



RONNIE McDONALD
BASTROP COUNTY JUDGE

October 25, 2010

Ms. Margie McAllister
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
MC-164
Post Office Box 13087
Austin, Texas 78711-3087

RE: Comment on Nonattainment Designations

Dear Ms. McAllister:

Bastrop County is a rural county located east of Austin, Texas. 2008 population estimates for our entire county were 73,491. Our County is also one of 5 in the Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area, the potential area of a nonattainment designation. As such, Bastrop County has actively participated in voluntary clean air efforts including being a signatory on the 1-hour Ozone Flex Plan, the Early Action Compact and the 8-hour Ozone Flex Program. In addition, Bastrop County regularly participates in programs of the Clean Air Coalition and Clean Air Force. These are all monumental steps for a county with a population less than 80,000. These voluntary programs have proven successful, with Central Texas' design-value for ozone decreasing from 90 parts per billion in 1999 to 75 ppb in 2009.

In March of this year, I sent a letter to Administrator Jackson of the EPA, indicating my Court's desire to keep the primary and secondary standards for Ozone at the 2008 level of 75 parts per billion, that the EPA consider transport and background Ozone levels in the new standard and that a lower standard than the transport and background levels is completely unachievable. Further, we requested that the Early Action Compact/ voluntary emissions reduction model continue to be supported by the EPA and be an allowable compliance option.

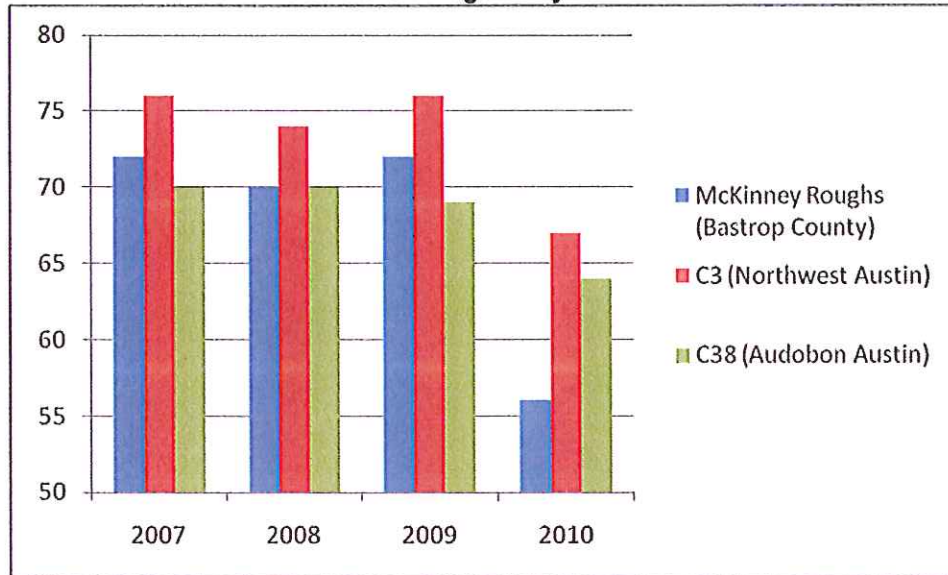
I understand that, though the EPA is not expected to release the new Ozone standards until later this year, the comment period on potential nonattainment designations for the TCEQ ends November 8. This letter has been prepared with the expectation that the 2008 standard of 75 parts per billion will remain in effect.

As you know, the EPA has historically considered nine factors in determining nonattainment area boundaries. Of those nine, the following six, in Bastrop County's opinion, do not meet the criteria for a non-attainment designation.

Air Quality data

There are currently no regulatory monitors in Bastrop County. There is, however, a Capital Area Council of Government monitor in the Lower Colorado River Authority park McKinney Roughs. This monitor is located in an activity center of the park and is close to SH 71. Figure 1 below shows the difference in 4th highest Ozone readings for the two regulatory monitors in the Austin area and the one monitor in the Bastrop County area.

Figure 1: 4th Highest Ozone Readings in Bastrop County and Two Austin Regulatory Monitors



Data Source: Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

While it is understood that the 2010 Ozone season is not yet complete and therefore data could change, please note that, on average, the 4th highest reading for Ozone in Bastrop County is 92% of the 4th highest reading for the Austin C3 monitor and 98% of the 4th highest reading for the C38 monitor. In addition, the Bastrop County 4th highest reading is always below the 2008 standard of 75 parts per billion.

Emissions data

There are currently only six significant stationary sources in Bastrop County. Figure 2 explains that two are brick manufacturing facilities, three are power production facilities and one is a gas storage facility.

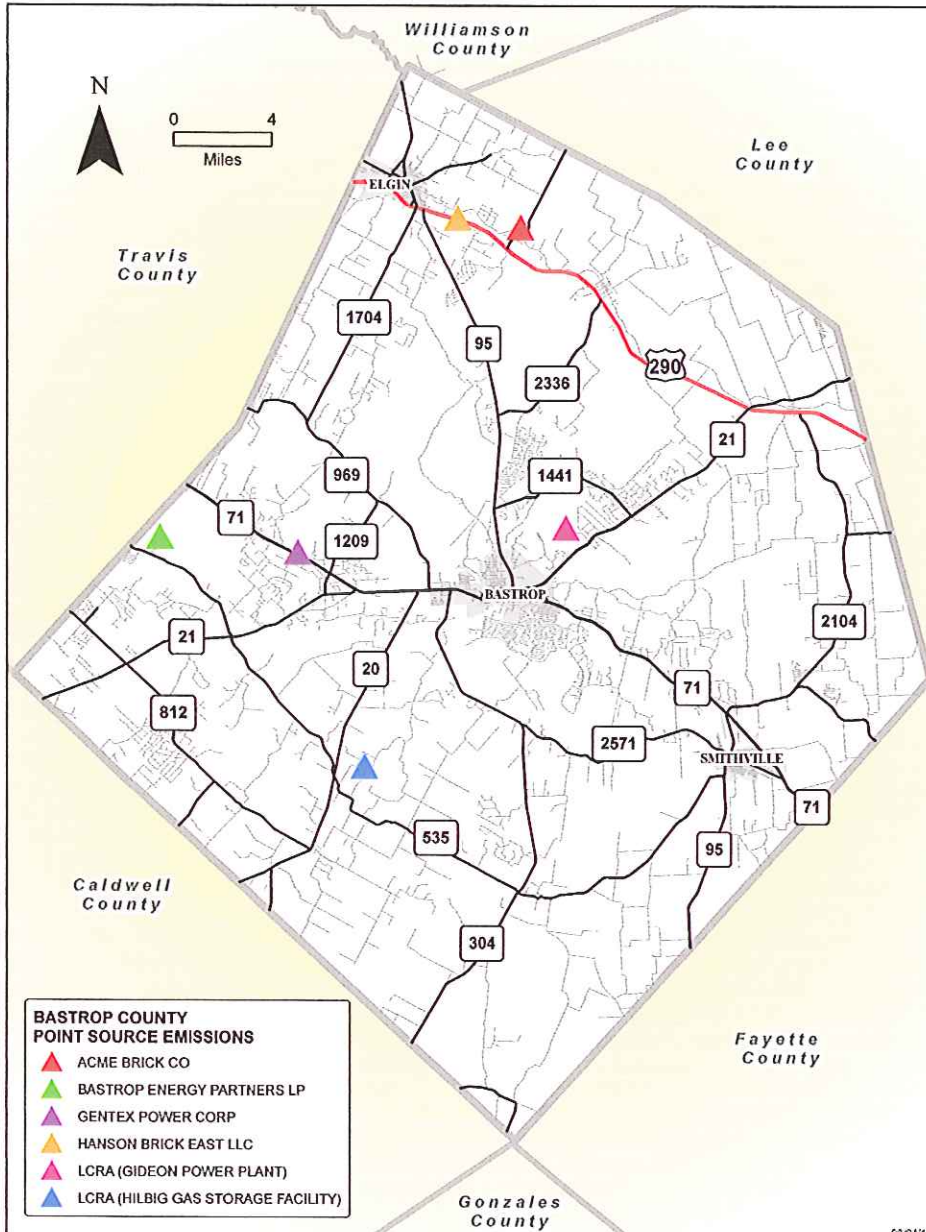
Figure 2: Stationary Emissions Sources in Bastrop County

COMPANY	SITE	CO TPY	NOX TPY	PM2.5 TPY	SO2 TPY	VOC TPY
ACME BRICK CO	ELGIN PLANT	96.78	28.89	0.12	107.65	24.20
BASTROP ENERGY PARTNERS LP	BASTROP ENERGY CENTER	33.51	268.96	24.48	4.92	17.12
GENTEX POWER CORP	LOST PINES 1 POWER PLANT	72.56	209.51	59.78	7.47	14.06
HANSON BRICK EAST LLC	HANSON BRICK ELGIN FACILITY	34.67	10.24	19.74	88.47	3.11
LOWER COLORADO RIVER AUTHORITY	SIM GIDEON POWER PLANT	23.82	736.43	46.33	3.44	37.21
LOWER COLORADO RIVER AUTHORITY	HILBIG GAS STORAGE FACILITY	0.82	0.64	0.05	0.00	23.33

Data Source: Capital Area Council of Governments

In addition to a relatively small number of facilities (neighboring Travis County, for example has seventeen sites) the facilities are widely dispersed throughout the County. Figure 3 is a map which shows the locations of the aforementioned facilities.

Figure 3: Locations of Stationary Sources in Bastrop County



Disclaimer: Bastrop County provides this map and/or data "as is" and assumes no liability for the accuracy or completeness. This is intended as a general representation only and is in no way to be used as survey grade information. 08/24/10

Population density

Bastrop County has an estimated density of 84.3 people per square mile. Bastrop County is defined as rural by the United State's Department of Agriculture Office of Rural Development, in that all throughout the County there is not a city or town over 50,000 in population and it has no urbanized area. Clearly, such a low rate of density does not support a non-attainment designation.

Figure 4: Population Density of Five Counties in Austin- Round Rock MSA

	Land area (without water) in square miles	Estimated Census population July 1, 2009	Estimated density per square mile of land area in 2009
Bastrop County	888.35	74,876	84.3
Caldwell County	545.73	37,810	69.3
Hays County	677.87	155,545	229.5
Travis County	989.3	1,026,158	1037.3
Williamson County	1,122.77	410,686	365.8

Data Source: US Census and Capital Area Council of Governments

Traffic and commuting patterns

Of 560,011 regional work trips which occur in the Capital Area Council of Government area, only 3.6% are generated by Bastrop County and only 1.5% are distributed to Bastrop County. Figure 5 demonstrates that the Bastrop County is a minor player in the region's commuter traffic.

Figure 5: Traffic and Commuting Patterns for Bastrop County

County of Residence:	County of Work:					
	Bastrop	Caldwell	Hays	Travis	Williamson	Outside MSA
Bastrop	5,941	121	443	11,756	1,115	602
Caldwell	228	2,107	1,896	4,584	429	181
Hays	157	338	15,086	18,731	1,214	454
Travis	1,098	365	6,175	312,300	21,631	1,658
Williamson	98	126	1,277	86,670	41,938	1,097
Outside MSA	731	85	508	5,776	1,861	11,234

Data Source: Capital Area Council of Governments

Jurisdictional boundaries

Thus far, I have explained how air quality data, emissions data, population density, and traffic and commuting patterns in Bastrop County have a far smaller impact on the Austin-Round Rock MSA and on air quality than the three large counties to our West. It is clear, that in this case, the jurisdictional boundary for nonattainment should not be drawn to include Bastrop County.

Level of control of emission sources

Bastrop County voluntarily participates in regional air quality compacts. As mentioned earlier, Bastrop County has actively participated in voluntary clean air efforts including being a signatory on the 1-hour Ozone Flex Plan, the Early Action Compact and the 8-hour Ozone Flex Program. The County adopted a Memorandum of Agreement with the TCEQ to reduce idling and has extensively participated in air quality improvement programs. At this point, there are few additional things, if any, that Bastrop County could implement to control emissions sources. Reductions in Bastrop County's Ozone levels will ultimately need to come from a cleaner fleet of cars in the United States and a reduction in transport emissions.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on potential non-attainment designations. I request that you consider Bastrop County's recommendation that we not be included in a non-attainment designation. Bastrop County will continue to work with our regional and local partners on voluntary measures aimed at reducing the Ozone load in our area. If you should have any questions regarding this letter please do not hesitate to contact me at 512.332.7201.

Sincerely,



Ronnie McDonald
Bastrop County Judge

cc: Senator Glen Hegar
Representative Tim Kleinschmidt
County Commissioner Lee Dildy
County Commissioner Clara Beckett
County Commissioner John Klaus
County Commissioner Willie Piña
Mayor Terry Orr, City of Bastrop
Mayor Marc Holm, City of Elgin
Mayor Mark Bunte, City of Smithville