

ALERT! February 2012

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



Air Quality Regulations

New Report from Columbia University Claims that Benefits of New U.S. Air Quality Rules Greatly Outweigh Costs

Researchers from Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health released a white paper in December, 2011 that provides an expanded review of six new air quality regulations that were recently proposed or adopted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). According to the report, the cost of implementing these regulations was estimated at \$195 billion over the next twenty years, but the economic, environmental, and health benefits amount to well over \$1 trillion during that time period.

The Columbia University researchers reviewed data included in EPA's Regulatory Impact Analyses (RIA) to determine the societal costs and benefits of the following six new air quality regulations;

- Heavy-duty Vehicles Greenhouse Gas Emissions Standards,
- Light-duty Vehicles Greenhouse Gas Emissions and CAFÉ Standards,
- Mercury and Air Toxic Standards
- Cross State Air Pollution Rule,
- Emission Standards for Boilers and Commercial /Industrial Solid Waste Incinerators, and
- Standards of Performance for Petroleum Refineries.

Researchers then performed a multi-step analysis to monetize the estimated health benefits of these regulations for comparison against the calculated costs of implementation.

The calculated costs of a regulation included factors such as direct compliance costs, administrative and recordkeeping costs, and the distribution of costs and benefits to business and consumers. The analysis of benefits included prevention of premature deaths, prevention of doctors' visits and hospitalizations, avoidance of missed work days, and a reduction in cases of bronchitis, respiratory illness, and aggravated asthma.

The report highlights the importance of the two motor vehicles rules in benefitting residents in communities that are vulnerable to the health effects of air pollution, since urban air pollution tends to be dominated by motor vehicle emissions.

The entire white paper "*Health and Economic Benefits of Clean Air Regulations*" can be downloaded at:

<http://www.jointcenter.org/research/white-paper-health-and-economic-benefits-of-clean-air-regulations>



**SAVE
THE
DATE**

**Monday,
February 13, 2012
Philadelphia Diesel
Difference
Working Group
10:00 AM**

DVRPC Conference Center
8th Floor
6th and Race Streets
Philadelphia, PA

**Wednesday,
February 15, 2012
Air Quality Partnership
Board Meeting
10:00 AM to 12:00 PM**

DVRPC Conference Center
8th Floor
6th and Race Streets
Philadelphia, PA



Health and Air Quality

University of Massachusetts Researchers Find that Asthma Rates and Related Costs from Traffic Pollution are Much Higher than Indicated by Past Risk Assessments

A research team, led by University of Massachusetts resource economist Sylvia Brandt, recently published a study in the *European Respiratory Journal* that sharply raises the cost burden estimates for childhood asthma. This research used updated techniques that count asthma cases attributable to air pollution and includes a broader range of health care costs, such as parents' missed work days, extra doctors' visits and prescription costs, in the final cost burden analysis.

The study's findings report that the total cost of asthma due to pollution is much higher than traditional risk assessments have indicated and that there is growing evidence that exposure to traffic related air pollution is a cause of asthma and a trigger for attacks. According to Brandt's report, the total additional asthma specific costs in her study region due to traffic related pollution reaches approximately \$18 million per year.

The research indicates that the total annual cost for a typical asthma case in the study area was between \$3,800 and \$4,000. This cost represented 7 percent of the area's median income and is higher than the 5 percent considered to be a sustainable level of health care costs for a family.

Brandt's report stresses that these greater healthcare costs are being disproportionately born by people living in cities with higher levels of traffic related pollution and sees her research findings as a call to reduce traffic related pollution.

For more information on this research, please visit:

<http://www.newswise.com/articles/asthma-rate-and-costs-from-traffic-pollution-higher>



Information

U.S. EPA Releases Air Quality Forecast Applications for the Android and iPhone

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has released a mobile application for iPhones and Android phones that will allow users to get location-specific reports on current air quality and air quality forecasts for both ozone and fine particle pollution (PM2.5). Air quality maps from the AIRNow website provide visual depictions of current and forecast air quality nationwide, and a page on air quality-related health effects explains what actions people can take to protect their health on Air Quality Action Days

For more information on the air quality mobile application, please visit:

<http://www.airnow.gov>

<p>ALERT! is a DVRPC publication.</p>	 <p>Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission DVRPC, 8th Floor 190 N. Independence Mall West Philadelphia, PA 19106-1520 Phone 215.592.1800 Fax 215.592.9125 www.dvrpc.org</p>
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