

# Alert

dvrpc

March 2013

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



## Air Quality Regulations

### US EPA Proposes Rule Requiring Reduction of Sulfur Content in Gasoline

The federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is currently reviewing a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed rule that would reduce the amount of sulfur produced by gasoline from 30 parts per million (ppm) to 10 ppm. According to the EPA, the regulation, known as the Tier 3 Fuel Standard, would not only reduce sulfur emissions, which contribute to fine particle pollution or PM<sub>2.5</sub>, but will also result in significant reductions in nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and carbon monoxide (CO). VOCs and NO<sub>x</sub> are the major constituents of ozone and CO is a toxic gas in its own right.

The Tier 3 Fuel Standards would require oil refineries to install equipment that would reduce the sulfur content of the gasoline. Reduction of the other gases would be coincidental to the processes that reduce sulfur emissions. Reduced sulfur content in fuel allows for catalytic converters in vehicles to work more effectively by reducing sulfur build-up in the converter which interferes with emissions reductions. It is expected that the combination of sulfur removal from the fuel and co-benefits to emissions controls on vehicles will result in NO<sub>x</sub> emissions being reduced by 29%, VOC emissions by 26% and CO emissions by 38%. This translates into NO<sub>x</sub> reductions of 29 tons per day in Pennsylvania and 18 tons per day in New Jersey (EPA estimates) by 2017. These improvements are expected to reduce ozone and PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution in regions not meeting the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and help the American public realize \$5 to \$6 billion in health care costs, caused by air pollution, by 2020.

The EPA estimates that implementation of the rule will cost oil refineries \$0.01 per gallon of gasoline to meet the new standard. These costs are expected to be offset by the health care benefits, and jobs created by the manufacturing, installation, and maintenance of the emissions control technologies. A national low-sulfur fuel standard would also harmonize fuel requirements between California, which currently requires sulfur content of gasoline to meet a 15 ppm standard, and the rest of the nation.

The Tier 3 Fuel Standard Rule is facing opposition from the petroleum industry and senators from oil producing states, but is being supported and promoted by senators and governors of states in the northeast and western United States that suffer from the nation's worst air pollution problems.

Proponents of the Tier 3 Fuel Standard claim that the rule is a necessary tool to help states meet and maintain the NAAQS for ozone and PM<sub>2.5</sub> and protect public health from air pollution. The EPA contends that the Tier 3



## Save the Date

Monday,  
March 25, 2013

Philadelphia Diesel  
Difference Working Group  
10:00 am  
Location of Meeting:  
DVRPC Conference Center  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
6<sup>th</sup> and Race Streets  
Philadelphia, PA

Saturday,  
April 20, 2013

Clean Air Council 5K for  
Clean Air  
Location of Event  
Martin Luther King Dr.  
(behind the Philadelphia  
Museum of Art)

Register at:  
[www5krunforcleanair.org](http://www5krunforcleanair.org)

Fuel Standard is an exceptionally cost effective way to reduce emissions from the transportation sector and could be a critical tool in helping non-attainment areas meet and maintain current and emerging air quality standards.

It is anticipated that the OMB will finalize its review of the Tier 3 Fuel Standards in March 2013, opening the possibility of EPA finalizing the rule by the end of 2013.

For more information on EPA's Tier 3 Fuel Standard, please visit: [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

## Transportation and Air Quality

### EPA and DOE Release Fuel Economy Guide for Model Year 2013 Vehicles

In December 2012, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released the 2013 Fuel Economy Guide. The 2013 version of the guide includes standard information on the fuel economy and environmental impact of each vehicle as well as a "second" top-ten list of fuel efficient vehicles that identifies the most fuel efficient diesel and gasoline powered vehicles. Previous guides included lists of the most fuel efficient vehicles, but these lists were often led by hybrid and electric vehicles, which may be priced above the reach of the average consumer. The second top-ten list allows consumers more conventional options to consider when purchasing a new vehicle.

The agencies have published the 2013 guide on the web at [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov). The online version of the guide allows consumers to enter local gasoline prices and typical driving habits to receive personalized fuel cost estimates as well as a greenhouse gas rating for each model.

According to the EPA, this guide is designed to provide a useful tool for consumers to consider operating costs and environmental impacts of a new car purchase and supports the Obama Administration's goal of fostering a new generation of clean, fuel efficient American vehicles.

To view the 2013 Fuel Economy Guide, please visit: [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov).

## Information

### Every Tree Matters in Reducing Greenhouses Gases

 "Every little bit matters" according to Cornell University Ecology Professor Timothy Fahey. Fahey contends that forests in the northeastern United States are counteracting a considerable amount of fossil fuel burning by cars, slowing down the rate at which carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is accumulating in the atmosphere.

The benefits vary with the age of the tree and species, and many fast growing species sequester more CO<sub>2</sub> earlier in their life cycle, but Fahey calculates that a single acre oak woodlot could sequester up to 30,000 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, or the equivalent of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 2.7 model year 2007 cars.

When considering the additional benefits of planting trees for removing other air pollutants, providing cooling and shade, and the simple aesthetics, planting trees this spring is a simple way to improve local communities and the environment.

For more information on selecting the right tree for your lawn or community please visit: [www.patrees.org](http://www.patrees.org).



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