

November 10, 2003

Mr. James I. Palmer, Jr.  
Regional Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Atlanta Federal Center  
61 Forsyth Street  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8960

Dear Mr. Palmer:

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) is the state agency authorized to receive federal grants to implement the requirements of the Clean Water Act. The 1987 amendments to the Act require that at least 40% of the State Section 205(j)/604(b) Water Quality Management funds be allocated to regional Public Comprehensive Planning agencies that have the capability to perform "priority" activities. However, where such entities do not have the capability to perform "priority" activities, the pass-through requirements may be waived by the EPA Regional Administrator. To obtain such a waiver, the state must certify that it has consulted with these agencies and determined that their participation would not significantly assist in the development and implementation of the state's Water Quality Management Plan. The activities to be implemented in this plan include the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program, preparation of the Section 305(b) Water Quality Report to Congress, development of Water Quality Standards, and coordination of the State's Water Quality Management Program.

As required by the Clean Water Act, MDEQ has previously contacted those Planning and Development Districts in the state that have expressed the desire to assist the department in water quality planning activities. After thorough discussions, the Planning and Development Districts and MDEQ have agreed that the goals of the Clean Water Act would be better served if the EPA waived the pass-through requirement so the MDEQ can move forward with this essential activity.

Since the requirements of Section 205(j)(3) of the Act have been met, I request that the EPA waive the pass-through requirement for the FY 2004 Section 205(j)/604(b) grant.

Very truly yours,

RONNIE MUSGROVE

cc: Charles Chisolm, MDEQ