

ALERT! *May 2004*

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



CONFORMITY

474 Counties Fail Air Standards

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified 474 counties with air that is either too dirty or pollution that causes neighboring counties to fail the air quality test. These counties, mostly in California and the eastern third of the country, have been cited as having too much ground-level ozone (a precursor of smog) in violation of the federal clean air laws.

State and local officials in these noncompliant regions have been told that they will have to develop new pollution controls. These may include imposing new controls or restrictions on industrial plants and transportation, and require tougher vehicles inspection programs.

32 counties in Pennsylvania and all of New Jersey do not meet federal standards for ground-level ozone. However, the Los Angeles basin was designated as having the most severe air pollution and has until 2021 to come into compliance with the federal standard. Other areas with marginal or moderate pollution problems have until either 2007 to 2010 to comply. Areas that continue to violate the standard could lose federal highway dollars.

The Philadelphia area was classified as a moderate nonattainment area and has until 2010 to meet the federal ozone standard. The Philadelphia nonattainment area covers 18 counties in parts of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland. Ocean County, New Jersey was included in the Philadelphia nonattainment area. Whether to include Ocean County as part of the New York nonattainment area, as it had been under the 1-hour ozone standard, or put it in the Philadelphia nonattainment area has been a point of contention between Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The ozone monitor in Ocean County has historically recorded the highest ozone levels on the East Coast.

EPA and McGreevy at Odds Over Proposed Rule on Smog

A recently released EPA report identified all of New Jersey's 21 counties as failing to meet federal pollution standards. Governor McGreevey blamed a third of the state's air pollution problem on out-of-state power plants. He further criticized the Bush administration for its proposed interstate air-quality rule, which he said would relax emissions standards worsening the problem.



**Ozone Action
Season Begins
Monday,
May 24th**

This proposal, now under administrative review, is intended to cut smog and soot-forming chemicals from power plants, with the aim of reducing pollution often carried by wind across many states. Some of the rule's provisions would include a cap on emissions of acid-rain-causing sulfur dioxide and smog-causing nitrogen oxide from power plants in 30 states, most east of the Mississippi River. The measure also includes a pollution trading system that would allow states, utilities and companies to trade pollution allowances if overall caps were maintained.

Bradley M. Campbell, commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, said allowing overall caps to be met under a pollution trading system would undercut a Clinton administration rule restricting nitrogen-oxide emissions, specifically in summer, when the heat produces smog.



OTHER NEWS

Governor Rendell's Plan for Pollution

Gov. Rendell's proposal to fund environmental programs through fees on pollution seeks to address some of Pennsylvania's key environmental problems such as the loss of 110,000 acres of open space each year due to sprawl. He has proposed a \$1.4 billion initiative paid for through a set of fees on pollution and waste - fees on releases of toxic chemicals by industry, additional fees on disposing of waste in state landfills, and a fee for the first time on the disposal of industrial waste.

Until now, the public has paid for pollution in many ways. Taxpayers pay to clean up contaminated sites and polluted rivers and streams, ensuring that residents with tainted wells have clean water. Asthma attacks caused by air pollution burden all of us through escalating health-care costs. And some communities can't benefit from our state's second-largest industry, tourism, because of polluted rivers and dangerously toxic fish.

Now, some of our most important cleanup programs are out of, or low on, funds. Our Recycling Fund, which gives grants to municipalities for recycling programs, is running low on money. And the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund, which has cleaned up hundreds of sites around the state, is nearly broke.

The governor's budget proposal recognizes that residents want these important programs continued, but also puts the costs on the industries responsible for the problems. Just as states have sought money from tobacco companies for their increasing health-care costs, he wants to turn to companies that create pollution and waste to support environmental protection and cleanup programs.

ALERT contains news items related to air quality and transportation.

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