

A!ert



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



Air Quality Regulations

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Proposes to Strengthen the Air Quality Standards for Fine Particle Pollution

On January 6, 2023, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a proposal to strengthen the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for fine particle pollution also known as PM_{2.5}. Fine particle pollution has several transportation and industrial sources and is composed of small bits of dust, metals, and/or liquids that can penetrate deep into the lungs. These particles can be directly emitted from sources or form in the atmosphere.

EPA will accept comments on the proposal to strengthen the primary (health-based) annual PM_{2.5} standard from a level of 12 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m³) to a level between 9 and 10 µg/m³. The EPA maintains that the latest health data and scientific evidence supports revising the NAAQS to this level in order to protect public health, particularly in disadvantaged communities that may be located near sources of fine particle pollution. The Agency is also accepting comments on revising the standard to between 8 and 11 µg/m³.

Since EPA completed its last review of the PM_{2.5} NAAQS in 2012, thousands of new scientific studies have been conducted on the health impacts of fine particle pollution. The Agency has determined that strengthening the primary annual PM_{2.5} standard would address disparities for environmental justice communities and would result in significant public health benefits. EPA estimates that if finalized, a strengthened primary annual PM_{2.5} standard at a level of 9 µg/m³ would prevent up to 4,200 premature deaths per year, 270,000 lost workdays per year, and result in as much as \$43 billion in net health benefits in 2032.

The proposal to revise the PM_{2.5} NAAQS is a part of a number of initiatives that the Biden Administration has taken to reduce air pollution. These programs include the proposed Good Neighbor Plan to address emissions that affect downwind states; rules to address air pollution from oil and gas operations; and other critical rules to reduce emissions from power plants and the transportation sector, such as the recently finalized Clean Trucks Rule that will reduce pollution from heavy-duty trucks. Additionally, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act provide funding that is aimed at cutting pollution from school buses and trucks, port operations, and electricity generation. These programs are expected to help regions attain the proposed, more stringent standards.

The EPA's proposal does not include revising the 24-Hour PM_{2.5} NAAQS, which is currently set at 35 µg/m³. Currently, the DVRPC region meets the current annual and daily (24-Hour) PM_{2.5} NAAQS. The region was previously in violation of both of these standards. Based on



Save the Date

Wednesday
March 1, 2023
PA DEP

**Medium- and Heavy-Duty
Zero Emissions Vehicle
Funding Program**

Applications Due

Information is available at:

dep.pa.gov

Search "Driving PA Forward"

Tuesday
March 28, 2023

**Public Comments Due
U.S. EPA Proposed Revision
of the Fine Particle Pollution
NAAQS**

Information is available at:

epa.gov

Search "PM Standards
Regulatory Actions"

the latest quality-controlled air quality monitoring data, the region would be in danger of violating the new NAAQS if the standard is set at 9 µg/m³.

The EPA will accept public comment on the proposed rule until March 28, 2023. EPA will also conduct virtual public hearings over several days for this proposed rulemaking.

Read more about the EPA's "[Proposed Revision of the PM_{2.5} NAAQS](https://www.epa.gov/propose-revision-pm25-naaqs)" at www.epa.gov.

Air Quality and Transportation

Amazon Announces that it Has Over 1,000 Electric Delivery Vehicles on the Road

Amazon announced that the company's new zero-tailpipe emission vehicles have made more than five million deliveries in the US in 2022. The fleet is composed of 1,000 electric delivery vans produced by the electric vehicle start-up Rivian. That's still only a fraction of the company's overall transportation fleet, which includes 30,000 Amazon-branded delivery vehicles and 20,000 branded trailers. But the electric portion is growing, with Rivian expecting to deliver 100,000 vans to the company.

Amazon started rolling out the electric vans in July 2022 and they're currently serving over 20 cities across the nation. In 2019, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos announced that Amazon would buy 100,000 vans that would be on the road by 2024, but a global pandemic and supply chain issues have delayed that aggressive schedule. Now, Amazon projects to hit that 100,000 electric van goal by 2030.

The roll out of electric delivery vehicles supports Amazon's pledge to reach 100 percent net-zero carbon emissions by 2040 and 50 percent emission reductions by 2030.

Read about Amazon's progress towards electrifying its fleet of delivery vans in the November 2022 issue of the online technology journal [The Verge](https://www.theverge.com).

Pennsylvania DEP Launches Grant Program to Electrify Medium- and Heavy-Duty Trucks

In December 2022, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) announced a \$12.7 million grant program to assist businesses, local governments, and nonprofits with replacing their diesel trucks with electric vehicles.

The grants can be applied to the purchase of the vehicles themselves, as well as the infrastructure needed to charge them. Businesses and nonprofits can get grants for 75 percent of the project cost, while municipalities can get grants covering 90 percent of the project costs. Municipalities that are identified as Act 47 financially distressed communities can receive up to 100 percent of the project costs through these grants. In the DVRPC region, Chester City is the only designated Act 47 community. Grant recipients will need to replace at least five vehicles, or in the case of small fleets, at least three vehicles under the program.

The grant program will be focused on environmental justice areas, which Pennsylvania defines as places where at least 20 percent of people are at or below the federal poverty line or at least 30 percent of residents are people of color, as well as areas with high-traffic density.

Grant applicants are required to meet with PA DEP to discuss their project before applying. Recipients of the truck electrification grants will have two years to put the new trucks into service. Recipients will be required to collect and report data on the usage and charging characteristics of the new vehicles to inform future truck electrification projects. The grant program is part of a PA DEP Driving PA Forward initiative which is funded through the national Volkswagen settlement.

PA DEP will accept applications for the [Medium- and Heavy-Duty Truck Replacement Program](https://www.dep.pa.gov/press-releases/2022/12/20/dep-announces-grant-program-to-electrify-medium-and-heavy-duty-trucks) until March 1, 2023. Full details are available at www.dep.pa.gov and search "Driving PA Forward."



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