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**Sent:** Monday, June 18, 2012 1:56 PM  
**To:** mtammaro@rtenv.com  
**Subject:** EPA PROPOSES FINE PARTICLES IN AIR NAAQS REDUCTION

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## EPA PROPOSES FINE PARTICLES IN AIR NAAQS REDUCTION

Press Release

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has proposed that allowable levels of soot in the nation's air be reduced to protect public health.

Soot, one of the deadliest forms of air pollution, has fine particles that can travel deep into the lungs and endanger the bloodstream. It has been blamed for tens of thousands of premature deaths in the United States every year.

Major sources of fine particles include fuel combustion, diesel engines, some industrial processes and wood-burning stoves. The revision is proposed to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

Unlike other EPA regulations, which put limits on emissions, the soot regulations set a threshold for pollution levels in the nation's ambient air. How to meet that standard is a matter for states and other entities to determine.

However, the EPA said that based on rules already in place, 99 percent of U.S. counties, including this region, would meet the new standard by 2020 without taking any further action.

Federal law does not allow the EPA to factor in compliance costs when deciding what level of air pollution is too dangerous for public health. The Agency, nevertheless, estimated a return of \$30 to \$86 in health benefits for every dollar spent on pollution control.

The rule would reduce the acceptable annual average level of soot pollution from the current 15 micrograms per cubic meter to between 12 and 13 micrograms per cubic meter. (A daily standard which allows some spikes well above the yearly average limit would remain the same.)

A report prepared last year by the American Lung Association, the Clean Air Task Force and Earthjustice estimated that if the annual standard were set at 11 micrograms per cubic meter and the daily limit were reduced, the Philadelphia region would see 1,550 fewer premature deaths a year - the fourth largest reduction in the nation. The EPA is required to reassess ambient air quality standards every five

years.

The proposed rule came after a lengthy court battle that originated in 2006 when the Bush administration ignored the advice of science advisors who had recommended a tighter standard.

Final standards are expected to be issued by Dec. 14.

(By Sandy Bowers, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6/17/12)



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