

# ALERT! *June 2012*

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



## **Air Quality Regulations**

### **EPA Proposed to Strengthen Fine Particle Pollution Standard**

On June 14, 2012 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed to strengthen the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for fine particle pollution, also known as PM<sub>2.5</sub>.

There are currently two forms of the PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards, an annual standard, which is set at 15 micrograms per cubic meter of air ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) and was established in 1997 and a 24-hour standard which is set at 35  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  and was established in 2006. EPA's proposed action would retain the current 24-hour standard but would revise the annual standard to between 12  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  and 13  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

In addition to revising the Annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard, EPA is proposing to set an additional 24-hour standard to improve

On April 30, 2012 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued the Final Rule designating the nonattainment areas for the 2008, 8-hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS). In March 2008, the EPA lowered the ozone standard from 84 parts per billion (ppb) to 75 ppb. This Final Rule identifies the counties and regions in the nation whose ambient air quality violates the 75 ppb standard.

The EPA has designated the DVRPC region, along with seven other counties in New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland, as the Philadelphia – Wilmington – Atlantic City Ozone Nonattainment Area. This area is geographically identical to the nonattainment area for the 1997 Ozone Standard with the exceptions that Kent County, Delaware is designated as an attainment and Sussex County, Delaware has become its own nonattainment area.

The DVRPC region is designated as a "marginal" nonattainment area. This classification is the lowest level of nonattainment designation given by the EPA. Based on this classification, EPA has given the DVRPC region until December 31, 2015, to attain this standard.

As part of this Final Rule, the EPA has decided to revoke the 1997, 8-hour Ozone NAAQS for transportation conformity purposes. This rule will allow regions, such as the DVRPC region, that were also in nonattainment for the 1997 standard, to demonstrate transportation conformity to the new, more stringent standard only and relieves the states and regions of some administrative requirements associated with the conformity process.



**Monday,  
June 18, 2012  
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

**Tuesday, Wednesday  
August 7-8, 2012  
Northern Transportation &  
Air Quality Summit**

Loews Hotel  
Philadelphia, PA  
Register at: [www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org)

This Final Rule will take effect on July 20, 2012. Non-attainment areas will have until July 2013 to demonstrate transportation conformity of their Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) and Long-range Plans for this new standard. The revocation of the transportation conformity requirement for the 1997 ozone standard will also take effect in July 2013.

DVRPC will demonstrate transportation conformity to the 2008 ozone standard for the FY 2013 Pennsylvania TIP, FY 2012 New Jersey TIP, and *Connections* Long-range Plan in a conformity finding presented to the DVRPC Board for action in June 2012.

*For more information on the 2008 ozone non-attainment area designations, please visit:*  
<http://www.epa.gov/air/ozonepollution/actions.html>

### **EPA Waives Vapor Recovery Requirement for Pumps at Gasoline Service Stations**

Gasoline rich vapors in an empty automobile fuel tank are expelled when liquid fuel is pumped into the tank. In the early 1990's, the Clean Air Act (CAA) required states with serious ozone pollution problems to implement a program that would capture these vapors at the pump. This rule is referred to as the Stage II vapor recovery program. This program was required to be written into state air quality implementation plans for twelve northeastern states, including Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

As part of the Stage II Rule, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), compelled automakers to phase in on-board vapor recovery systems (OBVR) that would capture these gasoline vapors before they reached the pump nozzle during refueling. All model year cars 2006 and later are equipped with OBVR systems.

Because of the wide-spread use of OBVR systems, the EPA ruled in May 2012, that the Stage II program is becoming less effective and the program will no longer be a federal requirement in those areas where it was previously implemented.

States that have implemented Stage II vapor recovery programs may now seek EPA approval for gasoline service stations to begin to remove their Stage II vapor recovery systems. The states are not obligated to revoke their Stage II programs.

The EPA estimates that the decommissioning of these systems, and the associated operating costs, could save station operators over \$91 million each year.

*For more information on the waiver of the Stage II vapor recovery requirements, please visit:* <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg>



### **Information**

#### **APTA Reports Transit Ridership Up Almost 5% Over First Quarter in 2011**

On June 4, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) published its transit ridership report for the first quarter of 2012 and the results are encouraging.

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The report indicates that nationally, transit ridership is up almost 5%, when considering all modes (bus, heavy and light rail, trolley, etc.) compared to the first quarter of 2011. Local agencies reflect similar growth with SEPTA reporting a 3.48% growth across the system, PATCO reporting 4.67% growth, and NJT reporting 7% growth.

APTA president Michael Melaniphy credits rising gas prices and a recovering economy for the increase in ridership.

*To view the complete set of statistics on 2011 public transit ridership, please visit:*  
<http://www.apta.com>

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