

**For Immediate Release**

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## **New EPA Nonattainment Designations Threaten Job Creation in Southwestern Pennsylvania**

(Pittsburgh, PA – December 17, 2004) Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated all or part of nine counties in southwestern Pennsylvania as “nonattainment” for fine particulate air pollution, also known as PM2.5, even though the vast majority of the pollution comes from upwind areas. The Allegheny Conference on Community Development and Southwestern Pennsylvania Growth Alliance have called on EPA to address these interstate transport issues before making the nonattainment designations in order to improve air quality without hurting job creation efforts. Despite admitting that interstate transport is a major cause of PM2.5 problems, EPA has still not implemented controls on upwind sources.

“The unfair stance the EPA is taking with regard to regulating PM2.5 pollution puts southwestern Pennsylvania at a competitive disadvantage compared to other regions across the United States,” said F. Michael Langley, Chief Executive Officer of the Allegheny Conference. “A nonattainment designation can make the difference in whether or not a particular county makes the list to be considered for business relocation and expansion.”

Kathryn Klaber, Vice President of the Allegheny Conference, noted that “data from Carnegie Mellon University shows that as much as 80 percent of PM2.5 pollution in southwestern Pennsylvania comes from areas outside of our region, and EPA’s own analyses show that with the exception of the Mon Valley, southwestern Pennsylvania would not have a PM2.5 pollution problem if interstate transport were controlled. The best solution for both the environment and economic development is for EPA to address interstate transport first, and only regulate any residual PM2.5 problems.”

Harold Miller, Director of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Growth Alliance, explained the designations’ effects on the Pittsburgh region’s economy. “These nonattainment designations will have a chilling effect on economic development in southwestern Pennsylvania, while having little improvement on air quality. Moreover, because the implementing regulations have not yet been announced, many of our existing businesses, particularly manufacturing businesses, may be unable to expand or add new jobs because of the uncertainty about the implementation requirements.”

**- More -**

## **PM2.5 / Page 2**

At the beginning of 2004, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) had proposed that only four counties (Allegheny, Beaver, Washington, and Westmoreland) be designated as nonattainment areas. In June, EPA added five counties to the list (Armstrong, Butler, Greene, Indiana, and Lawrence), due largely to EPA's desire to subject the power plants in those counties to additional air emissions controls. The final designations announced today include DEP's original four counties, Butler County, and the portions of Armstrong, Greene, Indiana, and Lawrence counties that include power plants. In addition, EPA designated a separate nonattainment area in southern Allegheny County to distinguish the unique challenges to meeting the PM2.5 standard in that area.

In announcing the designations today, outgoing EPA Administrator Michael Leavitt indicated that a key to achieving the PM2.5 standard is national legislation or regulation to control emissions from power plants – emissions that transcend the geographic boundaries drawn in today's announcement. However, he did not specify when these controls would be put in place, leaving areas like southwestern Pennsylvania helpless to control pollution problems caused by these upwind areas.

Within the next 60 days, the designations become effective. Since EPA has not yet proposed or finalized the regulations that will apply in nonattainment areas, new projects where a business is expanding may need to be put on hold until the state can determine what type of expansion falls under this new program.

### **Allegheny Conference on Community Development and Affiliates**

The Allegheny Conference on Community Development and its Affiliates – Pittsburgh Regional Alliance; Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce; and Pennsylvania Economy League-Western Division – are working in collaboration to stimulate growth in southwestern Pennsylvania's economy and improve its quality of life.

### **Southwestern Pennsylvania Growth Alliance**

The Growth Alliance is a 10-county public-private partnership that advocates in Harrisburg and Washington, D.C. for legislative and regulatory changes that will help promote economic development in the Pittsburgh region. The Allegheny Conference provides staff support for the Growth Alliance.

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