



**For Immediate Release:**  
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## **Birmingham Area Air Quality Improvements Confirmed**

MONTGOMERY – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has approved a request from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management to formally redesignate Jefferson County, Shelby County, and a portion of Walker County as being in attainment of the current National Ambient Air Quality Standards for fine particulate matter. EPA Regional Administrator Gwen Keyes-Fleming signed an announcement today granting the ADEM request.

Particulate matter is classified as a criteria pollutant that contributes to a range of health impacts, especially in young children with asthma and elderly people with respiratory problems. Two air quality standards have been developed for particulate matter: a daily standard promulgated in 2006, as well as an annual standard promulgated in 1997. Monitoring data from the Birmingham area has shown that the area actually met the daily and annual standards since 2009 and 2010, respectively. Today's action confirms that the Birmingham area will be formally redesignated to attainment for both of these standards.

In addition, today's action means that the Birmingham area will now be designated as attainment for all six of the pollutants for which National Ambient Air Quality Standards have been established. This represents the first time in over thirty years that the Birmingham area has achieved this important goal.

These improvements in air quality are the result of emission reductions that have been achieved through a wide range of regulatory efforts implemented by EPA, ADEM, and the Jefferson County Department of Health.

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