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The **Alert** newsletter provides monthly updates on transportation and air quality planning activities within the Delaware Valley.

September 2023

Electric Vehicles

Major Automakers Collaborate on New Fast Charging Network

Seven major automakers have announced the creation of a new joint venture that plans to build a network of fast chargers across North America, a move that aims to encourage the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs). The still unnamed company is backed by a coalition that includes General Motors, Stellantis (formerly known as Fiat Chrysler Automobiles), BMW, Mercedes Benz, Honda, Hyundai, and Kia. [CNN Business](#) reports the venture plans to install at least 30,000 chargers starting in the summer of 2024.

According to [Reuters](#), the seven automakers represent about half of vehicle sales in the United States overall, but have lagged behind in the growing electric vehicle market which is dominated by Tesla. Tesla sold over 60% of EVs in the US last year and operates the largest fast charging network in the country with nearly 18,000 Superchargers.

Complicating the charging landscape is the emergence of two competing standards for fast charging connectors in the North American market: the Combined Charging Standard (CCS) and North American Charging Standard (NACS). CCS is currently used on vehicles sold in the US by most non-Tesla automakers. For years, Tesla's connectors, and by extension its expansive infrastructure, were proprietary in contrast to CCS and less successful CHAdeMO, which are open standards. This changed earlier this year when [Ford](#) and then [General Motors](#) agreed to adopt the Tesla-developed standard, now called the North American Charging Standard. GM and Ford said they will begin shipping new EVs with NACS ports in 2025.

Since the newly announced charging network will feature both types of connections, it will face competition on day one not only from Tesla's Supercharger network, which [Forbes](#) describes as the "gold standard" in terms of reliability and customer experience, but also from smaller CCS-equipped networks such as Electrify America. Electrify America was created with the backing of Volkswagen, and last year it [announced](#) a \$450 million investment from multinational technology company Siemens that should allow the network to grow to 10,000 fast chargers by 2026.

The growing interest and investments in charging infrastructure comes as consensus has emerged in the automotive industry that providing drivers with a good charging experience will be key to increasing EV sales. A recent survey by [Cox Automotive](#) found an increasing number of American consumers are considering buying an EV, but the growth of actual sales has been slower than the growth of consumer interest. Cox Automotive estimates that 1 million EVs will be sold in the US this year. This is more than double 2021 sales but still represents only about 8 percent of new car sales. The survey indicates affordability and lack of charging are the two largest obstacles for prospective EV buyers.



Save the Date

Thursday, October 12, 2023

US EPA Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund

Applications Due

Information is available at:
<https://www.epa.gov/greenhouse-gas-reduction-fund>

Monday, October 16, 2023

Pennsylvania Coastal Resource Management Grants

Applications Due

Information is available at:
[PA DEP Coastal Zone Grants](#)

New Jersey to Require 100 Percent Zero Emissions Vehicles Sales by 2035

In August 2023, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy officially filed a [proposal](#) to adopt the [Advanced Clean Cars II](#) (ACCII) rule that would require zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) to constitute an increasing percentage of automakers new light-duty vehicle sales, beginning at 35 percent in the 2026 model year until ultimately reaching 100 percent ZEVs by 2035. The ACCII rule was written and adopted by the California Air Resources Board in 2022 and has since been adopted or proposed in several [other states](#) including New York, Connecticut, Delaware, and Maryland. Governor Murphy touted the state's proactive stance on environmental issues stating, "By filing the ACCII proposal, we build upon our nation-leading record of bold climate action while delivering on our promise to utilize every tool at our disposal to combat the intensifying climate crisis. Our commitment to bringing the ACCII proposal to fruition is a commitment to every New Jersey family and the air they breathe, air that will be cleaner and healthier tomorrow thanks to the steps we're taking to reduce emissions today. That commitment is underscored by our signing of the ZEV Declaration, which recognizes that New Jersey is just one crucial piece of our global response to climate change." An [analysis](#) conducted by Sonoma Technology estimated that by 2040 New Jersey's adoption of the ACCII rule would reduce annual fine particulate (PM_{2.5}) emissions by 82 tons and result in health benefits valued at \$1.3 billion per year. Now that the proposal has been filed, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection will host a [public hearing](#) on September 21 and will be accepting written comments through October 20, 2023.

For more information, read the governor's press release at: www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562023/20230717b.shtml

Grant Opportunities

Federal Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Aims to Promote Environmental Sustainability and Equity

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is soliciting grant applications for three programs under the \$27 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. The Fund was created by the Inflation Reduction Act that aims to reduce pollution, create jobs, and lower energy costs, especially in low-income and disadvantaged communities. The largest of the three programs is the National Clean Investment Fund which will award \$14 billion to two or three national nonprofit entities to provide affordable financing for clean technology projects. These national nonprofits will in turn provide capital to community lenders that give financial assistance to households and businesses for projects that reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and other air pollutants. The financial assistance can take the form of various types of loans, private equity investments, loan guarantees, and other financial instruments. The [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) (NOFO) lists rooftop solar installations, net-zero emissions buildings, and infrastructure for electric vehicles as examples of eligible projects. This program compliments the \$6 billion [Clean Communities Investment Accelerator](#) competition which will provide funding and technical assistance to community lenders such as community development financial institutions, credit unions, green banks, housing finance agencies, and minority depository institutions to enable them to leverage public and private investments to support eligible projects.

The third program under the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, named [Solar for All](#), will award up to 60 grants to public and nonprofit entities to expand or create low-income solar programs. The press release from EPA emphasized the multifaceted benefits of the program: "Residential solar cuts home energy bills and provides families with resilient and secure power, and Solar for All will help low-income and disadvantaged communities experience these meaningful benefits, such as guaranteeing a minimum 20% total electricity bill savings for households benefiting from the program. By investing in residential solar, the program will reduce the pollution produced from powering our homes to improve air quality and public health outcomes, all while creating good-paying, clean energy jobs."

The application deadline for all three programs is October 12, 2023.



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