

# ALERT!

January 2004

ALERT is a monthly update on transportation and air quality planning activities in the Delaware Valley.



## CONFORMITY

### **Court Blocks Bush Clean Air Act Changes**

In December, a federal appeals court blocked several changes to the Clean Air Act previously proposed by the Bush administration. In particular, the court challenge took aim at an EPA maintenance rule that would allow power plants, utilities, refineries, and other industries to replace up to twenty percent of the value of their plants at a time without obtaining Clean Air Act permits and installing pollution controls.

Although EPA spokeswoman Cynthia Bergman claims that the rule will have "little or no impact on emissions", many state governments, and environmental and health groups feel differently. Many opponents of the regulation believe that its implementation will make it easier for industrial facilities to avoid the installation of additional pollution controls by making repairs in the name of routine maintenance.

Eliot Spitzer, attorney general of New York, called the court decision to stop the new rule from taking affect "as big a success as we've had in stopping the Bush administration from undercutting the Clean Air Act". While this amendment to the Clean Air Act was halted, at least temporarily, the judges in this case also refused to reconsider an earlier decision to allow EPA changes which gave coal-fired power plants and industrial facilities more flexibility to calculate their respective pollution levels.

### **New Standards for Highway Motorcycles Contribute to Air Quality Improvements**

EPA Administrator Mike Leavitt recently signed a final rule that launched the first new emission standards for highway motorcycles in 25 years. Currently, motorcycles produce more harmful exhaust emissions per mile than cars, or even most sport utility vehicles.

Beginning in 2006, manufacturers will be required to reduce the emission of hydrocarbons (HC) and Nitrogen Oxides (Nox) by 60 percent. The reductions will be accomplished through the use of proven technologies and are expected to lessen emissions of HC and Nox by about 54,000 tons per year. With stipulations beginning in 2008, this new rule also attempts to save approximately 12 million gallons of fuel annually with the control of fuel loss (called "permeation") through



**February 22-25,  
U.S. EPA's 2004  
National Air Quality  
Conference:  
"Your Forecast To  
Breathe By"**

Marriot Baltimore Inner  
Harbor Hotel,  
Baltimore, MD.

For registration info:  
[www.epa.gov/airnow/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/airnow/index.html)

fuel hoses and fuel tanks. These new emission controls will cost about \$75 per motorcycle when the final phase begins in 2010.

### **Proposed Revision to the State Implementation Plan for Ozone For the Philadelphia Ozone Nonattainment Area**

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (Penn DEP) is seeking public comment on a State Implementation Plan (SIP) revision for the Philadelphia ozone nonattainment area.

The Clean Air Act requires the Philadelphia area to have made incremental reductions in the emissions that cause ground-level ozone through 2005. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved the most recent "rate of progress" demonstration in October 2001. In January 2002, EPA revised the methodology by which highway vehicle emissions are calculated. Penn DEP is now proposing to revise its SIP to include a demonstration that the area continues to meet the 2005 rate of progress requirements with this new methodology.

This proposal is available on the DEP Website at <http://www.dep.state.pa.us> (Keyword: clean air plans). Penn DEP will hold a public hearing to receive comments on the SIP revision on Thursday, January 29, 2004, at 1:00 PM at the offices of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. Directions can be found at [www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org).



### **OTHER NEWS**

#### **The Whispering Wheel**

This winter the city of Apeldoorn in Holland will test a city bus fitted with a new Dutch invention called an in-wheel' electric engine. The engines developers, E-traction, claim it can make cars, busses and other vehicles no less than 50 percent more efficient and thus more environmentally friendly. For buses, the company boasts of fuel savings of up to 60 percent, with emissions down to only a fraction of the soot and carbon dioxide an ordinary bus would blow out of its tailpipe. Better still, the technology is already available; it all comes down to a smart combination of existing systems.

The test bus requires no adaptation, its drivers' need no extra training and there'll be no discomfort for passengers. It will simply run on diesel, just like all the other buses, and it should be just as reliable. One thing however will be very different; the Apeldoorn bus hardly makes a sound, hence its nickname "the whisperer".

In the coming six months the bus has to prove itself in everyday practice. Come summer, the city of Apeldoorn is set to decide whether to use whisperers on a larger scale in public transport. At the recent Tokyo Motor Show, it was the engine of choice in many of the futuristic hydrogen-powered concept cars.

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