



September 13, 2019

Via Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>

Mr. Andrew Wheeler
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
EPA Docket Center
Mail Code 2821T
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Re: *Amendments to Federal Implementation Plan for Managing Air Emissions from True Minor Sources Engaged in Oil and Natural Gas Production and Natural Gas Processing Segments of the Oil and Natural Gas Sector* – Docket ID number: EPA-HQ-OAR-2014-0606

Dear Administrator Wheeler:

The proposed changes to the National Oil and Natural Gas Federal Implementation Plan (National FIP) increase regulatory certainty for developing oil and natural gas in Indian country, thereby encouraging responsible development and enhancing economic opportunities for tribes. Western Energy Alliance (the Alliance) and Utah Petroleum Association (UPA) strongly support EPA's proposed amendments to make registering for air permits in Indian Country easier and more streamlined. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the *Amendments to Federal Implementation Plan for Managing Air Emissions from True Minor Sources Engaged in Oil and Natural Gas Production and Natural Gas Processing Segments of the Oil and Natural Gas Sector* (referred to herein as the FIP Amendments).

The Alliance represents 300 companies engaged in all aspects of environmentally responsible exploration and production of oil and natural gas in the West. Alliance members are independents, the majority of which are small businesses with an average of fourteen employees.

UPA is a statewide oil and gas trade association established in 1958 representing companies involved in all aspects of Utah's oil and gas industry. Our members range from independent producers, to midstream and service providers, to major oil and natural gas companies widely recognized as industry leaders responsible for driving technology advancement resulting in environmental and efficiency gains.

We support the changes proposed in the FIP Amendments. Many of our members operate in Indian country and have come to rely on the current permitting approach that is available through the

National FIP. The National FIP reduces the need for lengthy site-specific permits while facilitating continued responsible development in Indian country. The proposed targeted fixes would fix three elements, thereby increasing the efficacy of the National FIP.

First, we support EPA's decision to amend the National FIP to remove the 30-day waiting period between submission of the Part 1 permit application and the screening procedures for Endangered Species Act (ESA) and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) compliance. We agree with EPA's assessment that the change will expedite the preconstruction permitting process and that the waiting period is an unnecessary delay.

Second, we support EPA's clarification of the time period needed to submit the application before commencing construction. As EPA stated in the proposal, the current language implies that any application would need to be submitted exactly 30 days before construction begins. That is an unreasonable requirement since construction schedules often change due to weather, equipment failures, or other unforeseen circumstances. The proposed language that allows the application to be submitted at least 30 days before construction is a fix that reflects the realities of construction scheduling.

Third, the agency's proposed language to allow email instead of just written determinations that the ESA and NHPA screening procedures are satisfactory completed is a reasonable change that reflects modern business and standard communications practices. Since the National FIP registration application can be submitted through email, it is consistent to communicate the status of the application through email as well.

In conclusion, we reiterate our support for these three common-sense improvements to the National FIP that conserve EPA's resources while facilitating responsible development in Indian country. Please feel free to contact us regarding any questions with our comments.

Sincerely,



Kathleen M. Sgamma
President
Western Energy Alliance



Rikki Hrenko-Browning
President
Utah Petroleum Association