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To Whom This May Concern at the EPA,

I am writing as the Program Manager for Clean Air Methow regarding the EPA's potential designation of Omak, WA, as a nonattainment area under the revised PM2.5 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). This designation carries significant implications for public health, economic development, and environmental management across the region.

While the Omak monitor provides valuable data, it is essential to consider the broader context of air quality across geographic boundaries. The Methow Valley's air quality is shaped by distinct factors, including seasonal wildfire smoke and weather patterns that differ significantly from those in Omak. Misrepresenting these conditions could result in unnecessary regulatory burdens on communities already actively working to improve air quality.

I urge the County Commissioners to advocate for the EPA to rely on the most recent, high-quality data and to consider localized conditions and exceptional events, such as wildfire impacts, in its decision-making process. As noted in Ecology's draft recommendations, exceptional events have been flagged in the region, and their exclusion is vital to ensuring a fair assessment of air quality data.

Clean Air Methow remains committed to proactive measures that protect air quality, and we encourage the EPA to focus regulatory efforts on areas with the most acute challenges. Ensuring accurate, science-based designations will not only protect public health but also maintain community trust and foster collaborative air quality solutions.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further or provide additional context if needed. Please feel free to contact me at 509-997-0888x6 or annam@mvcitizens.org.

Sincerely,

Anna Jones
Program Manager, Clean Air Methow