

ALERT! *January 2011*

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



Air Quality Regulations

US EPA Administrator Postpones Final Rulemaking of New 8-Hour Ozone Standard until July 2011

When the Obama Administration took office in 2009, newly appointed Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administrator Lisa Jackson announced that the EPA would review the recently established 2008, 8-hour ozone standard. Administrator Jackson cited the fact that the EPA, under the Bush Administration, disregarded the recommendations of the statutorily-mandated, independent Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC) recommendations when setting the new ozone standard. The 2008 ozone standard was tightened to 75 parts per billion (ppb) of ozone from 84 ppb allowed by the 1997, 8-hour ozone standard. At the time the new standard was being reviewed by the EPA, the CASAC recommended an even stricter ozone standard to better protect human health.

It should be noted that the EPA has been sued by the State of Mississippi and some industry groups over the 75 ppb ozone standard on the basis that the standard is too strict. EPA has also been sued by the state of New York, among others, on the basis that the 75 ppb standard was not protective enough of human health.

In January 2010, the EPA proposed to strengthen both the primary (set to protect human health) and secondary (set to protect human welfare and the environment) 8-hour ozone standard. The proposal would have set the primary ozone standard to between 60 and 70 ppb while developing a new secondary standard that would consider the cumulative impacts of ozone exposure on crops and vegetation.

After collecting public comments for 60-days, the EPA was expected to issue final ozone standards in August 2010. That decision was postponed to December 2010, and now citing a need to gather more input from the scientific community to provide further interpretation of the clinical and epidemiological studies, Administrator Jackson has announced that EPA will set the final ozone rule in July 2011.

This final rule will strengthen the ozone standards and result in EPA designating non-attainment areas that do not meet the new standards. If EPA meets the July 2011 deadline, the non-attainment area designations will be issued, with input from the states, in July 2012. The DVRPC region will most likely be included within a newly designated non-attainment for the 8-hour ozone standard and will thus be required to

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

**Monday,
January 24, 2011
Philadelphia Diesel
Difference
Working Group
10:00 am**

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

**Monday,
January 31, 2011
Sustainable Skylines
Roundtable
10:00 am**

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

continue to demonstrate transportation conformity of the TIPs and Long-range Plan until the region meets all of the federal health based air quality standards.

For more information on the new ozone standards and the on-going debate about the levels of the new standard please visit: www.epa.gov/groundlevelozone/actions



Information

EPA Recognizes SEPTA for its Energy Efficient Headquarters

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) presented SEPTA with an Energy Star label in December 2010 for its headquarters on Market Street in Philadelphia. Only the top 25 percent of all energy efficient buildings nationwide receive this distinction.

SEPTA earned the recognition for numerous energy efficient retrofits it made to its headquarters building which SEPTA bought in 1993. The improvements included installing energy efficient chillers, new electronic controls and lighting, water saving toilets, and a new reflective cool roof. Another energy saving action included switching from nighttime to daytime cleaning allowing managers to close down the building after 6:00 p.m. This change alone decreased running time of non-essential building functions by 24-percent.

SEPTA's headquarters is one of twelve buildings in Philadelphia to receive this recognition in 2010. Philadelphia is among the top 25 metropolitan areas in the U.S. with the largest number of Energy Star designated buildings.

Greater Philadelphia Area Experiences Uncommon Multi-Day Winter Air Quality Alert Episode

Unusually calm winter winds, snow cover on the ground, and smoke from New Year's Eve fireworks contributed to a multi-day episode where particle pollution levels violated the health-based air quality standards. The poor air quality episode took place over the three days from December 30 through January 1.

Beginning on Thursday December 30, a lack of vertical mixing of the air and very calm winds allowed fine particles to accumulate in the air mass over the region. Vertical mixing occurs when cooler air temperatures from the atmosphere sink to the ground-level, displacing the warmer (and less dense) air at ground-level. The snow cover kept ground level air temperatures cool and hindered the vertical mixing. This situation combined with very calm winds which would have typically swept particle pollution through the region, allowed fine particles to accumulate and ultimately reach unhealthy levels. Smoke from New Year's Eve fireworks contributed to the problem as calm weather conditions persisted into Saturday morning.

During these uncommon winter air quality episodes, it is important that people in the region refrain from outdoor burning to reduce particle pollution in the air and to reduce strenuous activities to protect their health from the effects of particle pollution.

<p>ALERT! is a DVRPC publication.</p>	 <p>Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission DVRPC, 8th Floor 190 N. Independence Mall West Philadelphia, PA 19106-1520 Phone 215.592.1800 Fax 215.592.9125 www.dvrpc.org</p>
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