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



Air Quality Regulations

Biden Administration Announces New Fuel Efficiency Standards for Cars and Light Duty Trucks.

On December 20, 2021, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced revised fuel efficiency standards for the nation's fleet of cars and light duty trucks. The new standards will take effect with Model Year (MY) 2023 vehicles.

The transportation sector is the largest single source of greenhouse gases that have been shown to fuel climate change. The EPA's final fuel efficiency rule calls for vehicles in MYs 2023-2026 to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions between five and ten percent each year. This means that by 2026, cars will be required to achieve a fleet average of 40 miles per gallon (mpg). This revised rule is a significant strengthening of the previous standards which required a 1.5 percent greenhouse gas emissions reduction from the transportation sector over the same time period.

The EPA estimates that the rule will reduce carbon dioxide pollution from cars from 166 grams per mile in 2023 to 132 grams per mile in 2026, and will result in avoiding more than 3 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions. This reduction is equivalent to more than half the total U.S. carbon dioxide emissions in 2019. The agency says the rule will provide \$190 billion in net benefits through the year 2050, including "reduced impacts of climate change, improved public health from lower pollution, and cost savings for vehicle owners through improved fuel efficiency."

The EPA projects that the final standards can be met by increasing the number of electric vehicles sold in the nation to approximately 17 percent of vehicles sold in MY 2026 and wider uptake of advanced gasoline engine and vehicle technologies that are available today. The White House has set a target to make half of all new cars sold in 2030 zero-emissions vehicles.

The administration expects that provisions in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill will provide the necessary incentives in electric vehicles and supporting infrastructure to make that 17 percent electric vehicle market-share possible. The bill includes \$7.5 billion for electric vehicle charging infrastructure and \$7 billion set aside for investments in battery manufacturing, materials, and recycling to drive down costs of electric vehicle ownership.

Some environmental groups claim the new standards do not go far enough to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change, stating that the new rules still include loopholes for auto manufacturers to continue to



Save the Date

**Monday
January 31, 2022**

**Deadline for Applications:
PA DEP
DC Fast Charging and
Hydrogen Fueling Grant
Program**

**For more information,
please visit:**

www.dep.gov
and search
"DC Fast Charging Grants"

**Friday
February 25, 2022**

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

**For more information,
please visit:**

www.grants.gov
and search
EPA-OAR-OAQPS-22-01

manufacture vehicles that are required to meet less stringent fuel efficiency standards. Environmental advocates point to the European Union's practice of regulating tailpipe emissions directly, as opposed to fuel efficiency, as a more effective way to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

For more information on the EPA's revised fuel efficiency standards, please visit:

www.epa.gov/newsreleases.



Air Quality News

Six Automakers Commit to Phase Out Sales of All New Gasoline and Diesel-Powered Vehicles by 2040

Six major automakers, including Ford, Mercedes-Benz, General Motors, and Volvo, and 30 national governments pledged to phase out sales of new gasoline and diesel-powered vehicles by 2040 at the international climate talks held in Glasgow, Scotland in November 2021. The automakers that signed the pledge accounted for roughly 25 percent of global sales in 2019.

The 30 countries that joined the coalition included Britain, Canada, and India. India is the world's fourth-largest auto market and has not previously committed to eliminating emissions from its cars on a specific timeline. California, New York State, and Washington State also signed the pledge. In 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom of California signed an executive order requiring only new zero-emissions vehicles would be sold in the state by 2035. Notable automakers and nations that did not sign the pledge include Toyota, Volkswagen, and Nissan-Renault and the United States, China, and Japan, which are three of the world's largest auto markets.

The pledge states that automakers will "work toward reaching 100 percent zero-emission new car and van sales in leading markets by 2035 or earlier, supported by a business strategy that is in line with achieving this ambition, as we help build customer demand." Zero-emissions vehicles generally refer to plug-in electric vehicles or hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles.

Transportation accounts for approximately twenty percent of the world's carbon dioxide emissions with passenger vehicles and light duty trucks accounting for almost half of those emissions. While zero-emissions vehicles emit no carbon dioxide from the tailpipe, the benefits of zero-emissions vehicle are multiplied when renewable energy sources account for a greater percentage of electricity generation. Environmental groups point out that investment in clean and renewable energy sources are a critical component of realizing the benefits from the transition to an electrified transportation system.

Technological advances, particularly with the lithium-ion batteries that power most zero-emissions vehicles, have brought down the costs of electric vehicles and made them increasingly competitive with traditional combustion engine vehicles. These advances, combined with government investment in charging infrastructure and incentives for further research make fulfilling this pledge a possibility.

"We have the technology to make clean road transport a reality and today it's clear we have the willpower to do it in the next decade," said Nigel Topping, a British Government representative at the climate talks.

To learn more about the pledge to transition to 100 percent electric vehicles by 2040, please visit:

www.nytimes.com/2021/11/09/climate/cars-zero-emissions-cop26.html.



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