

ALERT! *September 2007*

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



CONFORMITY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Holds Public Hearings on Proposed Changes to the National Ambient Air Quality Standard for Ozone

On Thursday, August 30, 2007 the US EPA held a public hearing at the Warwick Hotel in Philadelphia, regarding proposed changes to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for Ozone. This was one of five meetings to be held across the nation to give the public an opportunity to submit comments on whether EPA should maintain the current primary ozone standard of 0.08 parts per million (ppm) or lower the standard to a range of 0.070 to 0.075 ppm. EPA is also considering comments on lowering the standard to 0.060 ppm.

EPA is reviewing whether to develop a secondary ozone standard that would be more protective of vegetation and crops or make the secondary standard equal to the primary standard as is currently the case.

Over fifty members of the public, government agencies, industry representatives and environmental advocacy groups spoke during the scheduled twelve hour long meeting. Comments ranged from support for lowering the standard to 0.060 ppm to maintaining the current standard. The EPA's Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC) has recommended that the standard be lowered to no greater than 0.070 ppm.

Proponents of lowering the standard maintain that the change is necessary to protect the health of sensitive populations from the effects of breathing ozone pollution. Opponents stated that lowering the standard would be cost prohibitive, hurt the economy and provide limited benefits above the current standard.

The Clean Air Act requires that air quality standards protect human health with an adequate margin of safety for sensitive populations and furthermore, can not consider the cost of implementing the standards when determining the NAAQS.

The EPA is expected to issue the final ozone standards by March, 2008 and designate the ozone non-attainment areas by June, 2010. Should the ozone standard be lowered to 0.070 ppm, as the CASAC recommends, an additional 429 counties with ozone monitors, out of 629 nationwide, will violate the air quality standard for ozone.

For more information regarding the proposed revision of the NAAQS for ozone, please visit: <http://epa.gov/groundlevelozone/fs20070620.html>.



**SAVE
THE
DATE**

**Monday,
September 10th, 2007
Philadelphia Diesel
Difference
Working Group
10:00 am**

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

**Wednesday,
September 12th, 2007
Mid-Atlantic Diesel
Collaborative
9:00 am**

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



HEALTH AND AIR QUALITY

Long Term Exposure to High Levels of Air Pollution Reduces Lung Function and Growth in Children

According to a recent study published in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, long term exposure to high levels of air pollution caused reduced lung function and growth in 3,170 Mexico City eight year-olds. The authors also indicated that these early deficits in lung function growth may increase the risk of developing chronic obstructive lung disease later in life.

The researchers measured the children's lung function and compared it to the children's exposure to ozone, nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter. Lung function was measured every three months from 1996 to 1999. The children attended 39 different elementary schools located near ten air quality monitors. The study results indicated that at the beginning of the study and at each stage of follow up the children who were exposed to lower levels of ozone and particle pollution had better lung function values than children exposed to higher concentrations of the pollutants.

For more information on this study see: *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine* Vol 176. pp. 377-384, (2007).



AIR QUALITY PARTNERSHIP

Number of Air Quality Action Days Up From 2006

The number of Air Quality Action Days for the 2007 ozone season was higher than in the summer of 2006. There have been 23 Code Orange Action Days for ozone this summer (May 1 – September 6). There were 15 Code Orange and 2 Code Red Action Days during the same period last summer. Six Action Days have been called for particle pollution in 2007, with only one not corresponding with a high ozone day. In 2006, there were three Code Orange Days for particle pollution.

Air Quality Action Days are called based on forecasted levels of ozone and particle pollution. These forecasts are provided by Penn State University through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and contributions from the states of New Jersey and Delaware.

Pollutant concentrations are closely related to weather and interactions of complex climatic conditions. Generally, days that are very hot with plenty of direct sunlight and little wind are conducive to the formation ground level ozone and elevated levels of particle pollution. Dry winds from the southwest can also impact our region's air quality by transporting pollutants from the Midwest and the Washington–Baltimore metro area.

To view the archived air quality forecast calendars, please visit:
www.airqualitypartnership.org/forecast.htm

ALERT! is a DVRPC publication.



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