

Alert

dvrpc | June 2016

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



Air Quality Regulations

Pennsylvania Expands Fine Particle Pollution Monitoring Network

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has launched an unprecedented expansion of the state's fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) ambient air monitoring network to ensure human health is protected in rural Pennsylvania.

"We have heard citizens of this commonwealth express concerns about air quality in areas near natural gas activities," said former DEP Secretary John Quigley. "With this expansion, we can better assess the ambient air in the natural gas regions."

"Focusing on the regions with significant numbers of natural gas compressor stations, we're installing continuous PM_{2.5} samplers in under-monitored areas of the state," said Quigley. "We simply don't have data on air quality in these areas. We need that data and monitoring capability to help us understand whether or not there are risks or impacts to public health from current air quality in these areas."

By the fall of 2017, DEP will expand its existing PM_{2.5} air monitoring network of 27 monitoring sites by adding continuous PM_{2.5} samplers in 10 northern tier and southwestern counties. In addition, health departments in Philadelphia and Allegheny counties operate PM_{2.5} samplers at 15 monitoring sites, including seven PM_{2.5} monitors operated by Philadelphia Air Management Services, and eight PM_{2.5} sensors operated by the Allegheny County Health Department.

As part of DEP's expansion of the network, continuous PM_{2.5} monitors recently installed at existing sites in Greene (Holbrook Township) and Bradford (Towanda Township) counties became operational last month. DEP intends to install PM_{2.5} monitors in Fayette, Indiana, Lycoming, Susquehanna, and Wyoming, counties by the end of 2016. Monitors will also be installed in Clarion, Jefferson, and McKean counties by the fall of 2017.

The estimated total cost of the project including the purchase, installation, and maintenance of the additional PM_{2.5} monitors, and the cost of replacement equipment over a five-year period is approximately \$1.56 Million. Federal Clean Air Act grant funds received by DEP under the PM_{2.5}



Save the Date

**Tuesday,
June 21 2016**

**Public Meeting: FY 2017 PA
TIP, Connections 2040 Long-
Range Plan Amendment,
and Conformity
Determination for TIPs and
Plan**

4:00 – 6:00 pm

*Location of Meeting:
DVRPC Conference Center
8th Floor*

**Tuesday and Wednesday,
August 30-31, 2016**

**Northeastern Transportation
and Air Quality Summit**

*Location of Meeting:
Baltimore Metropolitan Area
Council Offices
Baltimore, MD*

*For more information please
contact Kevin Black at:
Kevin.Black@dot.gov*

Air Monitoring Network Grant will help defray the cost of Pennsylvania's expanded air monitoring network.

Fine particulate pollution, including nitrates and sulfates, organic chemicals, metals, soils, or dust, are the result of a wide range of industrial processes and fuel combustion, including emissions caused by logging, agriculture, natural gas development and transmission, and vehicles. The human health impacts from accumulation in the respiratory system include decreased lung function, and increased respiratory symptoms and disease. Young children, the elderly, and those with respiratory problems including asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis, are especially vulnerable to the effects of particle pollution.

The PM_{2.5} ambient air monitoring data will be available to the general public via the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) "AIRNOW" system. This data will also be posted on the EPA and DEP websites.



Air Quality Partnership

May is the Beginning of Ozone Season in the Greater Philadelphia Region

As warmer weather approaches, so does the onset of higher levels of ground-level ozone. High levels of ozone pose health risks for everyone, and large segments of the population, such as the very young, the elderly, and people with breathing disorders, are considered especially sensitive to air pollution. Fortunately, ozone concentrations are monitored and the public can be alerted when levels become unhealthy. The Air Quality Partnership (AQP), a program of DVRPC, educates residents about the dangerous effects of ground-level ozone and provides air quality forecasts to the public.

Air Quality Awareness Week (May 2-6) marked the start of the ozone season, which runs through September. Currently, Greater Philadelphia does not meet the federal air quality standards for ground-level ozone. In the summer, sunlight and high temperatures "bake" pollutants emitted by motor vehicles, power plants, and other sources, to form high levels of ground-level ozone, commonly known as smog.

The region has already experienced the first Air Quality Action Days (days when ozone or fine particle levels are forecast to violate the federal health based standards) on May 25, and 26. The AQP encourages actions to reduce air pollution every day but especially on days when air pollution is expected to be high.

These actions are simple ways everyone can improve air quality in the region:

- Take transit or rideshare.
- Don't top off your gas tank. Spillage adds two tons of pollution to the air each day.
- Refuel at the end of the day. Ozone levels are highest in mid- to late-afternoon.
- Be sure to clean out your trunk, since an extra 100 pounds reduces gas mileage by up to 2% and wastes fuel.
- Trip-link when possible. Combining errands with your daily commute will save time, money, and the environment.
- Follow regular maintenance schedules for your car. A properly running vehicle emits less pollution and saves gas.
 - Check your owner's manual and properly inflate your tires. Properly inflated tires can improve your gas mileage up to 3.3%.
 - When changing your oil, use a manufacturer-recommended grade motor oil to improve fuel economy by 1-2%.

To view the daily forecast or sign up for air quality alerts, please visit www.airqualitypartnership.org.



DVRPC, 8th Floor
190 N. Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1520
Phone: 215.592.1800 | Fax: 215.592.9125 | Web: www.dvrpc.org