

ALERT! March 2012

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



Air Quality Regulations

U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Begins Hearing on EPA Greenhouse Gas Regulations

On February 28, 2012, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia began hearing arguments that challenge the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) rules to control greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). The court is hearing arguments on four EPA rules including the EPA's "endangerment finding" which states that GHGs endanger public health and welfare, as well as regulations on automobiles, power plants, and factories. The endangerment finding forms the basis that gives the EPA authority to develop other rules to regulate GHGs.

The court challenges are being brought by industry groups including chemical, energy, farming, and mining interests. The EPA is being supported by a number of states including New York, California, and Massachusetts. The automobile industry has also filed a brief in support of the EPA regulations citing that federal regulations on tailpipe emissions would alleviate the burden on the auto industry of a patchwork of state and federal standards.

Challengers to the EPA rules will need to meet a high legal burden to win their case. The plaintiffs would have to show that the EPA acted in an arbitrary or capricious manner or exceeded its legal authority in developing the rules. EPA's legal authority to regulate GHGs was established by a Supreme Court Decision in 2007.

Numerous supporters of EPA's GHG regulations have claimed that the entire U.S. efforts to control GHG emissions hang in the balance of the finding of this court hearing, as Congress is unlikely to pass new regulations regulating GHGs.

The Court of Appeals listened to two days of arguments and a ruling from the Court is expected to take a number of months.

Information for this article was originally reported in the article "EPA Air Rules Head to Court" printed in the Wall Street Journal on February 27, 2012.



**Monday,
March 5, 2012
DVRPC 2012 Competitive
CMAQ Program
Application Period Opens**

For More Information Visit:
www.dvrpc.org/CMAQ

**Monday,
March 19, 2012
Philadelphia Diesel
Difference
Working Group
10:00 AM**

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



Health and Air Quality

Air Pollution Linked to Cognitive Decline in Women

An article published in the February 13, 2012 issue of the *Articles of Internal Medicine* indicates that exposure to particulate air pollution may accelerate cognitive decline in older adult women. The study evaluated both fine and coarse particulate pollution (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ respectively), in relation to cognitive decline in 19,409 women ages 70 to 81 for a 14-year period going back as far as 1988. The women were participants in the Nurse's Health Study conducted by Harvard University, which is one of the nation's largest and longest running investigation into factors impacting women's health.

The study findings report women who were exposed to higher levels of ambient particulate pollution over the long-term experienced more decline in their cognitive functioning over a four-year period. Higher levels of long-term exposure to both PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ were associated with significantly faster cognitive decline. These associations were present at levels of particulate matter (PM) exposure typical in many areas of the United States.

The physical mechanism for the association between PM exposure and cognitive decline is still unknown but the association of exposure to PM and cardiovascular risk is accepted by the medical community. Increased incidence of cardiovascular disease may be playing a role in causing or accelerating cognitive decline.

Authors of this article see the results of their research as additional support for stricter regulations on PM emissions. According to lead researcher, Jennifer Weuve of Rush University Medical Center, "unlike other factors that may be involved in dementia, such as diet and physical activity, air pollution is something we can intervene on as a society as a whole through policy, regulation, and technology".

For more information on this research, please visit:

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/02/120213185121.htm>



Information

DVRPC Announce Funding Opportunity to Improve Air Quality

On Monday March 5, 2012, DVRPC opened a competitive funding round for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program. DVRPC's CMAQ program will make available \$8 million in the DVRPC Pennsylvania counties and \$2.6 million in the DVRPC New Jersey counties for projects that will improve air quality and/or reduce traffic congestion.

CMAQ program application forms and guidance are available at www.dvrpc.org/cmaq. The application period will remain open from March 5, 2012 until May 14, 2012.

<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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