

PA Environment Digest

An Update On Environmental Issues In PA

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DEP Committee To Consider Final Draft Climate Change Action Plan Update Dec. 20

The DEP [Climate Change Advisory Committee](#) will meet on December 20 where it is expected to endorse a draft update to the Pennsylvania Climate Change Action Plan along with a set of options for future actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Commonwealth.

[Click Here](#) for a copy of the draft Action Plan Update. [Click Here](#) for a copy of the draft Appendix to the Plan that includes the individual work plan recommendations.

This is the first update to the original Climate Change Action Plan completed in 2009 as a result of the 2008 Pennsylvania Climate Change Act (Act 70).

The Plan notes there have been significant changes to Pennsylvania's greenhouse gas emissions since the base year of 2000 used in the Plan resulting in the estimate that overall climate changing emissions from the Commonwealth will be lower in 2020 than in the base year.

The reduction in the use of coal for power generation and the switch to natural gas alone will result in emissions savings of about 12 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually.

The draft Plan concludes: "Pennsylvania CO₂ (carbon dioxide) emissions have fallen dramatically, in large part because Pennsylvania is generating more electricity with natural gas instead of coal. However, other factors, including improved energy efficiency standards from consumer products and automobiles have contributed to the decline in carbon emissions. Pennsylvania continues to be a leader in reducing methane emission from the natural gas industry and solid waste landfills. Moreover, further reductions are occurring, and future reductions will occur, through new regulatory requirements like the Tailoring Rule, NSPS, and MACT (new air quality regulations)."

The draft Plan Update incorporates an updated greenhouse gas inventory, reviews the steps Pennsylvania has already taken to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and makes available a list of options and initiatives for consideration to reduce greenhouse gas emissions further in the future.

Policy/Program Recommendations

The draft Plan Update provides options in several sectors--

- **Electricity Production, Transmission and Distribution:** Act 129 electricity use reduction, coal mine methane recovery, surface mines and non-gassy underground mines, gassy underground mines, combined heat and power, reducing methane leakage from natural gas infrastructure, waste-to-energy digesters, beneficial use of municipal solid waste (waste-to-energy facilities), nuclear capacity uprates, manure digesters and sulfur hexafluoride emission reductions from the electric power industry;
- **Residential, Commercial and Industrial:** building commissioning, demand side management-natural gas and water, high-performance buildings, re-roof Pennsylvania, re-light Pennsylvania, industrial electricity best management practices, heating oil conservation and fuel switching, improved efficiency at wastewater treatment facilities and increased recycling initiative;

- **Land Use and Transportation:** alternative fueled transit bus, taxicab fleets, cutting emissions from freight transportation; and
- **Agriculture and Forestry:** durable wood products, forest protection easements, forestland protection initiative-acquisition, urban forestry and no-till farming.

Legislative Changes

The Plan Update recommends legislative changes in several areas--

- **Carbon Capture Liability:** Address long-term liability issues associated with carbon capture and sequestration;
- **Carbon Capture Incentives:** Provide incentives for the capture and use of coal mine methane;
- **DSIC Program Effectiveness:** Evaluate the effectiveness of the DSIC ([Distribution System Improvement Charges](#)) Program for utilities to determine the impact accelerated natural gas distribution infrastructure replacement has on decreasing fugitive methane emissions;
- **Expand Natural Gas Use:** Enact legislative incentivizing and directing natural gas utilities to expand existing service territory to un-serve customers in a cost-effective manner;
- **Alternative Fueled Vehicles:** Provide additional incentives for the use of alternative fueled vehicles, including electric and LNG/CNG, particularly by large fuel consumption fleets;
- **Energy Use Profiling:** Consider legislative mandating or encouraging energy use profiling for commercial buildings, similar to the City of Philadelphia ordinance;
- **Competitive Energy Markets:** Expand competitive electricity markets to foster and encourage renewable and alternative energy suppliers to enter Pennsylvania's market;
- **Support AEPS:** Continue to support the implementation of the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards; and
- **Add New Waste-To-Energy To AEPS:** Amend the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards to permit the inclusion of additional waste-to-energy facilities.

Climate Impact Assessment

In addition to the draft Action Plan Update, DEP released a [Climate Impacts Assessment Update](#) in October prepared by professors and students at Penn State University's Environment and Natural Resources Institute.

The Committee will meet in the 12th Floor Conference Room at the Rachel Carson Building in Harrisburg starting at 10:00.

For more information, visit DEP's [Climate Change Advisory Committee](#) webpage.

Click Here: December 16 PA Environment Digest

[Click Here](#) to read the December 16 PA Environment Digest.

Stories Invited

Send your stories, photos and links to videos about your project, environmental issues or programs for publication in the **PA Environment Digest** to: DHess@CrisciAssociates.com.

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