

# A!ert

dvrpc | May 2015

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



## Health and Air Quality

### DVRPC Region Listed in Top 25 Most PM<sub>2.5</sub> Polluted Regions in the Country

The Philadelphia-Reading-Camden PA-NJ-DE-MD metropolitan region<sup>1</sup> once again was ranked in the top 25 most polluted regions for fine particles (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) by the American Lung Association (ALA) in their *State of the Air* report released in April 2015. The region was ranked as the 11<sup>th</sup> worst region for long-term (annual average) fine particle pollution (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and 22<sup>nd</sup> for short term (24-hour average) PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution. The region fell to 28<sup>th</sup> most ozone polluted region and was not listed in the most ozone polluted regions in this year's report. The ALA used quality-assured data for the period 2011 to 2013 to develop the 2015 report card on ozone and particle pollution for the nation's cities and counties.

The report also ranks individual counties based on the number of days that air quality reaches unhealthy levels (code orange and above) on the Air Quality Index. Of the eight counties in the DVRPC region that were graded, seven counties received a grade of "F" for ozone pollution, with Montgomery County receiving a "D". Burlington County does not have an air quality monitor and was not graded in this report. Bucks County received a failing grade for short term PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution, and Delaware County received a failing grade for annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution.

The ALA used the PM<sub>2.5</sub> daily standard of 35mg/m<sup>3</sup>, adopted in September 2006; the PM<sub>2.5</sub> annual standard of 12mg/m<sup>3</sup>, adopted in September 2012; and the ozone standard of 75 parts per billion, adopted in March 2008, to determine the unhealthy ranges for particle pollution and ozone.

The 2015 *State of the Air* report shows some positive trends in the nation's air quality. Emissions that contribute to the six criteria pollutants, regulated by the EPA (including ozone precursors and PM<sub>2.5</sub>) continued to decline despite a rebounding economy and growing population.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), national emissions of ozone and fine particle pollution dropped by 18% and 34% respectively, between 2000 and 2013, even while Gross Domestic Product, vehicle miles travelled, and population grew by approximately 29% (2009 dollars), 22%, and 18% over the same time period. The report attributes better air quality in the eastern U.S. to fleet turnover resulting in newer, cleaner diesel engines and to more stringent emissions controls on power plants.



## Save the Date

Monday,  
June 8, 2015

**Healthy Communities Task Force in Conjunction with the Philadelphia Diesel Difference Work Group**

10:00 am

*Location of Meeting:*  
DVRPC Conference Center  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
6<sup>th</sup> and Race Streets  
Philadelphia, PA

Monday,  
June 15, 2015

**National Clean Diesel Campaign Funding RFP Due to U.S. EPA**

For more information  
Please visit  
[www.epa.gov/cleandiesel/prg-national.htm](http://www.epa.gov/cleandiesel/prg-national.htm)

Ozone levels did show a decrease in eastern states since the previous report, but weather certainly played a role in this statistic. Since sunlight and high temperatures facilitate ozone formation, the wet weather experienced across the eastern U.S. in 2013 resulted in fewer unhealthy ozone days than in the previous reporting periods. Recent monitoring data in the DVRPC region shows that ozone and PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels in the region meet the 1997 ozone and 2006 PM<sub>2.5</sub> air quality standards.

To view the entire 2015 *State of the Air* report, including grading methodology and statistical analysis, please visit the American Lung Association at [www.stateoftheair.org](http://www.stateoftheair.org)

<sup>1</sup> The Philadelphia-Reading-Camden PA-NJ-DE-MD metropolitan region includes Philadelphia, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Berks Counties in PA, Camden, Burlington, Gloucester, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem Counties in NJ, New Castle and Kent Counties in Delaware and Cecil County in Maryland.



## Information

### U.S. EPA Announces \$13.5 Million Available for Projects that Reduce Diesel Emissions

On April 30, 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a Request for Proposals to fund projects that will reduce emissions from diesel engines under the National Clean Diesel Campaign (NCDC) Regional, state, local, or tribal agencies/consortia and port authorities with jurisdiction over transportation or air quality are eligible to apply for the funds. Nonprofit organizations that promote transportation or air quality as their principal purpose or that promote pollution reduction to organizations that own or operate diesel fleets are also eligible.

Priority consideration will be given to proposals that demonstrate:

- Diesel emission reductions from engines involved in goods movement, including freight and/or ports;
- Diesel emission reductions in areas of poor air quality;
- Project outcomes that benefit the community; and
- Community engagement and partnerships in the development and implementation of the project.

This funding can be used to replace diesel buses, medium and heavy duty trucks, as well as non-road engines or vehicles used in construction, cargo handling, or energy production. Vehicles and engines replaced by this program must be scrapped as a requirement of funding. Proposals are due by June 15, 2015

Since the entire DVRPC region is designated as a priority area with poor air quality; port authorities, freight centers, and diesel fleet operators who are interested in applying to the NCDC for funding are encouraged to contact Sean Greene at [sgreene@dvrpc.org](mailto:sgreene@dvrpc.org) to discuss potential partnerships in applying for funds under this program.

### Study Shows that Environmental Ratings Motivate Companies to Reduce Emissions

A recent study authored by researchers at the University of Chicago, and published in the *American Sociological Review* found that environmental ratings not only influence the emissions of the rated firms but also for unrated peer companies. The authors confirmed prior research that found that a company's toxic emissions are reduced when those companies are rated and also found that toxic emissions decrease in unrated companies when there is an expectation of widespread environmental rating. The authors found that the spillover benefits only apply in heavily regulated industries.

For more information on the article "*Taming polluting companies; Ratings have spillover effects leading to reduced toxic emissions*" please visit: [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/04/150423130434.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/04/150423130434.htm)



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