

ALERT! July 2006

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



CONFORMITY

EPA Releases Guidance to Calculate Benefits of Diesel Retrofits

In June, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a guidance document to assist state air quality agencies to utilize and quantify emissions reductions resulting from diesel retrofit projects in State Implementation Plans (SIPs) and Conformity determinations. The EPA was charged with developing SIP guidance for retrofit projects under the diesel emission reduction provisions of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The methodology presented in the guidance document is targeted at states using the MOBILE and NONROAD emission models, which includes both Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Retrofits of both on-road and off-road diesel vehicles have been shown to be cost effective methods to reduce air pollution, resulting in up to 50 percent reductions in NOx and up to 90 percent reductions of both particulate matter and VOC emissions. The authorized Surface Transportation Act of 2005 (SAFETEA-LU), has, for the first time, made retrofits of off-road mobile sources eligible for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding.

This guidance document details how state agencies can utilize off-road retrofit projects in SIP development or for Transportation Conformity determinations including guidance on establishing trading mechanisms or using retrofit projects to create or enhance margins of safety in the SIP. Both mechanisms require SIP revisions. Highway retrofit projects are much simpler to incorporate into Transportation Conformity determinations and do not require a SIP revision, but should follow the guidance to quantify emission reductions from retrofit projects.

"Diesel Retrofits: Quantifying and Using their Benefits in SIPs and Conformity – Guidance for State and Local Air and Transportation Agencies" can be viewed or downloaded from the EPA at www.epa.gov/otaq/stateresources/transconf/policy.htm



**Thursday,
July 13th, 2006
Greater Philadelphia Clean
Cities Working Group
Meeting
10:00 am**

DVRPC Conference Center
ACP Building, 8th Floor
6th and Race Streets
Philadelphia, PA

**Monday,
July 17th, 2006
Philadelphia Diesel
Difference Working Group
Meeting
10:00 am**

DVRPC Conference Center
ACP Building, 8th Floor
6th and Race Streets



HEALTH AND AIR QUALITY

Philadelphia Metropolitan Region Ranked 10th Worst Ozone Polluted City in the Nation

The Philadelphia-Camden-Vineland PA-NJ-DE-MD metropolitan region was ranked as the tenth most ozone polluted city by the American Lung Association (ALA) in their State of the Air report released in May 2006. The ALA used quality assured data from the period 2002 to 2004 to develop the 2006 report card on ozone and particle

pollution for the nation's cities and counties. The report analyzes regulatory and programmatic efforts to improve the nation's ambient air quality and identifies issues affecting progress towards cleaner, healthier air.

According to the ALA, the Philadelphia region did make gains in improving ambient air quality. The report noted that ozone levels in Chester County improved enough to be removed from the top 25 most ozone polluted counties in the nation. The report also presented good news with regard to regional particle pollution. Particle pollution levels in Philadelphia County improved enough to drop the county from both the daily and annual list of top 25 most polluted counties for particle pollution.

The ALA report also notes that federal regulations enacted in the 1990s are already beginning to show air quality benefits, especially in the Northeastern United States.

To view the entire 2006 State of the Air Report, please visit the American Lung Association at www.lunginfo.org.



TRANSPORTATION – AIR QUALITY

New Congressional Bill to Make Biodiesel Tax Credits Permanent

Legislation has been introduced into both houses of Congress to remove sunset provisions of the Volumetric Ethanol Excise Tax Credit (VEETC) which is scheduled to expire in 2008. The tax credit was aimed at lowering the cost of biodiesel for consumers who pay road taxes, such as truckers, and tax exempt markets such as school districts. The legislation also makes tax incentives for small agri-biodiesel producers permanent.

VEETC is credited with being the primary stimulant for a dramatic increase in biodiesel production facilities since the credit took effect in 2005. With a positive energy balance of 320 percent, 3.2 units of energy are produced for every unit of energy input to the production of biodiesel; biodiesel is the fastest growing alternative fuel in the country. Biodiesel sales in the U.S. have grown from 500,000 gallons in 1999 to an estimated 150 million gallons in 2006.

Pennsylvania is also offering state funds to support biodiesel production and fueling infrastructure, including a \$220,000 grant to open the East Coast's first biodiesel injection facility in Dauphin County in October 2005. There are currently almost 20 proposed biodiesel plants in various states of development in Pennsylvania

Local Schools Take Top Honors at the 2006 Tour de Sol Championship

The Tour de Sol is a national competition held each year that challenges teams and individuals to build one-of-a-kind highway-worthy vehicles that aim to reduce oil use and climate change emissions to zero.

This year, two local schools, West Philadelphia High School and Burlington County Community College, took top honors in their divisions. West Philadelphia High won the student hybrid and alternative fuel division while BCCC won the student built electric vehicle division.

ALERT! is a DVRPC publication.



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