

JEFF FLAKE
6TH DISTRICT, ARIZONA

240 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE (202) 225-2635
FAX (202) 226-4386

DISTRICT OFFICE:

1640 SOUTH STAPLEY DRIVE
SUITE 215
MESA, AZ 85204
PHONE (480) 833-0092
FAX (480) 833-6314



COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

March 20, 2012

Mr. Jared Blumenfeld
Regional Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: State of Arizona Exceptional Event Documentation for the Events of July 2nd through July 8th, 2011

Dear Administrator Blumenfeld,

It is my understanding that the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Maricopa County Air Quality Department, and Maricopa Association of Governments recently submitted for your review an exceptional events demonstration containing information about the windblown dust events that occurred between July 2nd and July 8th of last year and caused 29 exceedances in the Phoenix PM10 Nonattainment Area.

As you are no doubt aware, exceedances of national ambient air quality standards can have dramatic regulatory consequences. While state and local officials in Arizona continue to make progress on addressing dust issues, they should not be held responsible for events that are outside of their control. As required by regulation, the submission documents that the exceedances that occurred during July 2nd through July 8th, 2011 were caused by a naturally-occurring exceptional event that affected air quality and was not preventable or controllable. Based on the extensive evidence provided, the demonstration concluded that "the exceedances of the federal 24-hour PM10 standard on July 3, July 4, July 5, July 7 and July 8, 2011, would not have occurred but for the monsoonal thunderstorm driven high winds and windblown dust transport from areas largely outside the Phoenix PM10 nonattainment area."

I look forward to your prompt review of the submitted exceptional event demonstration. Specifically, I would appreciate it if you would provide me with an expected timeframe for the outcome of your review. I appreciate your attention to this matter, in accordance with existing agency rules, regulations, and ethical guidelines.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Flake".

JEFF FLAKE
Member of Congress

cc: Gina McCarthy, Assistant Administrator, U.S. EPA Office of Air and Radiation,
Deborah Jordan, Director, EPA Region 9 Air Division