Air Quality Information

PA DEP Releases Draft Mitigation Plan for Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust

Pennsylvania has been allocated over $118 million in the federal Consent Decrees to mitigate environmental damage done by Volkswagen, model year 2009-2016, 2.0 and 3.0 liter engine, diesel vehicles that were equipped with emissions "cheat" devices and sold in the Commonwealth. The amount of money allocated to Pennsylvania is based on the percentage of unlawful Volkswagen vehicles registered in the state compared to the number registered nationally. Following the court ordered procedures to receive mitigation funds, and once the Trust Effective Date is established, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will apply to become certified by the court-appointed Trustee as the official state agency that will receive and distribute funding from the Environmental Mitigation Trust (Mitigation Trust).

On May 20, DEP released a Draft Beneficiary Mitigation Plan that provides an overview of how Pennsylvania will distribute its portion of the trust fund. DEP will accept public comment on the Beneficiary Mitigation Plan until July 5, 2017. In general terms, the Mitigation Plan outlines how DEP will receive proposals for projects and rate the projects on established and publicized criteria, such as cost effectiveness, emission reductions, and the air quality where the project is located. DEP will grade project applications and identify the best eligible projects. Once DEP identifies eligible projects that it intends to fund, the agency will then apply to the Mitigation Fund Trustee for approval to fund those projects.

In its plan, Pennsylvania identifies the following eligible project types for funding under the Mitigation Trust:

On-Road Fleet Projects (Proposed 20-40% of funding)
- Class 8 Local Trucks and Port Drayage Trucks
- Class 4-8 School Bus, Shuttle Bus, or Transit Bus
- Class 4-7 Local Freight Trucks

Non-Road/Off-Road Fleet Projects (Proposed 35-55% of funding)
- Railroad Freight Switcher Locomotives
- Ferries/Tugs
- Ocean Going Vessels Shorepower
- Airport Ground Support Equipment
- Forklifts

Diesel Emissions Reduction Act Eligible (DERA) Projects (Proposed 0-20% of funding)

Light-Duty Zero Emission Vehicle Supply Equipment (Proposed 15% of funding)

DEP has posted the Draft Beneficiary Mitigation Plan, a webinar detailing the agency's strategies and goals, along with other important and informational documents associated with the Mitigation Trust at: http://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Air/Volkswagen/Pages/Environmental-Mitigation-Trust-Agreement.aspx

DEP will be holding public listening sessions across the state through the month of June. The listening session in the southeast region is scheduled for June 13 in Norristown. Dates, times, and locations of these meetings are posted on the webpage listed above.

Many of the activities and procedures for distributing the Volkswagen Mitigation Trust cannot proceed until the Trust Effective Date is established between the Trustee and the federal government. This has not occurred as of June 6, 2017. DVRPC will continue to follow this topic and coordinate with our planning partners.

University of Texas, Google, Environmental Defense Fund, and Aclima Inc. Develop Method to Map Neighborhood Level Air Pollution

Engineering researchers at the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin) have developed the most detailed and extensive local map of air pollution ever produced for an urban area, using specially equipped Google Street View cars to measure air quality on a block-by-block basis. This new hyper-local mobile approach to measuring air quality, which reveals that air pollution can vary dramatically even within a single city block, could address major air quality monitoring gaps worldwide.

By integrating Aclima's sensor system into Google Street View cars, the team mapped air pollution in 78 square miles of Oakland, California, over an entire year, collecting one of the largest data sets of air pollution ever measured of single city streets. This new technique maps urban air pollution at 100,000 times greater spatial resolution than is possible with traditional government air quality monitors. Their approach and findings were published on June 5, 2017 in the journal *Environmental Science & Technology.*

The team believes that their hyper-local mobile measurement system could be implemented in many cities throughout the world, providing detailed air quality information for citizens, families, local governments, and scientists. The new technique could address major air quality monitoring gaps worldwide and has the potential to transform the way air pollution is monitored in urban areas as well as shed light on the health effects on city dwellers.

Air pollution is a major global risk factor for illness and death, and the air pollution that people are breathing can be, at times, far worse than what official air quality monitors report. Most large urban areas have only one air quality monitor for every 100 to 200 square miles. In comparison, the UT Austin team's mobile approach maps air pollution every 100 feet, or at about four to five locations along a single city block.

This project is the latest phase of a partnership between EDF and Google, who have been working together since 2012 to map and measure a growing list of health and environmental risks, including hidden leaks from local natural gas systems.

The study's approach was designed to be cost-effective and easily replicated. For instance, research partner Aclima designed pollution sensing systems that made it straightforward to collect high-quality air pollution data on moving vehicles day after day. Driving more than 14,000 miles, the Google cars collected 3 million measurements of nitric oxide, nitrogen dioxide, and black carbon pollutants in Oakland, generating the largest urban air quality data set of its kind.

For more information on the air pollution mapping study, please visit: www.utexas.edu/google-air-mapping/ .