



Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. Hotline



Summer 2006

www.gasp-pgh.org

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Comprehensive Campaign to Reduce Diesel Pollution Underway

by Rachel Filippini, GASP Executive Director

In May, GASP and Clean Water Action launched the **Allegheny County Partnership to Reduce Diesel Pollution** at Plum Borough School District's O'Block Junior High School. The Allegheny County Partnership to Reduce Diesel Pollution is a comprehensive campaign to reduce toxic diesel emissions from all sources--school buses, transit buses, waste haulers, construction equipment, locomotives, and marine vessels. This campaign is part of a multi-state diesel network working together to achieve significant reductions of diesel emissions of 40% by 2012, 55% by 2015 and 70% by 2020.

Diesel pollution is a significant problem in Allegheny County and a comprehensive approach to cleaning up diesel from all sectors is needed. The Clean Air Task Force report, *Diesel and Health in America, The Lingering Threat* estimates that diesel emissions cause 237 local residents to face premature death each year, in addition to causing hundreds of heart attacks and thousands of asthma attacks. Our cancer risk from diesel exhaust is almost 400 times EPA's goal, and diesel particulates contribute to our global warming crisis. After presenting the local diesel problem at the

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Getting the Mercury Out: The Pennsylvania Debate

by Sue Seppi, GASP Project Manager

Agreement on how to reduce mercury emissions from Pennsylvania coal-fired power plants has been anything but a walk in the park. Sparks have been flying and the lobbying has been intense. At issue is a Pennsylvania-specific plan presented by DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty versus a Pennsylvania Senate Proposal, SB 1201, that parallels the federal rule (Clean Air Mercury Rule or CAMR), introduced by Senator Mary Jo White, Chair of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.¹

As this article goes to press in late June 2006, the unhappy news for many environ-

mental, faith-based, hunting and fishing groups that have supported the more environmentally protective DEP proposal is that the Senate proposal was passed 40 to 10 and was rapidly sent to the House Rules Committee. This last action appears to be an irregular move designed to bypass Chairmen Adolph and George who co-chair the committee of jurisdiction for this bill, the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee. William F. Adolph, Jr. (R-Delaware) said, "We must do better than the federal regulation." Whether this bill

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Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. (GASP) is a non-profit citizens' group in Southwestern Pennsylvania working for a healthy, sustainable environment. Founded in 1969, GASP has been a diligent watchdog, educator, litigator, and policy-maker on many environmental issues, with a focus on air quality in the Pittsburgh region.

Scientists Sound Ultrafine Alarm

May 1, 2006

LOS ANGELES - A whole new layer of regulations may be needed to deal with the tiniest and most dangerous bits of air pollution, as scientists released another study Monday showing children who live next to busy roads are 50 percent more likely to have asthma symptoms.

"This is a major health issue," said John Froines, director of the Southern California Particle Center, at a conference in Los Angeles about ultrafine particles.

Ultrafine particles are unregulated, and are so small they can actually penetrate cells, carrying toxic compounds directly to the DNA and other critical areas.

As regulators struggle to scrub the air clean during a time of explosive growth in the diesel-powered shipping industry, scientists continue to warn that pollution from diesel sources is by far the most deadly. And the smaller the particle, the greater the danger.

"Ultrafines possess the greatest toxic potential compared to other particles," Froines said.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District will begin an in-depth examination of ultrafine particles in its next air-quality-management plan this year, said Barry Wallerstein, executive officer of the region's smog-fighting agency.

Regulations to control the toxic flecks of pollution are expected to follow in the next few years.

In addition to respiratory problems, diesel emissions are known to cause cancer, heart problems and early death.

The study on asthma and roads, published this month in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*, looked at more than 5,000 children, ages 5 to 7, who live in 13 Southern California communities, including San Bernardino, Lake Arrowhead, Upland, Riverside, Mira Loma and Lake Elsinore.

by Andrew Silva, Staff Writer, San Bernardino County Sun

It found those who live within about 80 yards of a major road are 50 percent more likely to have had asthma symptoms in the previous year than those who live farther away.

The study dovetails with previous research that shows concentrations of ultrafine particles are greatest near roadways and drop off dramatically with distance.

"Ultrafines may be the cause" of respiratory problems, said Rob McConnell, one of the study's authors and a professor at USC.

Restrictions are in place for larger particles, those 10 microns in diameter, or PM10 - about one-sixth the diameter of a human hair - and the smaller PM2.5. A micron is one-millionth of a meter, or about the thickness of a dime sliced 1,000 times.

The regulations may be having a strange side effect.

Reductions in larger particles may actually spur an increase in the number of ultrafine particles, scientists said.

"Little particles attach to larger particles," Froines said. If you lower the number of big particles, there are fewer for the small particles to glom onto, he said.

That phenomenon has scientists calling for a change in the way particulates are measured.

Currently, particles are regulated by their mass, which is to say the particles in a cubic meter of air are weighed.

Instead, the particles should be counted, which is now being done in Europe.

Asked if the current regulations might be making things worse, Froines and other scientists said the larger particles are definitely toxic and need to be cut back. Additional regulations and new technology to handle ultrafines are also needed, scientists said.

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The **Hotline** is the quarterly newsletter of the Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc.

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GASP Mission Statement

GASP will act to obtain for the residents of southwestern Pennsylvania clean air, water, and land in order to create the healthy, sustainable environment and quality of life to which we are entitled.

Methods of Achieving Mission

GASP is a citizens' group based in Southwestern PA which focuses on Allegheny County environmental issues. When pertinent to these concerns, we participate in state and national environmental decisions.

We believe in the public's right to receive accurate and thorough information on these issues and to actively participate in the decision making process.

To achieve our environmental goals on behalf of our membership, GASP will advocate, educate, serve as an environmental watchdog, mobilize action, and litigate when necessary.

We will work both independently and in cooperation with like-minded individuals and groups as determined by the Board of Directors.

We will uphold GASP's reputation for scientific integrity, honesty, and responsible involvement.



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GASP Legal Update

Cambria Coke Company

In May of 2005, GASP and PennFuture jointly appealed the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) issuance of an Air Quality Plan Approval to Cambria Coke Company for the construction of a heat recovery coke plant consisting of 280 coke ovens to be located in Cambria County. Those ovens are designed to annually process 2.55 million tons of coal into 1.7 million tons of coke. Also, the waste heat from the process will be used to generate approximately 165 megawatts of electricity.

The DEP issued the plan approval for this facility one day prior to the effective date of PM2.5 non-attainment area designations, a move intended to sidestep the new, more stringent pollution control standards. The proposed plant is located in an area designated as being in non-attainment for PM2.5. GASP and PennFuture also believe that the plant does not include the best available control technology (BACT) for sulfur dioxide, that it does not include the lowest achievable emission rate (LAER) for nitrogen oxides, and that the plant would have adverse effects on pristine federal wilderness lands.

Currently, the case, which is before the Pennsylvania Environmental Hearing Board, is still in the pre-trial phase and hearing dates have not been set. If construction on the plant does not begin by early October, the permit will expire and the plant cannot be constructed without going through the entire review process again.

Mercury continued from page 1

can be appropriately delivered to the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee where it has a chance to be strengthened is unknown at this point.

There are a few general points of agreement in the two proposals. Mercury is a persistent, toxic, bio-accumulative pollutant. The developing fetus is the most sensitive to the toxic effects of methylmercury. This form of mercury is exceptionally toxic and forms primarily from mercury input to water bodies including dry and wet mercury deposition from the air. Methylmercury magnifies in fish and other seafood which is the primary source of human exposure. This seems to be where the agreement ends.

The following is a brief comparison of the two proposals and a distillation of some arguments and concerns that are being expressed in this debate by both sides.

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by Michael Parker, GASP Policy & Outreach Coordinator

Greene Energy Resource Recovery Project

In July of 2005, GASP, the National Parks Conservation Association, and two individuals filed an appeal of the DEP's issuance of an Air Quality Plan Approval to Wellington Development - WVDT, LLC for the construction of two circulating fluidized bed boilers designed to generate 525 megawatts of electricity through the combustion of a mixture of waste coal and virgin coal. As a major stationary source of several pollutants, the facility is subject to both the Prevention of Significant Deterioration program and the New Source Review program.

In their notice of appeal, GASP and the other appellants find fault with the DEP's determination of BACT and LAER for nitrogen oxides and the with the DEP's public notice procedures. Also, we believe that the plant will have an adverse impact on air quality related values in Shenandoah National Park. The National Park Service shares this view. Presently, our appeal is at trial before the Environmental Hearing Board. The 3-week trial began on June 6th. The case was vigorously litigated by all sides, and it's difficult at this point to predict the outcome. Once the trial concludes it will be several months before the Board issues an adjudication and opinion. Construction on the facility must begin by late December before the permit expires. 

Proposed COMs Regulation

A public comment period was in effect through July 6, 2006 for a proposed Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) regulation that will allow the use of continuous opacity monitor (COM) data in determining compliance with visible emission standards. GASP has been pushing the county to adopt this regulation for nearly two years. COMs data is very useful in enforcement of visible emission standards. Initially, visible emission compliance was determined through "smoke-reading," referred to in agency-speak as "Method 9." Smoke-reading is conducted by a trained and certified individual who visually measures the opacity of stack emissions. This method is limited in that it can only be used during daylight hours. It is also limited by time. Regulators and concerned citizens can only devote so much time to smoke-reading. Thus prior to the advent of COMs, compliance was verified for only a handful of hours a year. As the name implies, COMs monitor compliance continuously.

GASP has submitted comments to ACHD in support of the proposed regulation and attended the public hearing on July 6. 

Envisioning a Revitalized Community: From the Mayor of Braddock

I would like to extend my thanks to Rachel [GASP's Executive Director] for inviting me to share my thoughts and introduce our community. I had the pleasure of meeting members of GASP during a visit to Braddock several weeks ago.

Braddock is perhaps the single most historic community in all of Allegheny County--from the start of the French and Indian War, to the birth of the American Steel Industry--all tucked into a town less than one square mile in size.

Once a community of unrivaled prosperity, wealth and amenities, Braddock lost nearly 90% of her population, homes, and businesses. Currently, we have more than 350 vacant and dilapidated homes in our community.

Between an unremitting parade of diesel slag trucks running up and down Braddock Avenue, to hosting the region's first and last functioning steel mill, our air quality consistently ranks among the worst in the county and we have the dubious distinction of having the region's highest asthma rate.

Oh, and it is also "ground zero" for the proposed Mon-Fayette Expressway that would quite literally slice the community in two and sever much of the town from the riverfront.

Yet despite these pronounced challenges, I truly would not want to live anywhere else. After living in numerous "marquee" cities like Boston, D.C., Seattle, and Philadelphia, Braddock has a weathered beauty

and aesthetic that I find profoundly compelling. Residents are warm, friendly, and deserving of better days ahead. Serving as mayor is a humbling and deeply cherished personal endeavor.

GASP, and other progressive organizations, have a committed friend to their organizational objective during my time in office. Braddock shares many of the challenges of much larger cities, yet it is small enough to enact ideas and plans to see progress.

I invite an ongoing dialogue and collaboration with GASP; from our asthma rate, to finally killing off the Mon-Fayette Expressway, we share many common objectives. To be sure, we need all of the expertise, support and prestige of an organization like your own.

For a personal tour or for any reason at all, it would be an absolute pleasure to host any members, events, or activities with GASP. Again, my sincere thanks to Rachel for this opportunity to introduce myself and our community for your consideration.

John Fetterman, Mayor of Braddock, PA

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e-mail: JKF99@post.harvard.edu

website: www.15104.cc



PHOTO: BRIDGET YURKAVAGE

Mayor John Fetterman speaks with Rachel Filippini in front of the Edgar Thomson Works in Braddock.

Diesel Campaign continued from page 1

event, we called for the following activities to be undertaken:

- Allegheny County school districts should adopt a proposed “Clean Diesel Policy” which would gradually reduce diesel emissions from school buses by 90% by 2010. This “Clean Diesel Policy” would include such things as retrofitting older school buses with diesel retrofit technology or replacing them with cleaner running 2007 and later models, using cleaner fuels, and abiding by Allegheny County’s School Bus Idling Regulation.

- Port Authority Transit (PAT) should develop a plan for retrofitting existing diesel transit buses operating in Allegheny County with diesel particulate filters.

- Allegheny County should enact the proposed regulation to reduce idling by diesel construction equipment.

- Congress should appropriate the proposed \$50 million budget allocation for local diesel clean-up under the Diesel Emission Reduction Act.



CATF Senior Scientist Bruce Hill uses an air pollution monitor to demonstrate how filters on school buses dramatically reduce tailpipe soot particle emissions.

Immediately following the official launch of the “Diesel Partnership,” Clean Air Task Force (CATF) Senior Scientist Bruce Hill used an air pollution monitor to demonstrate how diesel particulate matter filters (DPFs) on the Plum Borough school buses dramatically reduce tailpipe soot particle emissions. Plum Borough School District has taken the initiative to provide cleaner, healthier rides for their students by retrofitting 23 of their diesel school buses. We applaud



Rachel Filippini speaks at the launch of the Allegheny County Partnership to Reduce Diesel Pollution

their efforts and advocate that all school buses in Allegheny County use DPFs to ensure that all children are protected from diesel emissions. In addition to tailpipe controls, a closed-crankcase filtration device is critical to ensuring that no diesel emissions enter the cabin of the school bus. CATF’s demonstration compared one of Plum Borough’s retrofit buses to a newer, yet unretrofitted school bus. The results were pretty surprising even to the school district’s transportation manager who assumed the newer bus would be cleaner. Plum Borough School District is currently the only school district within Allegheny County using DPFs.

Clean Air Task Force has been an important collaborator to GASP in our diesel work, providing technical support, campaign organizing guidance, and assisting us in networking with other diesel campaigns around the country. We are extremely thankful for their support of our local campaign. For more information about CATF, including links to their diesel publications, visit <http://www.catf.us/projects/diesel/>.

The “Diesel Partnership” is currently joined by eight other environmental and public health organizations including; American Lung Association, Citizens for Pennsylvania’s Future, Center for Healthy Environments and Communities (at the University of Pittsburgh’s Graduate School of Public Health), Healthy Children Project of the Learning Disabilities Association of America, Rachel Carson Homestead, Save Our Transit, Sierra Club Allegheny Group, and Steel City Biofuels. The Allegheny County Partnership to Reduce Diesel Pollution and the majority of GASP’s diesel work is made possible by a grant from The Heinz Endowments. We are very grateful for their continued support of our work.

If your organization is interested in becoming a diesel coalition partner, contact GASP at 412-325-7382 or gasp@gasp-pgh.org for more information.

For more information about GASP’s diesel work, visit <http://www.gasp-pgh.org/diesel/index.html>



Mercury Reductions

1. The DEP Proposal would reduce mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants in Pennsylvania by **80% by 2010 and 90% by 2015**.
2. SB 1201 would parallel the federal mercury rule calling for a **20% reduction in mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants nationwide by 2010 and 70% by 2018**.

DEP Proposal Support

- Many argue that getting larger reductions sooner rather than later, thereby providing better health and environmental protections, is the primary point of a mercury reduction bill.
- There is concern that SB 1201 could substantially delay achieving the proposed reductions due to banking and trading of mercury reduction credits. A Congressional Research Service study found that 70% of mercury emissions reductions could be achieved nationally, but probably not until 2030 because of the extension of banking and trading opportunities.

SB 1201 Support

- Others argue that the DEP proposal does not result in substantial additional health protections beyond the federal rule and does not address economic concerns related to potential increased generator and consumer costs.
- The SB 1201 schedule along with trading keeps Pennsylvania in a similar competitive structure with other states following CAMR.

Emissions Trading

1. The DEP Proposal would disallow trading of mercury allowances between coal-fired generator facilities that reduce emissions more than required and those that do not.
2. SB 1201, paralleling the federal rule, allows trading between coal-fired power generating plants nationally.

DEP Proposal Support

- A concern directed against trading is that if a plant purchases mercury allowances rather than cleaning up its emissions, the region near the plant will receive higher levels of mercury, becoming a “hotspot.”
- Purchasing credits from an upwind out-of-state plant won't improve our Pennsylvania generators.

SB 1201 Support

- The smaller generators may not have the financial ability to put on proper control equipment but could continue operating successfully by purchasing allowances if allowed.
- The larger facilities will not have an incentive to do better than the federal standards require without a cap and trade program.

- The cap and trade program will achieve mercury reductions in the most economic way for generators and ultimately for consumers.
- There is additional pressure from the Clean Air Interstate Rule, which would result in many of Pennsylvania's large generators installing pollution controls for nitrogen and sulfur oxides, which also reduce mercury emissions.

Coal Type

1. The DEP proposal provides incentives to use bituminous coal, such as is predominant in Pennsylvania.
2. SB 1201 applies an allowance system that favors other coal types including sub-bituminous coal such as that found in the west.

DEP Proposal Support

- Most Pennsylvania coal is bituminous and would burn more cleanly in plants that had installed the proper pollution controls. Encouraging the use of bituminous coal helps keep Pennsylvania coal a viable product.

SB 1201 Support

- Bituminous coal can be found in other states and has less mercury, so the DEP proposal might drive purchases of coal to nearby bituminous coal states and not have the expected positive effects in Pennsylvania. However, SB 1201 favors western coal in its allowance structure. To address this provision, the Pennsylvania Coal Association joined with six other coal associations, bituminous coal operators and the United Mine Workers of America and took legal action. Their lawsuit narrowly challenges the allowance allocation strategy of EPA. Although these groups agree with DEP that EPA should not be favoring certain coal types over others, overall these groups prefer SB 1201 with its cap and trade provisions.

GASP weighs in on this debate first and foremost in favor of protecting public health, and therefore hangs its hat on the rule that gets more mercury out of the environment faster, and that is the DEP Proposal.

The Senate's decision to push through its bill is an unfortunate tactic. It will preclude the independent hearings on the matter scheduled next month by the state Environmental Quality Board. Remarkably, it also ignores the fact that Pennsylvania has joined 15 other states in filing a new petition in federal court, challenging the U.S. EPA's weak approach to controlling toxic mercury pollution from coal-fired power plants.

1. For more information on the mercury issue, see:
<http://www.senatormjwhite.com/environmental.html> — transcripts of three extensive hearings held in the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee on the two mercury proposals.
http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/airwaste/airwaste/regs/Mercury_Rule.htm — history of the DEP sponsored Mercury Working Group testimony as well as the history for the state specific mercury proposal.



Driving Cleaner and Greener with GASP

by Marla Ferrency, GASP Board Member

GASP's third annual Drive Cleaner, Drive Greener event was held in May at the Venture Outdoors Festival. With twenty-one personal vehicles on display and two cars available for test drives, this was GASP's largest hybrid car event to date.

The vehicles on display included six hybrid models, a biodiesel car and an ethanol SUV, and were provided by individuals who also volunteered to speak one-on-one with event attendees who had questions about owning a hybrid vehicle. The test drive vehicles—a Toyota Prius and a Ford Escape Hybrid—were provided by local dealerships. A total of 88 people took advantage of the test drive opportunity, many of whom were seriously considering purchasing a hybrid vehicle.

We estimate that several hundred of the 5000 festival attendees were educated about alternative fuel vehicles at our event—by taking a test drive, speaking with a hybrid owner, or stopping by the GASP table to talk to GASP volunteers and pick up our fact sheets.

Next year we're planning on featuring more biodiesel, ethanol and CNG vehicles, as well as the newest hybrid models available. If you would like to be involved as a volunteer or car owner, please contact Bridget Yupcavage at bridget@gasp-pgh.org. 



PHOTO: MARLA FERRENCY

The Honda Insight was one of six hybrid models at this year's Drive Cleaner, Drive Greener event.

Join GASP Today!

- \$35 Grassroots Supporters (\$15 low income/student rate)
- \$60 Grassroots Contributors
- \$100 Grassroots Patrons
- \$250 Clean Air Defenders
- \$500 Clean Air Protectors
- \$___ Other

Call GASP at (412) 325-7382 to learn about automatic monthly giving, deducted directly from your checking account or charged to your credit card. An easy, hassle-free way to support GASP all year round!

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All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The official registration and financial information of GASP may be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

A huge **thank you** to all of the event volunteers and car owners who gave their time to GASP for this important event.

Thank you to these generous companies and organizations who contributed to the event:

McCrackin Ford	Giant Eagle
Rohrich Toyota	Venture Outdoors
GetGo	WQED Multimedia

PA Hybrid Rebate Program

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection offers a rebate to commonwealth residents who buy hybrid cars. This year's program will start in July and continue until funding runs out. Last year's rebate was \$500. Individuals must submit a rebate form within six months of the purchase date of the hybrid vehicle. Details about this year's program are available on DEP's website: www.depweb.state.pa.us Keyword: Alternative Fuels 

Save the Date!

GASP's Fall 2006 Benefit Event: **Saturday, October 7, 2006**



GASP cordially invites you to come onboard the evening of October 7th for our 2006 Benefit Event, to be held on **Pittsburgh Voyager's new "green" boat**. This new flagship vessel represents a worldwide first in environmental design and construction and it features a hybrid propulsion system of electric and biodiesel. The boat's technology highlights sustainability, alternative fuels and reduced emissions—targeted areas of GASP's mission.

Please be sure to invite your family, guests and colleagues for a memorable evening touring the Three Rivers on this unique vessel. For more information and tickets, call the GASP office at (412) 325-7382.



Help Wanted

GASP is currently seeking a new Treasurer to serve on our Board. This volunteer position will assist the organization with tax reporting, annual financial reports, state registration, and other financial matters. Some accounting experience is preferred but not required. If you have a few hours to spare each month and a passion for the environment, please consider joining the GASP Board of Directors. Please let Rachel Filipini know if you are interested at gasp@gasp-pgh.org or (412) 325-7382.

Attention current GASP members!

If you are proud of the work that we do, please take a moment to pass along this Hotline to a friend, neighbor, colleague or family member who might also be interested in becoming a member of the GASP community. Help us spread the word that GASP is fighting for cleaner air in our region!

Reminder: You can read this newsletter online in the form of a pdf file (Adobe Acrobat required) and help us save paper. E-mail the editor at hotline@gasp-pgh.org if you'd prefer to receive a downloadable pdf link via e-mail when the next issue of the Hotline is published.



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