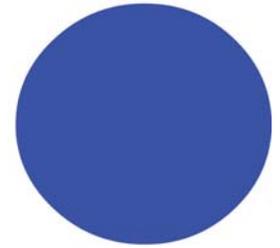


# ALERT! May 2012

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



## Health and Air Quality

### **DVRPC Region Listed in Top 25 Most Ozone and PM<sub>2.5</sub> Polluted Regions in the Country in the American Lung Association's 2012 State of the Air Report.**

The Philadelphia-Camden-Vineland PA-NJ-DE metropolitan region<sup>1</sup> once again was ranked in the top 25 most polluted regions for ozone and fine particles (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) by the American Lung Association (ALA) in their *State of the Air* report released in April 2012. The region was ranked as the 16<sup>th</sup> worst region for ozone pollution, 10<sup>th</sup> for long-term (annual average) fine particle pollution (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and 22<sup>nd</sup> for short term (24-hour average) PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution. The ALA used quality-assured data from the period 2008 to 2010 to develop the 2012 report card on ozone and particle pollution for the nation's cities and counties.

The report also ranks individual counties based on the number of days that air quality reaches unhealthy levels (code orange and above) on the Air Quality Index. Of the eight counties in the DVRPC region that were graded<sup>2</sup>, every county, once again, received an "F" grade for ozone pollution.

Two counties (Chester and Philadelphia) received failing grades for short term PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution but none of the eight counties received failing grades for annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution. Some counties did have inconclusive results for annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> based on a lack of quality-assured data. The ALA used the PM<sub>2.5</sub> daily standard of 35µg/m<sup>3</sup>, adopted in September 2006, and the ozone standard of 75 parts per billion, adopted in March 2008, to determine the unhealthy range for short-term particle pollution and ozone.

The 2012 *State of the Air* report shows some positive trends in the nation's air quality. Of the 25 worst regions for ozone, 22 regions showed significant improvement in ozone levels. The trend was similar for particle pollution with 22 of the 25 worst regions improving in long-term particle pollution levels and 12 of the 25 worst regions improving in short-term particle pollution levels.

For the second year in a row, the Philadelphia region experienced its lowest average ozone levels since the ALA began the *State of the Air* report in 1999. The region also showed improvement in short-term particle pollution levels.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), emissions of the six criteria air pollutants, for which there are ambient air quality standards, dropped by



**Tuesday,  
May 15, 2012  
Pennsylvania FY 2013 TIP,  
Connections Long-Range Plan  
Amendment  
and  
Conformity Public Meeting  
4:00 – 6:00 PM**

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

**Tuesday,  
May 22, 2012  
Connections Long-Range Plan  
Amendment and  
Conformity Public Meeting  
4:00 – 6:00 PM**

Deptford Township Building  
1011 Cooper St.  
Deptford, NJ

59% since the adoption of the Clean Air Act in 1990 even while Gross Domestic Product, vehicle miles travelled, and population grew by 65%, 40%, and 24% over the same time period. These gains can be attributed to better emissions controls on vehicles, diesel engines, and point sources such as industry and power plants.

To view the entire 2012 *State of the Air* report, including grading methodology and statistical analysis, please visit the American Lung Association at [www.stateoftheair.org](http://www.stateoftheair.org)

<sup>1</sup> The Philadelphia-Camden-Vineland PA-NJ-DE-MD metropolitan region includes Philadelphia, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties in PA and Camden, Burlington, Gloucester and Salem Counties in NJ.

<sup>2</sup>Burlington County was not included in the ALA *State of the Air* Report, presumably due to a lack of quality assured data.



## **[Air Quality Regulations](#)**

### **[EPA Issues Rule for Oil and Gas Companies to Capture Emissions from Wells, Pipelines, and Storage Facilities.](#)**

On Wednesday, April 17, 2012, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a final rule requiring oil and gas companies to capture greenhouse gas and toxic emissions from oil and natural gas exploration and drilling. This is the first federal rule to address emissions from the natural gas drilling process known as hydraulic fracturing.

The standards were proposed in 2011, in response to public concerns about the health effects of emissions from the 13,000 new natural gas wells being drilled each year using the hydraulic fracturing method.

The EPA claims that the regulations, set to take effect in 2015, will reduce emissions of volatile organic compounds, a major component of ground level ozone pollution, by 190,000 to 290,000 tons per year and reduce toxic air pollutants, such as benzene and hexane, by as much as 20,000 tons per year. The EPA states that the new standards are flexible and achievable because the emissions control technologies that are required to meet the standards are already in use in states with similar environmental regulations on the oil and natural gas industry.

Industry groups oppose the new federal regulations claiming that the regulations will cost the industry hundreds of millions of dollars to implement and slow the boom in domestic natural gas production. Industry objections to the rule resulted in successfully delaying the implementation of the regulations to allow drillers time to invest in the emissions control equipment.

To view the *New Source Performance Standards and National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants* final rule issued by the EPA on April 18, 2012, please visit: [www.epa.gov/airquality/oilandgas/pdfs/20120417finalrule.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/airquality/oilandgas/pdfs/20120417finalrule.pdf)

ALERT! is a DVRPC publication.



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