

ALERT! *March 2007*

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



CONFORMITY

US EPA Issues Final Rule to Reduce Mobile Source Air Toxics

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a final rule aimed at reducing hazardous air pollutants from mobile sources known as Mobile Source Air Toxics or MSATs. The rule, issued in February 2007, will reduce emissions of MSATs in three ways: 1) by lowering the benzene content in gasoline; 2) by reducing exhaust emissions from passenger vehicles operated under cold conditions (under 75 degrees); and 3) by reducing emissions that evaporate from, and permeate through, portable fuel containers. These three approaches are referred to as the Fuel Program, Vehicle Program and Container Program.

MSATs are known or suspected carcinogens and are implicated in other health and environmental concerns, such as premature death, lung and coronary disease. Many MSATs are also volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that contribute to the formation of ozone and PM_{2.5}. Benzene is an air toxic of particular concern because it is a known carcinogen and comes largely from mobile sources. People who live or work near major roads or spend large amounts of time in vehicles are likely to experience high risk from benzene exposure.

The three emission control programs are scheduled to be implemented over the next eight years. Beginning in 2011, fuel refiners will be required to meet an annual average benzene content of .62 percent benzene by volume in gasoline. This is a reduction from the current 1 percent benzene content in gasoline today. The Vehicle Program standards will be implemented beginning in 2010 with light vehicles and 2012 with heavy duty vehicles. The program will require reductions in non-methane hydrocarbon emissions and be fully implemented by 2015. The Fuel Container Program will require a testing and certification program of all portable fuel containers, including kerosene and diesel, starting with containers manufactured in 2009.

EPA estimates that this new rule will reduce MSAT emissions by 333,000 tons and benzene emissions by 61,000 tons in 2030. In addition to reductions in hydrocarbons, the rule is expected to reduce VOC emissions by 1 million tons and save approximately \$6 billion in 2030.

The EPA's MSAT Final rule can be read at: <http://epa.gov/otaq/toxics.htm#regdocs>



**SAVE
THE
DATE**

**Monday,
March 19th, 2007
Philadelphia Diesel
Difference Working Group
Meeting
10:00 am**

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

**Monday - Tuesday
April 23rd & 24th, 2007
Innovative Funding for Clean
Diesel Workshop**

Radisson Plaza
Warwick Hotel
Philadelphia, PA

For more information visit:
www.marama.org



HEALTH AND AIR QUALITY

Study Finds That Fine Particle Pollution Significantly Raises Heart Disease Risk in Older Women

An article in the February 1, 2007 edition of the *New England Journal of Medicine* presented the results of a study linking elevated risk of heart disease in post-menopausal women and prolonged exposure to fine particle pollution. The study was conducted by researchers at the University of Washington and included over 65,000 women between the ages of 50 and 79. The study notes that the women's annual average exposure to fine particle pollution or PM_{2.5} was 13 parts per million per cubic meter of air (ppm/m³), which is below the annual PM_{2.5} air quality standard of 15 ppm/m³.

The 65,893 study subjects were drawn from 36 U.S. metropolitan areas from 1994 to 1998 and lived within 30 miles of an air quality monitor that measured particle pollution. The women had no previous record of cardiovascular disease and results were adjusted for age, race or ethnicity, smoking status, educational level, diabetes and other relevant factors.

The results of the study indicated that each increase of 10 ppm/m³ of average annual PM_{2.5} was associated with a 24% increase in the risk of a cardiovascular event and 76% increase in the risk of death from cardiovascular disease. Researchers did acknowledge that while the degree to which ambient air pollution monitors represent the exposure of specific study subjects is imperfect, this factor is unlikely to have introduced a bias that would have influenced the studied findings. Researchers stressed that continued efforts to limit long term exposure to PM_{2.5} are warranted.

The entire article "Long Term Exposure to Air Pollution and Incidence of Cardiovascular Events in Women" can be read at: <http://content.nejm.org>

Philadelphia Listed as Second Worst Place in Nation to Live With Asthma

The annual *Asthma Capitals* report released by the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, once again listed Philadelphia in its top-one hundred list of most challenging places in the nation to live with asthma. The list is based on several factors including asthma prevalence, ambient air quality, poverty levels and use of emergency medications. Philadelphia ranked as average or below average in all twelve of the measured categories when compared to the other 99 U.S. cities in the report, resulting in a rank of second most challenging city in which to live with asthma.

With a motto of "Don't Move, Improve", the purpose of the report is to raise awareness of asthma and breathing issues and encourage people to work with their doctors to improve asthma management. The report also encourages communities to improve air quality and public policies, such as public smoking laws and access to medication at school, that diminish the challenges of living with asthma.

To view the entire *Asthma Capitals* report, please visit: <http://www.asthmacapitals.com>

ALERT! is a DVRPC publication.



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