

Alert

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



Air Quality Regulations

Trump Administration Executive Order Directs Roll Back of *Clean Power Plan* and Regulations Related to Climate Change

On March 28, 2017, President Trump signed the Energy Independence Executive Order which directs agencies responsible for regulating domestic energy production to submit plans which will propose measures to revise or rescind, regulatory barriers that impede progress towards energy independence, including regulations that impose burdens on coal-fired electric utilities and oil and gas producers, to the White House. The executive order also rescinds several initiatives and policies related to climate change that were implemented by the Obama Administration.

Included in President Trump's executive order is a directive to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to rewrite the *Clean Power Plan*. The *Clean Power Plan* was signed into law by President Obama in August 2015 and set the goal of requiring a 32 percent reduction of greenhouse gases emitted by existing power plants from 2005 levels by 2030.

According to the EPA at the time, *the Clean Power Plan* was designed with three components. First, it required an increase in the efficiency of existing coal-fired power plants. Second, it moved electricity generation away from fossil fuel-fired, coal power plants to natural gas-fired power plants. And third, it planned to increase the use of renewable energy sources like wind and solar.

The *Clean Power Plan* required each state to reach specific carbon emission goals for electricity producers. The EPA claimed that the climate and health benefits of the plan "far outweigh the estimated annual costs of the plan, which are \$7.3 billion to \$8.8 billion in 2030." It also claimed that the plan would reduce asthma rates in adults and children due to concurrent reductions in fine particle, nitrogen oxide, and sulfur dioxide emissions.

The *Clean Power Plan* isn't currently being enforced because the law was challenged in Federal Court. On February 9, 2016, the Supreme Court stayed implementation of the law pending judicial review. Attorney generals from 28 states joined together to claim that the plan presents too broad an interpretation of the Clean Air Act.

The rewriting of the *Clean Power Plan* could take over a year, as it requires the EPA to follow the same procedure of rule-making used when crafting the original plan. This means, for every rule the EPA plans to rewrite, the administration will have to justify why the rule is being rolled back. Then, comments will be made on each of the new rules that the administration must respond to. This complex re-writing period will likely face hefty litigation from environmental advocacy groups opposed to the executive order. It is still unclear how this executive order will impact the United States' participation in the Paris Climate Accord.



Save the Date

Friday,
April 28, 2017

Temple University
Earthfest

Location of Event:
Temple University
Ambler Campus

Event Information at:
<http://ambler.temple.edu/about/earthfest>

May 2 – May 5, 2017

Air Quality
Awareness Week

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Air Quality Information

DEP Awards \$1.9 Million in Alternative Fuel Incentive Grants to PA Communities and Businesses

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has awarded more than \$1.9 million to Pennsylvania schools and businesses for projects using alternative fuels and infrastructure. The Alternative Fuels Incentive Grant (AFIG) awards funding for projects to improve air quality through alternative fuel use.

“The buses, cars, and trucks purchased and rebuilt with these grants will reduce air pollution and improve the air we breathe,” said Acting DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell. The awards were granted in two categories: Vehicle Purchase/Retrofit and Refueling Infrastructure. The awards for vehicles will save approximately 1.2 million gallons of gasoline.

Applicants in Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties were awarded nearly \$500,000 to replace 43 diesel powered vehicles with propane and natural gas powered vehicles, replacing an estimated 554,000 gasoline gallon equivalents (GGE) of fuel per year with alternative fuels.

Grant awardees in Montgomery County included Hatboro-Horsham School District to purchase five propane fueled school buses and United Parcel Service to purchase twenty compressed natural gas (CNG) powered Class 8 tractors. Awardees in Philadelphia included the Streets Department to purchase ten CNG powered waste haulers and Wally Park to purchase eight CNG shuttle buses.

In addition to the Alternative Fuel Incentive Grants just awarded, DEP is offering a limited number of free technical assistance opportunities to municipalities, school districts, municipal authorities, and non-profit organizations to assist them in developing plans for building or expanding an alternative energy vehicle fleet. Applications for the Alternative Fuels Technical Assistance Program will be accepted through June 1, 2017.

For more information on the AFIG program, please visit: www.dep.pa.gov and search “AFIG”.

DEP Plans to Re-open State Diesel Emission Reduction Act Grant Funding

The Pennsylvania DEP will be announcing the availability of state Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) funding in April 2017. The DEP recently closed a statewide DERA grant round in December 2016 and did not award all of the available funds. In order to award this funding in Pennsylvania, DEP is expected to open another DERA round with the remaining \$400,000 in the program.

Eligible projects include the replacement, repower, or retrofit emissions controls for diesel trucks, buses, and port equipment among others. Eligible applicants include businesses, municipalities, government agencies and non-profits. DEP will fund up to 100% of diesel emission control retrofits and between 25% and 50% of the cost of other eligible project types.

Information on the December grant round is still posted on the DEP website and the information contained there is relevant to the upcoming round.

For more information on the Pennsylvania State DERA program, please visit: www.dep.pa.gov and search “Clean Diesel”.



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