

# A!ert

dvrpc

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



## Air Quality Regulations

### Governor Murphy Signs Law Requiring All Municipalities in New Jersey to Prepare for Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

On July 9, 2021, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy signed a law that requires all of the 565 municipalities in New Jersey to adopt a model ordinance that will facilitate the installation of Electric Vehicle Service Equipment (EVSE) or charging stations in new construction in the state. The law requires that EVSE and Make-Ready parking spaces be designated as a permitted accessory use in all zoning or use districts and establishes associated installation and parking requirements related to EVSE.

The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) published a statewide model ordinance on September 1, 2021. The model ordinance details the requirements to prepare for the installation of EVSE and includes parking requirements detailed in the bill. The ordinance also addresses sightline and setback requirements and other health- and safety-related specifications ("Reasonable Standards") for EVSE and Make-Ready parking spaces.

The model statewide ordinance is mandatory and became effective in all municipalities on September 1. Municipalities are allowed to make changes to the "Reasonable Standards" portion of the ordinance through the normal ordinance amendment process but may not change the parts of the ordinance that were required by the legislation (installation and parking requirements). For municipalities with existing Electric Vehicle (EV) ordinances, the statewide ordinance will supersede those requirements. The model statewide ordinance will enable EV adoption among residents who can't charge at home and will alleviate "range anxiety" by increasing the proximity of charging infrastructure and giving residents the confidence to drive electric.

"New Jersey municipalities are on the front lines of the climate crisis, both in responding to its impacts and leading the charge to reduce their contribution to greenhouse gas emissions," said Lt. Governor and DCA Commissioner Sheila Oliver. "This statewide municipal ordinance provides them with consistent guidance on how to make those changes in the most efficient and cost-effective way and is a big step toward ensuring that our communities are ready for a carbon-neutral future."

Electrifying New Jersey's transportation sector is critical to achieving the Murphy Administration's climate goals, including a transformation to 100 percent clean energy and an 80 percent reduction in the state's greenhouse gas emissions relative to 2006 levels. This model ordinance is a part of a multi-pronged strategy initiated by the Murphy administration to expand EV adoption in the state.



## Save the Date

**Applications Being Accepted Ongoing**

***It Pays to Plug-In Grant Program for Workplace Electric Vehicle Charging Stations in New Jersey***

**For more information, please visit:**

[drivegreen.nj.gov](https://drivegreen.nj.gov)

**Friday  
December 17, 2021**

**Deadline for Applications:  
Pennsylvania DEP Alternative Fuel Incentive Grant**

**For more information, please visit:**

[www.dep.pa.gov](https://www.dep.pa.gov)  
and search "AFIG"

These strategies include electrifying the state's fleet of vehicles and providing grants and rebates for local governments, businesses, and private citizens to purchase EVs and install ESVE.

For more information on New Jersey's efforts to electrify the transportation sector, please visit: [www.drivegreen.nj.gov](http://www.drivegreen.nj.gov).



## Air Quality News

### Study Shows Western Wildfires Contribute to Higher Rates of Covid-19 Infections

Evidence for connections between climate change, air pollution, and poor health outcomes continues to grow. It is commonly accepted hypothesis that air pollution impairs lung function and the lungs' ability to respond to infection resulting in more severe lung infections, but recent research has shown that increased exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution from wildfires impairs people's ability to resist infection and resulted in higher incidences of Covid-19 infection rates.

In August, 2021, Researchers from Harvard University published a paper in the journal *Environmental Advances*, linking elevated fine particle pollution (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) levels caused by wildfires in the western United States with increased infection rates of Covid-19.

The Harvard researchers used satellite data of smoke plumes from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to identify the locations and days affected by wildfires. They paired those readings with PM<sub>2.5</sub> data from ground-level air quality monitors in each of the affected counties with Covid-19 cases and death rates from data compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Their statistical model accounted for other factors such as weather and the amount of time people were at home. They included a four-week lag to capture the virus's incubation period as well as the additional time it can take for infected people's health to deteriorate.

The study included reported infections, not just deaths, which makes it especially interesting, said John Balmes, a professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, and an expert on the health effects of pollution. "It's one thing for air pollution to be increasing the severity of the coronavirus infection, it's another for it to be increasing reported cases," he said.

Air quality has improved dramatically in much of the United States over the past fifty years. But in the West, increased wildfire smoke threatens to undo those advances, said Loretta Mickley, an atmospheric chemist at Harvard and one of the paper's authors.

The study authors note that climate change is contributing to an increase in drought conditions and frequency of wildfires in the West. According to the New York Times, California alone experienced a record 2.5 million acres burned during the 2020 wildfire season, which was twenty times what had burned in 2019.

During the summer of 2021, wildfire smoke from the western United States and Canada reached the east coast resulting in the highest summertime PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels in years, indicating that drought, wildfires, and poor air quality related to climate change are not just a regional concern. Higher temperatures related to climate change are also expected to contribute to ground-level ozone formation, further complicating the relationship between air pollution and public health while impeding progress made in the eastern United States to reduce ozone pollution levels. Researchers at Harvard note that this study is one more reason to consider addressing climate change as part of the overall effort to improve air quality and protect public health.

To learn more about the Harvard School of Medicine's research on the connections between wildfire smoke and Covid-19 infection rates, please visit: [www.nytimes.com/2021/08/13/climate/wildfires-smoke-covid.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/13/climate/wildfires-smoke-covid.html).



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