

# ALERT! *March 2006*

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



## CONFORMITY

### **EPA Proposes New and Revised National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter**

On January 17, 2006 the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced proposed revisions to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for Particle Pollution. The proposed revisions address two types of particle pollution; fine particles (smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter) or PM<sub>2.5</sub> and inhalable coarse particles (between 2.5 and 10 microns in diameter), also known as PM<sub>10-2.5</sub>.

The proposal includes lowering the 24-hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard from 65 µg/m<sup>3</sup> to 35 µg/m<sup>3</sup> while holding the annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard at the current level of 15 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The proposal would also create a new 24-hour standard for coarse inhalable particles set at 70 µg/m<sup>3</sup> while revoking the 24-hour PM<sub>10</sub> standard for areas with populations under 100,000 and no violating air quality monitors. Under the new regulations there would not be an annual standard for PM<sub>10-2.5</sub>.

The EPA cited evidence from peer reviewed research that identified the health and environmental impacts of short term exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub> as a reason for the stricter fine particulate matter standards. EPA also cited a lack of evidence of significant health effects from long term exposure to coarse particulate matter, as a major reason for moving from a PM<sub>10</sub> to PM<sub>10-2.5</sub> standard and eliminating the annual PM<sub>10</sub> standard. The studies noted that coarse particulate matter that originates from urban sources such as high density traffic, industry, and construction, is more likely to pose health impacts than particles from agriculture, windblown dust and mining or sources more typical of non-urban areas.

In a related action, the EPA has submitted recommendations to change national air quality monitoring requirements to reflect improvements in monitoring technologies. These changes would include a design for a PM<sub>10-2.5</sub> monitoring network.

The EPA will be accepting public comment on the proposed changes until April 17, 2006. The EPA must issue final standards by September 27, 2006, based on further research and input from the public comment period. The EPA will be taking testimony and public comment at three concurrent public hearings to be held in Philadelphia (see save the date section for location), Chicago and San Francisco on March 8, 2006.



**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**

**Wednesday,  
March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006  
EPA Public Hearing  
on PM NAAQS Revisions  
9:00 am-9:00 pm**

Holiday Inn Historic District  
400 Arch Street  
Philadelphia

**Friday,  
March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2006  
Philadelphia  
Diesel Difference  
CMAQ Workshop  
10:00 am**

DVRPC Conference Center  
190 N. Independence Mall West,  
(corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and Race Streets)  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor

The potential timeline for implementation of the proposed standards is outlined in the following table.

<b>Potential Timeline for Implementing Proposed Particulate Matter NAAQS</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
States recommend non-attainment areas	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	November, 2007	PM <sub>10-2.5</sub>	July, 2012*
EPA makes final attainment designations	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	November, 2009	PM <sub>10-2.5</sub>	May, 2013
EPA designations become effective	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	April, 2010	PM <sub>10-2.5</sub>	July, 2013
State Implementation Plans due	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	April, 2013	PM <sub>10-2.5</sub>	July, 2016
Deadline for states to meet standards	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	April, 2015	PM <sub>10-2.5</sub>	July, 2018

\*EPA requires three years of monitoring data to determine base PM<sub>10-2.5</sub> levels

For more information about the proposed changes to the NAAQS for particulate matter or how to submit a comment please visit the EPA's website at [www.epa.gov/air/particlepollution/actions.html](http://www.epa.gov/air/particlepollution/actions.html).



### **OTHER NEWS**

#### **Philadelphia Region Cited as One of the Worst Places in Country for Asthma Sufferers**

A recent report released by the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) ranked the Philadelphia region as the third worst place in the country to be an asthma sufferer. Rankings were based on analysis of twelve weighted factors from three broad categories including asthma prevalence, risk and medical factors. The Philadelphia region was ranked as below average for nine of the twelve factors when compared to the country's 100 most populated metropolitan areas.

Specific factors analyzed ranged from ambient air quality (such as ozone and pollen levels) and economic factors (poverty levels and rate of uninsured residents) to public policy (public smoking bans and school inhaler access laws) among others. Air quality factors were weighted heavily in this analysis and was one of the categories in which the Philadelphia region scored low compared to other regions.

According to the AAFA, asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism, is responsible for 5,000 deaths annually and costs Americans approximately \$14 billion dollars per year in medical and indirect costs. The AAFA releases the "Asthma Capitals" report each year to raise awareness about asthma and asthma prevention.

The complete list of metropolitan region rankings and details about the analysis factors can be viewed at the AAFA website at [www.asthmacapitals.com](http://www.asthmacapitals.com).

<p>ALERT! is a DVRPC publication.</p>	 <p><b>Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission</b>  DVRPC, 8th Floor  190 N. Independence Mall West  Philadelphia, PA 19106-1520  Phone 215.592.1800 Fax 215.592.9125 <a href="http://www.dvrpc.org">www.dvrpc.org</a></p>
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