

Alert

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



Air Quality Regulations

US EPA to Host National Discussion on Impacts of Background Ozone Levels on the Implementation of 2015 Ozone NAAQS

In December, 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that the agency will be holding two workshops in February, 2016 to discuss the impacts of background ozone levels on states' ability to meet the new 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ozone. The first workshop, to be held on February 24, will be targeted at state and local air quality agencies, and the second, to be held on February 25, will be open to all interested stakeholders.

The purpose of the meetings, which will be held in Phoenix, Arizona, is to provide the EPA with feedback on procedures to address implementation challenges that result from elevated background levels of ozone. Many states, particularly in the Mountain West, maintain that background levels of ozone will prevent them from attaining the 2015 ozone NAAQS of 70 parts per billion (ppb).

The EPA released a white paper on background levels of ozone to accompany the workshop announcement. The purpose of the white paper is to define "background levels" of ozone, identify states and counties that may experience periodic episodes of high background levels of ozone, and present mechanisms that are available in the Clean Air Act for states to use to address instances where background levels of ozone prevented or inhibited states and counties from demonstrating attainment of the NAAQS.

The EPA narrowly defines the United States Background (USB) ozone levels as any ozone formed from sources or processes *other than* U.S. manmade emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x), Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), methane (CH₄), or carbon monoxide (CO). Therefore, USB will include ozone sources from things such as wildfires, foreign sources of emissions, and stratospheric intrusions, where naturally occurring ozone from the stratosphere can actually be transported to ground level. Stratospheric intrusions most frequently happen at high altitudes in the Mountain West.

Interstate and intrastate transport of ozone forming pollutants are not considered background levels of ozone, even though the sources of these emissions may be well beyond the control of the state and local air agencies that are impacted by elevated ozone levels.

According to the white paper, the EPA feels that mechanisms included in the Clean Air Act that allow air agencies to account for extraordinary events in periodic violations of the NAAQS and discount monitor



Save the Date

Tuesday,
January 19, 2016

**Air Quality Partnership
Board
2:00 pm**

*Location of Meeting:
DVRPC - New Jersey Room
8th Floor
6th and Race Streets
Philadelphia, PA*

Thursday,
January 21, 2016

**DVRPC 2016 Competitive
CMAQ Program
for Pennsylvania
Application Period Opens**

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

readings on those days are sufficient to address the USB. The EPA also points out that other regulatory efforts are addressing interstate and intrastate pollution transport and that those efforts are making progress towards helping downwind states attain the NAAQS.

In the white paper, the EPA identifies the Mountain West (Colorado, Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico) as the region of the country with the highest USB, while the eastern U.S. has the lowest. The paper contains tables that identify each county in the country that does not meet the 2015 ozone NAAQS and includes data on the fraction of the monitor's design value that is attributable to interstate transport of pollutants and in-state sources of ozone precursors. The paper indicates that for air quality monitors in the DVRPC region, interstate transport of ozone precursors is the largest source of ozone pollution contributing to the region's nonattainment of the ozone NAAQS.

While separate issues, the EPA's efforts to address the USB's impact on attainment of the 2015 NAAQS for ozone in the Mountain West underscores the importance of controlling interstate transport of pollutants to assist all states, especially those downwind of aging power plants, in attaining the new more stringent ozone standards.

For more information on background ozone levels and the EPA workshops, please visit: www3.epa.gov/ozonepollution/registration.html



Air Quality Information

DVRPC Announces \$20 Million Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Funding Round for Pennsylvania

On Thursday, January 21, 2016, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) will open a competitive funding round for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program. DVRPC's CMAQ Program will make available \$20 million in the DVRPC Pennsylvania counties of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia, for projects that will improve air quality and/or reduce traffic congestion.

The CMAQ program is a source of federal transportation funds that is dedicated to projects that show quantifiable benefits to air quality in regions that do not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Diverse project types, such as traffic operations improvements, transit improvements, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and even vehicle replacements and retrofits are eligible for funding, but all projects must result in a reduction of transportation related emissions.

Public agencies and private-public partnerships with a public agency sponsor are eligible to apply for the CMAQ competitive program funds. All potential applicants are expected to discuss their project with their county representatives or the appropriate PennDOT District 6-0 staff in order to coordinate potential transportation improvements.

CMAQ program application forms and program guidance will be available at www.dvrpc.org/cmaq. The application period will remain open from January 21, 2016 until 5 p.m. on April 21, 2016. All applicants will be expected to attend a mandatory information session on Tuesday, February 23, 2016 at 4:00 PM at the DVRPC Offices at 190 N. Independence Mall West, 8th floor, Philadelphia, PA 19106.

For more information on DVRPC's CMAQ program, please visit: www.dvrpc.org/cmaq or contact Sean Greene at sgreene@dvrpc.org.



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