

Alert

dvrpc

February 2020

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



Air Quality Regulations

Trump Administration Considers Compromise on Proposed CAFÉ Standards.

In 2018, the US Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the Trump administration's replacement for Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards. The Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient (SAFE) Vehicles Rule proposed to freeze the overall industry fuel-economy average for vehicle model years 2021-2026 at 37 miles per gallon (mpg), as opposed to the 46.7 mpg standard under current rules finalized by the Obama administration in 2012.

In November 2019, the Wall Street Journal reported that the Trump administration is considering a plan to revise this proposal and increase fleetwide fuel efficiency by 1.5% per year, which is still well below the 5% reductions in the current CAFE rules but avoids the freezing of standards, which has been highly controversial.

Under the Clean Air Act, California has a waiver that allows the state to require more stringent emissions standards than the federal government in order to address that state's chronic air pollution problem. Since California, and the 15 other states that adopt California's emission rules represent over 40% of the US automobile market, separate emissions standards for California and the rest of the nation pose a challenge for automakers to meet separate regulations. The Trump administration's SAFE Vehicle Rule also proposed to revoke California's Clean Air Act Waiver in an attempt to enforce the freeze on CAFÉ standards across the nation.

California, supported by 22 other states and the District of Columbia, has filed suit to block the rescission of the Clean Air Act waiver and signed an agreement with Ford, BMW, Volkswagen, and Honda to increase fuel efficiency from those automakers' vehicles by 3.7% per year.

The SAFE vehicles rule is not expected to be finalized until later this year due to reported problems with the EPA's ability to replicate the original cost-benefit analysis used to create the rule.

In comments in October 2019, US EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler suggested that the final rule would be more restrictive than the proposed freeze in response to concerns from automakers, who are largely requesting annual increases in emissions reductions, but at a more manageable level than the Obama-era rule requires.

The uncertainty created by this new rule and the California Clean Air Act litigation comes at a time when automakers are planning and designing the affected model year vehicles under the current and proposed CAFÉ standards. The details of the final SAFE Vehicles Rules will not be published until the Office of



Save the Date

Wednesday

February 26, 2020

**Application Deadline for
US EPA Diesel Emissions
Reduction Act grant**

**For information on the grant program, please visit:
<https://www.epa.gov/clean-diesel/clean-diesel-national-grants>**

Monday

February 24, 2020

**Air Quality Partnership
Board meeting
10:00 am – 12:00 pm**

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

Management and Budget finalizes its analysis of the rule but this rule will not resolve the court case involving the revocation of California's Clean Air Act Waiver.

For a more detailed explanation of the proposed SAFE Vehicle Rule and its implications, please visit: www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/11/5/20942457/california-trump-fuel-economy-auto-industry



Air Quality News

PA DEP Accepting Applications For Clean Transportation Grants

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is now accepting applications for clean transportation grants for the Clean Diesel, Marine and Rail Freight Movers, and the Corridor Refueling Infrastructure programs under the Driving PA Forward Initiative.

Clean Diesel Program

DEP has \$2.6 million in funding available for the PA State Clean Diesel Grant Program to support projects that will replace or retrofit fleet diesel-powered highway and nonroad vehicles, engines, and equipment. The deadline for applications is March 6, 2020.

Eligible applicants include school districts, municipal authorities, political subdivisions, State agencies, nonprofit entities, corporations, limited liability companies or partnerships incorporated or registered in the Commonwealth, air quality or transportation organizations, and metropolitan or rural planning organizations.

Corridor Refueling Infrastructure Grants

DEP has approximately \$1 million in funding available for the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act Corridor Refueling Infrastructure Grant Program to support projects to install public refueling infrastructure along the highway corridors in the Commonwealth designated as alternative fuel corridors by the federal FAST Act.

The deadline for applications is March 24, 2020. Individual project awards will be capped at \$500,000.

Eligible applicants and projects include municipal authorities, political subdivisions, nonprofit entities, corporations and limited liability companies, or partnerships incorporated or registered in the Commonwealth to install public-use electric, hydrogen, propane, and compressed natural gas refueling infrastructure.

The infrastructure must support public vehicles seeking to undertake alternative fuel refueling including, electric vehicle charging or hydrogen, propane, or compressed natural gas refueling.

Marine & Rail Freight Movers

DEP has \$10 million in funding available for the Marine and Rail Freight Movers Grant Program to support projects to repower or replace diesel-powered freight switcher locomotives and diesel-powered marine engines in ferries or tugboats.

The deadline for applications is June 5, 2020.

Public and private entities that own or operate eligible freight switcher locomotives, ferries or tugboats (towboats) throughout the Commonwealth should apply.

These entities include school districts, municipal authorities, political subdivisions, State agencies, nonprofit entities, corporations, limited liability companies or partnerships incorporated or registered in the Commonwealth, air quality or transportation organizations, and metropolitan or rural planning organizations.

For more information on these grant programs and scheduled webinars on how to apply, please visit: www.depgis.state.pa.us/DrivingPAForward/



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