

# ALERT! *September 2010*

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



## Air Quality Regulations

### **US EPA Issues Proposed Rule to Reduce Interstate Transport of Ozone and Fine Particle Pollution**

On July 6, 2010, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a proposed rule to reduce the interstate transport of fine particle pollution (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and ozone precursors. EPA's "transport rule" would limit emissions from power plants that contribute to air pollution in 31 states across the eastern US.

EPA's transport rule addresses sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>) emissions from power plants. SO<sub>2</sub> contributes to the formation of fine particles which can be inhaled deep into lungs, causing respiratory and cardiac disease, as well as premature deaths. NO<sub>x</sub> is a critical ingredient in the formation of ground-level ozone which irritates lung tissue and exacerbates respiratory disease. NO<sub>x</sub> also contributes to PM<sub>2.5</sub> formation.

This proposed rule is intended to replace the 2005 Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR) which had been struck down by federal courts. Many states had relied on the emissions reductions contained in the CAIR to demonstrate how the states would attain the federal health based standards for PM<sub>2.5</sub> and ozone. The federal court decision upheld the implementation of key CAIR components until the EPA proposed a rule to remedy deficiencies identified in the CAIR by the courts. This rule will remedy those deficiencies.

Emissions from power plants can be transported by prevailing winds for hundreds of miles. Air pollution in Pennsylvania can have at least some of its origins from as far away as Alabama. Conversely, air quality issues in New England have origins in emissions from Pennsylvania's power plants.

EPA cites the need to reduce the interstate transport of SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions if states in the eastern US are going to attain the federal PM<sub>2.5</sub> and ozone standards. The proposed transport rule offers a menu of options to reduce emissions ranging from switching fuels used in power generation to installing scrubbers and other emissions control devices. It is anticipated that the costs of improving some older power plants to meet the new standards will result in the decommissioning of some of the facilities where the costs of upgrades do not make economic sense for the



**Monday,  
September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
Philadelphia Diesel  
Difference  
Working Group  
10:00 am**

DVRPC Conference Center  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
6<sup>th</sup> and Race Streets  
Philadelphia, PA

**Friday,  
October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010  
Close of Public Comment  
EPA Transport Rule**

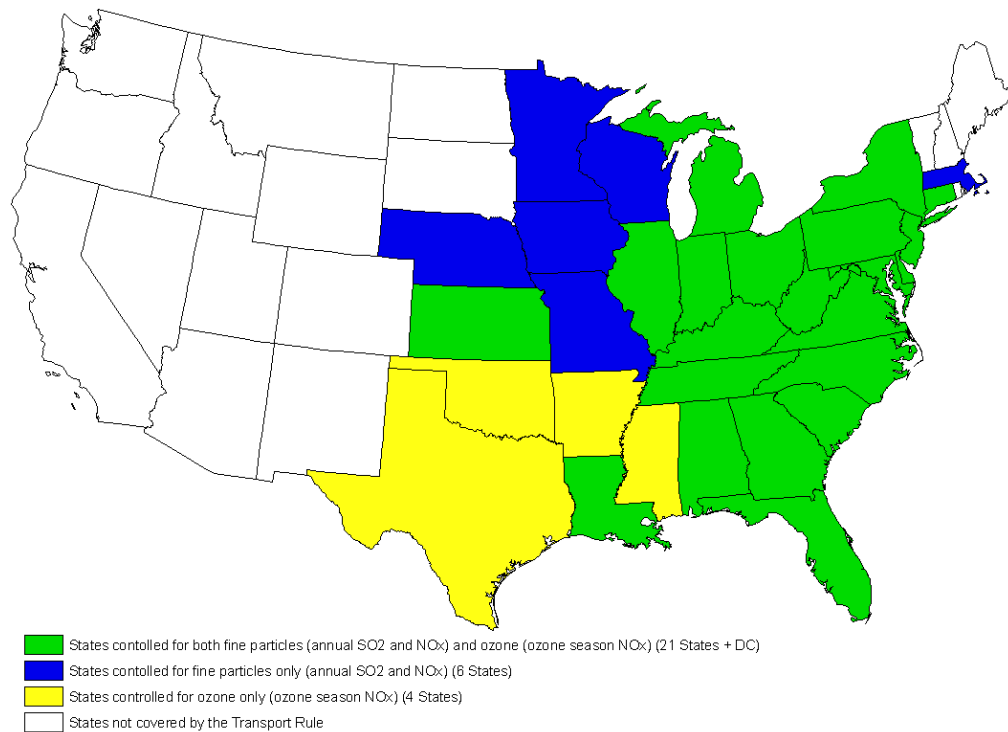
Submit Comments to:  
[a-and-r-docket@epa.gov](mailto:a-and-r-docket@epa.gov)  
Attention Docket ID No.  
EPA-HQ-OAR-2009-0491

owners. EPA estimates that the national costs to energy suppliers to meet these improvements could approach \$2.8 billion annually.

The EPA claims that the main purpose of this rule is focused on protecting human health and that the anticipated health benefits far outweigh the implementation cost. When fully implemented in 2014, the EPA estimates that the proposed transport rule will save between 14,000 and 36,000 lives and between \$120 and \$290 billion in health care costs annually.

Thirty-one states and the District of Columbia will be impacted by the proposed transport rule. Twenty-seven of those states will be required to reduce SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> emissions to reduce annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution, which will also address ozone pollution, while four of the states will be required to reduce summertime NO<sub>x</sub> emissions to address ozone issues. EPA last implemented rules to reduce interstate transport of NO<sub>x</sub> emissions in 2002. That effort, termed the NO<sub>x</sub> SIP Call, has been regarded as being successful in reducing ozone pollution in the eastern US over the last eight years.

The map below shows the states impacted by the EPA's proposed transport rule.



Source: US EPA 2010

The EPA will accept public comment on the proposed transport rule until Friday, October 1, 2010.

For more information on the proposed EPA transport rule please visit:  
<http://www.epa.gov/airtransport/pdfs/FactsheetTR7-6-10.pdf>

ALERT! is a DVRPC publication.	
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