

ALERT! June 2009

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



CONFORMITY

DVRPC Issues Draft Conformity Finding for *Connections* Long-Range Plan and Transportation Improvement Programs for PA and NJ.

DVRPC has published the Draft Transportation Conformity Findings for the *Connections* Long-Range Plan (Plan) and FY 2009-12 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Pennsylvania and FY 2010 – 2013 TIP for New Jersey. The public comment on the draft document will close at 5:00 pm, on June 22, 2009.

The federal Clean Air Act (CAA) requires that Metropolitan Planning Organizations, in designated air quality non-attainment areas, demonstrate that Plans and TIPs, and the projects contained in those documents, do not worsen air quality in the region nor impede the region's progress towards attaining the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The Transportation Conformity analysis includes air emissions modeling from the region's existing transportation network and planned and proposed regionally significant projects. The emissions analyses results are then tested against established benchmarks established by state and federal regulations.

In 2008, the US EPA approved motor vehicle emissions budgets for both Pennsylvania and New Jersey for the 8-hour ozone standard. These budgets replace the 2005, 1-hour ozone SIP budgets for this conformity determination and require lower emissions levels than the 2005 budgets. The stricter budgets are more protective of public health and will assist the region's efforts to improve air quality.

This iteration of DVRPC's Transportation Conformity findings show that the TIPs and Plan meet the established criteria contained in the respective state and federal conformity regulations as well as the proposed criteria contained in the new state implementation plans to attain the federal health based standards. Estimated regional emissions levels are below the approved SIP budget levels.

The DVRPC documents that are currently open for public comment, including the *Connections* Long-Range Plan, TIPs and Transportation Conformity findings can be viewed at: www.dvrpc.org/publicaffairs/publicinvolvement/notice/2009-05_notice.htm. Public comments on the documents are being accepted via mail, email at tip-plan-comments@dvrpc.org or by calling (215) 592-9125.



SAVE
THE
DATE

June 22nd, 2009
Public Comment Period
Closes for
Connections Long-Range
Plan,
FY 2010 NJ TIP, and
Conformity Determination

Send Comments to:
Tip- Plan Comments C/O DVRPC
190 N. Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Or email:
Tip-plan-comments@dvrpc.org

Thursday,
June 11th, 2009
Public Meeting
for *Connections*
Long-Range Plan,
FY 2010 NJ TIP, and
Conformity Determination
4:00 – 6:00 pm

Cherry Hill Public Library
Cherry Hill, NJ

New Jersey DEP Submits State Implementation Plan Showing Attainment of the 1997 Annual Fine Particulate Matter Standard

In 2005, the US EPA designated two Annual PM_{2.5} nonattainment areas (NAA) in New Jersey for the 1997 Annual PM_{2.5} standard. Both of these NAAs include portions of the DVRPC region. Mercer County is included in the New York – Northern NJ – Connecticut PM_{2.5} NAA, while the other three New Jersey counties in the region are in the Philadelphia – Wilmington NAA.

In March, 2009, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) submitted a revision to the state implementation plan (SIP) to the US EPA. The SIP revision demonstrates that the two PM_{2.5} NAAs in the state will meet the 1997 Annual PM_{2.5} standard by the federally mandated 2010 attainment date. The plan also contains steps that are being taken to help the region attain the year 2006 24-hour PM_{2.5} standard.

The SIPs contain on-road mobile vehicle emissions budgets that, once approved by the EPA, will be used by DVRPC to demonstrate transportation conformity. These budgets will help ensure that DVRPC's transportation plans and programs are supporting the region's progress towards cleaner air.

For more information on the New Jersey SIP revision please visit:
www.nj.gov/dep/baqp/pm25sip/pm25sip.html

Health and Air Quality

PA DEP Testing Finds Air Quality at Schools Identified in USA Today Report to be Safe

In December 2008, the *USA Today* newspaper ran a series of articles raising public concerns about the ambient air quality near the nation's schools and childcare facilities. The newspaper used data collected from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2005 to analyze exposure to industrial pollution at 128,000 schools across the country. The stories cited five Pennsylvania schools where the newspaper's air quality testing showed elevated levels of carcinogens and or heavy metals. The stories identified 38 other schools in Pennsylvania that the newspaper calculated were located in high pollution zones based on EPA data.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) responded to these articles by monitoring air quality near the identified schools. Results released by DEP this spring indicate that air quality at those facilities is indeed safe. DEP, used federally accepted air quality monitoring protocols located at the identified schools and collected air quality samples over the course of several weeks.

The results of the testing showed that the air quality outside of the identified schools was comparable to the state background levels for carcinogens and heavy metals and was within the federal limits for exposure and cancer risk.



ALERT! is a DVRPC publication.



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