10 sources. The California Clean Air Act provides flexibility in terms of addressing violations of the state PM10 standard – attainment plans are not required. As a result, there is no planning or regulatory problem with simply acknowledging the contribution of sea salt to PM10 violations as part of the District's efforts to characterize the region's PM10 air quality.

We are happy to provide any technical assistance you may need to identify the contribution of sea salt to your district's PM10 levels. If you have any questions, please feel free to call your district liaison, Mr. Ron Nunes at (916) 323-8408.

Sincerely,


Michael P. Kenny
Executive Officer