

Alert

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

April 2024

Transportation Emissions

EPA Finalizes Stronger Air Pollution Standards for Cars

On March 20, 2024, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [announced](#) that it had finalized tougher emissions standards for light- and medium-duty vehicles. The standards, which were first proposed in April of last year, cover greenhouse gases (GHGs), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), and particulate matter (PM) and will be gradually phased in for model years 2027 through 2032.

Although the standards are expected to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles, they do not mandate the use of any particular technology. Instead, the standards set average emissions targets for a vehicle manufacturer's entire fleet and allows automakers to use a combination of strategies to meet those targets, including improving fuel efficiency, installing particulate filters on gasoline powered vehicles, and increasing sales of hybrid- and fully electric vehicles. The EPA estimates that, as a result of the new targets, battery electric vehicles (BEVs) will account for 30 to 56 percent of new light-duty vehicle sales and 20 to 32 percent of new medium-duty vehicle sales for model years 2030 through 2032.

According to a [fact sheet](#) published by EPA, the new standards will advance efforts to combat climate change by preventing 7.7 billion metric tons of CO₂ emissions by 2055 and improve public health by significantly reducing emissions of NO_x, VOCs, and PM, each of which negatively affect human health and contribute to the formation of smog.

The technology-neutral, performance-based standards adopted by the federal government contrast with the more rigid approach taken by some states. Under the Clean Air Act, the State of California has the ability to obtain a waiver from EPA that allows the state to set stricter emissions standards than those of the federal government. The Clean Air Act also allows states outside of California to adopt these stricter standards. In 2022, the California Air Resources Board developed and adopted a set of regulations known as [Advanced Clean Cars II](#) that requires a certain percentage of vehicles sold to be zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs). Advanced Clean Cars II will take effect in model year 2026 when 35 percent of vehicles sold by an automaker must be ZEVs. This minimum percentage is set to increase each model year until 2035 when all vehicles sold must be ZEVs. The definition of ZEV set in Advanced Clean Cars II includes BEVs, fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs) that use hydrogen, and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) that meet certain requirements. Since its development in California, Advanced Clean Cars II has been adopted by [12 states](#) including New Jersey, New York, Maryland, and Massachusetts.

Taken together, the state and federal regulations signal a strong governmental push toward decarbonizing the transportation sector which is responsible for 29 percent of the nation's total GHG emissions. The press release from EPA also notes that the new standards, in combination with other policies from the federal government, are projected to increase employment in the American auto industry and support domestic manufacturing by providing predictability for automakers and catalyzing private investment.



Save the Date

Friday

May 3, 2024

DVRPC Regional Trails Program

Applications Due

Information is available at:
www.dvrpc.org/trails/regionaltrailsprogram

Tuesday

May 28, 2024

EPA Clean Ports Program Air Quality Planning and Zero Emissions Deployment Grants

Applications Due

For more information visit:
www.epa.gov/ports-initiative/cleanports

Climate Change Action

EPA Receives Priority Climate Action Plans from Around the Country

March 1, 2024, marked the deadline for states and large metropolitan areas to submit the first round of climate action plans to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program (CPRG). DVRPC, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey each submitted their own plans, which makes them eligible for future rounds of CPRG funding.

The CPRG program is a \$5 billion initiative that will fund measures to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across the country. It is divided into two phases: planning and implementation. The planning funds were dispersed in June 2023. Each state was offered \$3 million, and the nation's largest metropolitan areas were eligible for \$1 million. Ultimately, 45 states, 80 metropolitan areas, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico accepted the grants, while the state governments of Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, South Dakota, and Wyoming decided not to participate in the CPRG program. DVRPC accepted the planning grant on behalf of the Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington Metropolitan Statistical Area which includes three counties outside DVRPC's nine county region: Salem County, New Jersey; New Castle County, Delaware; and Cecil County, Maryland. By accepting the planning funds, the grantees agreed to submit three main deliverables: the Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP), a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) due in 2025, and a later status report. The PCAP is intended to identify high-priority, ready-to-implement measures to reduce GHG emissions, while the CCAP will include a broader range of emissions reduction measures across more sectors of the economy.

Submitting a PCAP makes a state or metropolitan area eligible for funds in the implementation phase of the CPRG program. Applications for the implementation funds are currently being reviewed. EPA expects to competitively award a total of \$4.3 billion across approximately 30 to 115 awards ranging from \$2 million to \$500 million each.

[DVRPC's PCAP](#) was developed over eight months with stakeholder input from all 12 counties covered by the plan and special attention paid to the impacts of the proposed actions on low income and disadvantaged communities. Ultimately, nine priority measures were selected: support decarbonization of local government operations; implement energy efficiency, electrification, and clean energy for residential buildings; implement energy efficiency, electrification, and clean energy for commercial buildings; transition light duty vehicles to low- or no-carbon emissions vehicles; expand and improve transit; implement bicycle, pedestrian, and active transportation improvements; implement a clean electricity grid and ensure grid reliability; reduce waste and better manage waste generated; and reduce emissions at wastewater treatment plants and increase generation of biomethane.

For more information about the CPRG program, visit www.dvrpc.org/cprg.

Funding Opportunity

\$2 Million Available to Fund Trails in the DVRPC Region

Thanks to funding from the William Penn Foundation, \$2 million is now available to support multi-use trail projects in the DVRPC region. The funding is being administered by DVRPC as part of its Regional Trails Program. Eligible activities include planning studies, engineering, and construction for trails, trailheads, gateways, and neighborhood connections that advance the Circuit Trails network, a planned network of over 800 miles of multi-use trails that provide people in Greater Philadelphia non-motorized access to jobs, schools, shops, and opportunities for recreation.

The deadline to apply for this opportunity is Friday, May 3, 2024, at 5 PM. Awards may be announced as early as July 2024. For more information visit www.dvrpc.org/trails/regionaltrailsprogram.



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