

# A!ert

dvrpc

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



## Air Quality News

### U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Increase in 2021

In one of the rare good news stories from the Covid-19 pandemic, America's annual GHG emissions fell more than 10 percent in 2020, as the U.S. economy slowed and energy use dropped to its lowest level in decades due to health restrictions aimed at slowing the spread of the pandemic.

However, as restrictions eased and the economy began recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, the nation's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions rebounded.

A recent report compiled by the Rhodium Group, an independent research and consulting group, estimated that that GHG emissions from energy and industry rose 6.2 percent in 2021—though emissions remain slightly below 2019 levels.

The Rhodium Group estimated that transportation emissions, the nation's largest source of GHG emissions, rose 10 percent in 2021 after a 15 percent decline in 2020. Freight traffic was the source on much of that increase as e-commerce grew above pre-pandemic levels in 2021. Passenger and air travel have not recovered as quickly as new COVID variants continue to disrupt travel plans. Gasoline consumption only returned to 2019 levels in October 2021, while demand for jet fuel remains well below pre-pandemic levels.

Emissions from heavy industry, like cement and steel production, rose 3.6 percent in 2021 after declining 6.2 percent in 2020. Factories, which account for roughly one-fifth of the nation's emissions, could prove difficult to clean up without new technologies, and industrial emissions have stayed consistent since 2005.

Homes and buildings also directly produce emissions by burning fossil fuels such as natural gas in furnaces, hot water heaters, stoves, and clothes dryers. The group reported that building emissions rose 1.9 percent in 2021 after declining 7.6 percent in 2020.

President Biden set a goal of reducing the nation's GHG emissions by 50 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. This is the target that scientists agree is necessary for the world to meet, in order to keep the Earth from warming more than 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit above preindustrial levels and minimize the impacts of climate change. The President's emissions reduction goals are supported by many provisions of the recently passed \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. However, these goals largely rely on reductions that would be realized with the passage of the Build Back Better Act, which contains an additional \$555 billion in spending and tax incentives for renewable power, electric cars, and other climate programs. The Build Back Better Act would fund wind and solar



## Save the Date

Friday  
March 4, 2022

**Deadline for Applications:**  
**NJDEP**  
**Diesel Electrification Grant Program**

For more information,  
please visit:

[www.stopthesoot.org](http://www.stopthesoot.org)

Friday  
March 25, 2022

**Deadline for Applications:**  
**US EPA Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring Grants**

For more information,  
please visit:

[www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)  
and search  
**EPA-OAR-OAQPS-22-01**

power installations, accelerate electric vehicle sales, and incentivize utilities to retire more coal plants and reduce GHG emissions over the next decade.

For more information on the Rhodium Group's GHG Emissions Estimates, please visit:  
<https://rhg.com/research/preliminary-us-emissions-2021/>.



## Air Quality Programs

### U.S. EPA Expands Programs to Reduce GHG Emissions from Buildings

On January 21, 2022, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the upcoming release of new tools through the ENERGY STAR program that will help commercial and multifamily building owners reduce their GHG emissions. Commercial and multifamily buildings contribute approximately 19 percent of GHG emissions in the U.S.

EPA's ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager is an online energy measurement and tracking tool that serves as a platform for managing building performance policies. State and local agencies across the U.S. use this program to monitor energy usage in their buildings and guide the implementation of energy saving practices. The EPA will continue to provide technical assistance and software updates to help these partner governments manage their energy use and reduce GHG emissions.

In February 2022, the EPA will unveil a new web-based tool that allows building owners to use their energy benchmarking data to estimate emissions under local building performance standards. Known as the ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager Building Emissions Calculator, this tool will also project the impact that changes in a building's efficiency, fuel mix, renewable energy use, and emissions factors will have on their emissions over time.

Later this year, EPA will launch a new tool providing access to aggregated, anonymized energy data from the hundreds of thousands of buildings in Portfolio Manager, enabling policymakers, building owners, and others to understand how energy use varies based on the type of building, where it is located, how it is used, and other factors.

To learn more about the ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager and program updates, please visit:  
[www.energystar.gov/about](http://www.energystar.gov/about).

### NJDEP Announces New Funding to Replace Diesel Vehicles with Electric

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) is offering another round of funding to replace medium and heavy-duty diesel vehicles with electric. The NJDEP is utilizing funds from the state's participation in Regional Green House Gas Initiative to offer funds to local government vehicle electrification projects in environmental justice communities.

Local government vehicles, including but not limited to shuttles, garbage trucks, and buses, are eligible for the incremental costs of the electric vehicle purchase plus the cost of the requisite charging infrastructure. The old diesel vehicle must be decommissioned and awardees are also required to install a data logger that shares vehicle usage data with the NJDEP for three years. Priority will be given to projects with the best GHG cost effectiveness that are located in overburdened communities (as defined by the NJDEP). Proposals are due to NJDEP on Friday, March 4, 2022.

Learn more about the NJDEP Diesel Vehicle Replacement Grant Program at [www.stophesoot.org](http://www.stophesoot.org).



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