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dvrpc | November 2015

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



Air Quality Regulations

US EPA Strengthens Ground-Level Ozone Standards

On October 1, 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that the agency is revising the ground-level ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) from 75 parts per billion (ppb) to 70 ppb in order to better improve public health, reduce asthma attacks, and protect vulnerable populations from the harmful effects of exposure to ozone.

The Clean Air Act requires EPA to review the ozone standard every five years to determine whether the standard should be revised in light of the latest science. EPA examined nearly 2,300 studies in this review of the ozone standard, including more than 1,000 new studies published since the last review of the standard in 2008. Scientific evidence shows that ozone can cause a number of harmful effects on the respiratory system, including difficulty breathing and inflammation of the airways. The revised standard will significantly improve public health protection, resulting in fewer premature deaths, and thousands fewer missed school and work days and asthma attacks.

Local communities, states, and the federal government have made substantial progress in reducing ground-level ozone. Nationally, from 1980 to 2014, average ozone levels have fallen 33 percent, while the economy has continued to grow. By 2025, EPA projects that existing rules and programs will bring the vast majority of the remaining counties into compliance. Advances in pollution control technology for vehicles and industry along with other emission reduction standards, including "Tier 3" clean vehicle and fuels standards, the Clean Power Plan and the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, will significantly cut smog-forming emissions, helping states meet the updated ozone standard.

Recent evidence shows that local air quality is improving along with the national trends. During the 2015 ozone season (May through September), the Greater Philadelphia area experienced ten Air Quality Action Days – the fourth lowest number of Action days in a summer season since 2000. Air Quality Action Days are announced when ground-level ozone is at unhealthy levels, or when the Air Quality Index reaches Code Orange or Code Red levels.

Ground-level ozone forms when nitrogen oxides (NO_x) combine with Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) in the presence of sunlight. In the past, Air Quality Action Days were strongly correlated with high temperatures. But due to the reduction in pollutant concentrations, our region



Save the Date

**Thursday,
November 12, 2015**

**Healthy Communities
Task Force
10:00 am**

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

**Monday,
December 14, 2015**

**Philadelphia Diesel
Difference Working Group
10:00 am**

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

experienced fewer poor air quality days even though the region experienced higher than normal temperatures this summer. Factors including above average participation also likely contributed to the historically low ground-level ozone levels.

With the new 2015 ozone standard, all nine counties in the DVRPC region are likely to be designated as a part of a nonattainment area for ground-level ozone based on air quality monitoring data from 2012 through 2014. Currently none of the DVRPC counties meet the 70 ppb standard but the EPA anticipates all nine counties will meet the 2015 ozone standard by 2025 as existing regulatory programs are phased into implementation. If the new standard were in place during the summer of 2015, the region would have experienced 20 Air Quality Action days.

For more information on the 2015 Ozone NAAQS, please visit: www3.epa.gov/ozonepollution/



Air Quality Information

DVRPC Awards \$2.27 Million to Projects that Will Reduce Congestion and Improve Air Quality in New Jersey

On October 22, 2015 the DVRPC Board approved funding for five projects that reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality in Burlington, Camden, and Mercer counties under the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program.

The CMAQ program is a source of federal transportation funds that is dedicated to projects that show quantifiable benefits to air quality in regions that do not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Diverse project types, such as traffic operations improvements, transit improvements, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and even vehicle replacements and retrofits are eligible for funding but all projects must result in a reduction of transportation related emissions.

The five selected projects and sponsors are:

- **Burlington County;**
BURL Link Bus Replacements
Burlington County was approved for \$450,000 to replace three MY2009 buses.
- **South Jersey Port Corporation/New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection**
South Jersey Port Corporation Fleet Modernization Program
The South Jersey Port Corporation/NJ DEP was approved for \$1,000,000 to replace 13 diesel fork lifts.
- **Voorhees Township**
Pedestrian Safety Enhancements along Somerdale Road
Voorhees Township in Camden County was approved for \$515,000 for pedestrian safety improvements along Somerdale Road between Burnt Mill Road and Echelon Road.
- **Voorhees Township**
Voorhees Township Senior Bus Replacement
Voorhees Township was approved for \$110,000 to replace a MY1990 shuttle with a CNG bus.
- **Princeton Township**
Bike Share Expansion
Princeton Township in Mercer County was approved for \$196,000 to expand its bike share by five stations.

For more information on DVRPC's CMAQ program, please visit: www.dvrpc.org/cmaq.



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