

ALERT! *March 2009*

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



CONFORMITY

Important Air Quality Regulations Still Under Review by Obama Administration

On January 26, 2009, President Obama's Chief of Staff, Rahm Emanuel issued a memorandum to the heads of federal executive departments and agencies instructing them to refrain from publishing new regulations in the Federal Register and to withdraw proposed and final regulations that were awaiting publication. The memo also instructed the agency heads to consider extending the effective date for new regulations that were published in the Federal Register for 60-days.

The intent of this memo was to allow President Obama's appointees to review and approve new or pending regulations. This review affects at least twelve Clean Air Act regulations including:

- The Notices of Ozone SIP Disapprovals for the Philadelphia – Wilmington and New York – Northern New Jersey – Connecticut 8-Hour Ozone Nonattainment Areas
- The Revision to Air Quality Index Reporting and Significant Harm Level for Particulate Matter, and
- Nonattainment Area Designations for the 24-Hour PM_{2.5} National Air Quality Standards

As of March 5, 2009, there was no further information available regarding the progress of these reviews from the EPA website. Until these reviews are completed and/or new federal guidance is issued, DVRPC will continue to follow the current regulations and federal guidelines and work closely with state and federal regulators to anticipate impacts on the region's transportation conformity and air quality programs.

To view Chief of Staff Emanuel's memorandum to the executive agency and department heads, please visit:

<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-1639.pdf>.



**SAVE
THE
DATE**

**Wednesday
March 11th, 2009
Greater Philadelphia Clean
Cities Meeting and CNG
Workshop
10:00 am**

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

**Monday,
March 16th, 2009
Philadelphia Diesel
Difference
Working Group
10:00 am**

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



TRANSPORTATION and AIR QUALITY

EPA Revisits Decision to Allow California to Regulate Green House Gases

In December 2005 the California Air Resources Board (CARB) petitioned the U.S. EPA to allow the state to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles. In March 2008 the EPA declined California's request.

Fifteen other states, including New Jersey, Maryland and Pennsylvania were prepared to adopt the California standards. Had the waiver been granted by EPA, sixteen states would have adopted the stricter standards, covering nearly half of the new cars sold in the United States each year. California's proposal would have required automakers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent by 2016. This would have translated to fuel economy standards of approximately 43 miles per gallon (mpg) for new cars and light trucks and 27 mpg for new heavy duty trucks and SUVs. Reductions would have started with model year 2009 vehicles.

In addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the new vehicle standards would also reduce emissions of ozone forming nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds. These additional benefits would assist California and other states in ozone nonattainment areas meet federal air quality standards.

At the time the waiver was declined, EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson cited the new fuel economy standard, in the energy bill signed by President Bush in December 2007, as one factor in the agency's decision. The energy bill calls for a 35 mpg fleet-wide fuel economy standard for cars and trucks by 2020. The agency also claimed a need for a national program for greenhouse gas emissions reductions to avoid a "confusing patchwork of state rules" as a supporting reason for denying California's request for a waiver.

Shortly after taking office, President Obama requested that EPA revisit the agency's denial of the waiver, citing the seriousness of California's air quality problems and the long standing history of California receiving waivers from EPA as issues that should have been considered in this decision.

EPA opened a 60-day public comment period concerning the reconsideration of the waiver on February 12, 2009.

For more information on the California Motor Vehicle Pollution Control Standards and EPA's reconsideration of granting California's waiver request, please visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/otaq/climate/ca-waiver.htm>.

ALERT! is a DVRPC publication.



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