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dvrpc | September 2014

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



Air Quality Regulations

U.S. EPA Submits Progress Report on Reducing Hazardous Air Pollutants to Congress

On August 22, 2014, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) submitted the final of two reports produced to inform Congress of progress in reducing public health risks from toxic air pollutants, also known as hazardous air pollutants (HAPs). The report was a requirement of the amendments to the Clean Air Act in 1990 and used national emissions and air quality data to demonstrate the positive effects of numerous EPA initiatives to reduce toxic air pollution between 1990 and 2012.

The *Second Integrated Urban Air Toxics* report claimed significant reductions, including a 66 percent reduction in benzene emissions, 60 percent reduction in mercury emissions, and an 84 percent reduction in airborne lead. Progress includes the reduction of approximately 3 million tons per year of criteria pollutants, such as fine particle pollution (PM_{2.5}) and sulfur dioxide, from mobile sources (cars and trucks), as a co-benefit to programs aimed at reducing HAPs.

EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy expressed pride in the progress recorded in the report, citing that these gains in air quality were accomplished while economic activity nearly tripled over the same time frame. Ms. McCarthy reiterated EPA's commitment to "the pursuit of environmental justice – striving for clean air, water, and healthy land for every American" and to reducing the remaining health risks from pollution, particularly in overburdened communities.

Recent regulations enacted by the EPA will continue to reduce HAPs as the regulations enter progressive implementation stages. The 2011 *Mercury and Air Toxic Standards*, proposed *National Emissions Standards for Petroleum Refineries*, as well as new fuel and engine requirements for highway and nonroad vehicles are anticipated to maintain recent trends in the reductions of toxic air pollutants.

The report concludes by identifying challenges to the current EPA air toxics program which include improving monitoring and data collection on the various types of HAPs, improving monitoring technology, updating studies on the impacts of toxic air pollution on public health, better integration of HAP reductions in voluntary programs, and new regulatory tools to address emissions categories that pose significant health risks.

To view and download the *Second Integrated Urban Air Toxics* report, please visit: <http://www2.epa.gov/urban-air-toxics/second-integrated-urban-air-toxics-report-congress/>



Save the Date

**Monday,
September 22, 2014**

**Philadelphia Diesel
Difference Working Group
10:00 am – 12:00 pm**

*Location of Meeting:
DVRPC Main
Conference Room
8th Floor
190 N. Independence Mall W.
Philadelphia, PA*

**Wednesday,
September 24, 2014**

**"Post Disaster Recovery in a
Changing Climate"
3:45 – 5:30 pm**

*Location of Meeting:
Chester County Planning
Commission Offices
601 Westtown Road
West Chester, PA*



Health and Air Quality

MIT Study Shows Significant Health Benefits to Policies Aimed at Cutting Carbon Emissions

A study published by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in August 2014, quantified the health care cost benefits of three U.S. government policies aimed at reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. The study points out that the health benefits of these policies arise from the co-reduction of pollutants that lead to the formation of ground-level ozone and fine particle pollution and not directly from reductions in CO₂ emissions. According to lead author Dr. Noelle Selin, “policies aimed at cutting carbon emissions improve air quality by a similar amount as policies specifically targeting air pollution”.

The researchers considered three policies designed to resemble government strategies to reduce carbon emissions. The policies were a clean energy standard, transportation policy that included rigid fuel economy standards, and a carbon cap and trade program. The researchers then modeled the economic, air quality, and subsequent health care cost impacts of the three policies to determine the relative cost benefits of each of the proposed programs. Policy costs included the economic costs of implementation and impacts on economic activity, while health care costs included costs associated with treating the impacts of air pollution and lost work days due to air pollution influenced illnesses. The link between these cost estimates is the air pollution avoided by emissions reduction strategies from the various regulated sources.

The scientists reported wide variation in the relative costs and benefits of the three policies. All three policies had similar benefits in both CO₂ and pollution emissions reductions but the costs to implement the policies were significantly different. The differences in the implementation costs led researchers to conclude that the transportation policy would result in healthcare savings that were approximately 25 percent of the cost to implement the policy, while the cap and trade program resulted in health care savings that were almost 11 times the cost to implement a cap and trade program. The clean energy policy accrued health care benefits slightly higher than the implementation costs, according to the study’s authors.

Dr. Selin cautions that the current proposals to cut carbon emissions are only a first step. She notes that current carbon cutting proposals are not sufficient to curb climate change in the long term and that pollution-related benefits decline as carbon policies become more stringent. The study does however give regulators and policy makers more data to consider when adopting strategies to reduce carbon emissions and air pollution.

For more information on MIT research on the co-benefits of carbon reduction strategies, please visit: <http://newsoffice.mit.edu/2014/cutting-carbon-health-care-savings-0824>.



Transportation and Air Quality

PA DEP Announces Third Round of Natural Gas Vehicle Grants

On September 2, 2014, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection announced that the third round of Natural Gas Vehicle grants opened on Saturday, Aug. 30 and will provide an estimated \$6 million to help pay for the incremental purchase and conversion costs of heavy-duty natural gas fleet vehicles.

The funding is open to non-profit organizations, local transportation organizations, state owned or state related universities, commonwealth or municipal authorities, for-profit companies, and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission. Applications are due by 4 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 14, 2014.

For more information and to download the grant forms, please visit: www.dep.state.pa.us.



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