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This Week in Review

(1) NACAA Submits Written Testimony on FY 2022 Appropriations (April 13, 2021) – NACAA submitted written testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies regarding FY 2022 appropriations, specifically related to grants for state and local air quality agencies under Sections 103 and 105 of the Clean Air Act. In the testimony, NACAA requests that Congress 1) increase federal grants to state and local air pollution control agencies by at least \$91 million above FY 2021 levels, for a total of at least \$320 million; 2) provide flexibility to state and local air quality agencies to use any additional grants to address the highest priority programs in their areas; and 3) retain grants for monitoring fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) under the authority of Section 103 of the Clean Air Act, rather than shifting it to Section 105. Due to the pandemic, the Subcommittee is not holding in-person hearings this year. For further information:

http://www.4cleanair.org/sites/default/files/Documents/House_NACAA_FY_2022_Testimony_04-13-21.pdf

(2) EPA Inspector General Finds EPA Officials Delayed Risk Communication on Ethylene Oxide (April 15, 2021) – The EPA Office of Inspector General (OIG) has issued a report entitled, “EPA Delayed Risk Communication and Issued Instructions Hindering Region 5’s Ability to Address Ethylene Oxide Emissions,” in which it concluded that the agency delayed communicating health risks to residents in Illinois living near facilities emitting ethylene oxide (EtO), including the

results of short-term monitoring near one of the facilities. According to the report, Region 5 staff members allege that a senior EPA Office of Air and Radiation (OAR) official instructed the regional office to not conduct inspections at EtO-emitting facilities unless invited by the state and that OAR issued instructions that prevented the region from effectively addressing EtO emissions. OIG recommended that OAR develop standard operating procedures outlining the roles and responsibilities of OAR and regional offices in addressing air toxics emissions, including public communications. EPA's response was that its air toxics strategy would address the recommendations. However, OIG contends that the air toxics strategy does not address the concerns and the recommendations are unresolved. For further information: <https://www.epa.gov/office-inspector-general/epa-delayed-risk-communication-and-issued-instructions-hindering-region-5s>

(3) EPA Publishes Proposed Revisions to Municipal Solid Waste Landfills Rule (April 13, 2021) – EPA has published in the *Federal Register* the proposed technical amendments and revisions to the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants for the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Landfills source category that were announced on April 8, 2021 (86 Fed. Reg. 19,176). The amendments correct errors and provide clarifications to the final rule issued on March 26, 2020 related to monitoring requirements, delegation and applicability issues, among others. EPA will accept public comment on the proposal until May 28, 2021. For further information: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-04-13/pdf/2021-07566.pdf> and <https://www.epa.gov/stationary-sources-air-pollution/municipal-solid-waste-landfills-national-emission-standards>

(4) Researchers Find Link Between Exposure to Carbon Monoxide at Levels Below NAAQS and Increased Mortality (April 13, 2021) – Nearly 40 scientists, led by Dr. Kai Chen, Assistant Professor of Epidemiology at the Yale School of Public Health, collaborated on a multi-city study to assess the linkage between short-term exposure to ambient levels of carbon monoxide (CO) and increased mortality. Their analysis of data from 337 cities in 18 countries, including 40 million deaths from 1979 to 2016, led them to the conclusion that not only are slight increases in ambient levels of CO – from vehicles and other sources – associated with increased death, but even short-term exposure to CO at levels below EPA's health-based National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) is linked to increased mortality. The study's authors found that, overall, a 1-microgram-per-cubic-meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) increase in the previous day's average CO concentration was associated with a 0.91% increase in daily total mortality, leading them to report the following in their study: "Our results suggest that current ambient air quality guidelines for CO in the USA, Europe, and China are not sufficient enough to protect public health and should be updated. Thus, reductions in ambient CO levels, even in cities meeting the current air quality guideline, could yield important health benefits." The authors also report that they found "significant" mortality risk estimates at daily concentrations of less than 0.6 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ as well as no evidence of a threshold value below which exposure to ambient CO did not affect total mortality. The current U.S. CO 1-hour NAAQS and is 35 parts per million (ppm) and the 8-hour NAAQS is 9 ppm; these standards

were established in 1971 and reviewed and retained without revision in 1985, 1994 and 2011. “Ambient carbon monoxide and daily mortality: a global time-series study in 337 cities,” appears in the current issue of *The Lancet Planetary Health*. For further information:

<https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2542-5196%2821%2900026-7>

(5) Department of Energy Announces \$162 Million in Funding to Decarbonize Trucks and Cars (April 15, 2021)

– The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced the availability of over \$162 million to support initiatives that address the two largest contributors to U.S. transportation sector greenhouse emissions; medium- and heavy-duty trucks (responsible for almost 25 percent of emissions) and passenger cars and light trucks (responsible for almost 60 percent of emissions). In particular, this funding will support the “SuperTruck 3” initiative, which seeks to electrify freight trucking, and efforts to expand electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure and reduce emissions from on- and off-road vehicles. When she announced this funding, DOE Secretary Jennifer M. Granholm said, “DOE’s first two SuperTruck Initiatives led the biggest truck makers in the American semi market to take massive leaps in fuel efficiency. This new funding triples down on that progress with a push towards electrifying trucks of all sizes, along with efforts to expand EV charging access and develop low-emission car engines.” The SuperTruck 3 funding opportunity – which offers up to \$100 million over four years – is a partnership between the Vehicle Technologies Office (VTO) and Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technologies Office (HFTO) of DOE’s Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. The funding opportunity for innovations to reduce emissions from and increase efficiencies of on- and off-road vehicles – which offers up to \$62 million – is under the direction of VTO. The application process for each consists of two phases: 1) a concept paper, due by May 13, 2021 and 2) a full application, due July 12, 2021. All applicants are required to submit a plan for achieving specific diversity, equity and inclusion objectives. The SuperTruck 3 funding opportunity number is DE-FOA-0002450; the Low-GHG Vehicle Technologies Research, Development, Demonstration and Deployment funding opportunity number is DE-FOA-0002475. For further information:

<https://www.energy.gov/articles/doe-announces-162-million-decarbonize-cars-and-trucks>, <https://www.energy.gov/eere/funding-opportunities>, <https://www.energy.gov/eere/fuelcells/hydrogen-and-fuel-cell-technologies-office-funding-opportunities>, <https://eere-exchange.energy.gov/> and <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html>

(6) Los Angeles County Neighborhoods With Poor Air Quality Experienced More COVID-19 Deaths Than Other Communities in the County, Researchers Report (April 14, 2021)

– A study led by researchers at the University of California Los Angeles’ Fielding School of Public Health found that in Los Angeles County, the highest death rates from the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in communities with the poorest air quality. In “Spatial analysis of COVID-19 and traffic-related air pollution in Los Angeles” – to be published in the August 2021 issue of *Environment International* – researchers report that air pollution may contribute to COVID-19 incidence and death and that their findings suggest that

chronic exposure to nitrogen dioxide has a substantial impact on the incidence of COVID-19 and mortality. In addition, the researchers highlight that communities with higher levels of air pollution tend to have higher proportions of lower-income and Black and Latinx residents and that the higher pollution levels in these areas “may explain why these groups suffered disproportionately from the pandemic.” Los Angeles is one of the only cities in the world to publicly report COVID-19 cases and mortality on a neighborhood level, thus allowing for more accurate pollution exposure estimates. For further information:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160412021001562?via%3Dihub>

(7) Research Shows That With the Right Policies U.S. Can Electrify On-Road Transportation by 2035 With Substantial Economic Benefits (April 15, 2021)

– In a study from the University of California Berkeley, researchers report that all new cars and trucks sold in the U.S. by 2035 can be powered by electricity. The authors of “Plummeting Costs & Dramatic Improvements in Batteries Can Accelerate Our Clean Transportation Future” also report that “robust policy reforms” will be necessary to reduce emissions and transportation costs and increase jobs. Further, they illustrate how improvements in battery technology, costs, manufacturing scale and industry ambition will accelerate vehicle electrification and how the required infrastructure to support the transition to electrification can be built quickly and cost effectively. In terms of economic benefits, “rapid electrification” of new cars and trucks is projected to save consumers \$2.7 trillion by 2050 – which translates into roughly \$1,000 per household per year over the coming 30 years – and support a net increase of 2 million jobs in 2035. In addition, the electrification of all new car and truck sales, combined with a 90-percent clean-energy grid, would reduce air pollution, prevent 150,000 premature deaths, avoid \$1.3 trillion in environmental and health costs through 2050 and put the U.S. on a path to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius – a target scientists argue is necessary to avoid the most catastrophic consequences of climate change. For further information:

<https://www.2035report.com/transportation/>

(8) FERC Finalizes Policy Allowing Carbon Pricing (April 15, 2021) – The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approved a policy allowing carbon prices set at the state level to be included in electricity prices charged in wholesale electricity markets. Chairman Rich Glick and Commissioner Allison Clements – both Democrats - were joined by Republican Commissioner Neil Chatterjee in approving the policy, which applies in electric transmission organization territories that are regulated by the FERC. Republican Commissioners James Danly and Mark Christie voted against the policy. The policy provides guidance to power markets that might want to include carbon emission trading programs, such as those found in California and the Northeast, in their pricing programs. For further information: <https://www.ferc.gov/news->

[events/news/ferc-issues-policy-statement-carbon-pricing-organized-wholesale-markets](#)

(9) EPA Releases 2019 GHG Inventory That Shows Power Sector Led Emissions Decline (April 14, 2021) – Analysis of 2019 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions show that U.S. emissions dropped by 1.7 percent in 2019 compared with 2018. Issued annually, this year’s “Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks” attributed the reduction to decreased carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel combustion, resulting from a 1 percent drop in total energy use and the displacement of coal by renewables and fossil gas in the power sector. Mobile sources remain the largest source of U.S. GHG emissions, responsible for about 29 percent in 2019. Electricity production was responsible for 25 percent, manufacturing produced 23 percent of emissions, buildings produced 13 percent, and agriculture was responsible for about 10 percent. Between 2017 and 2018, total U.S. GHG emissions had increased by about 3 percent. For further information: <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/inventory-us-greenhouse-gas-emissions-and-sinks>

(10) Brenda Mallory Confirmed to Lead CEQ (April 14, 2021) – In a 53-45 vote, the U.S. Senate has confirmed Brenda Mallory to be the chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). Ms. Mallory will be the 12th Chair of the White House CEQ and the first African American to serve in the role. She was most recently the Director of Regulatory Affairs at the Southern Environmental Law Center, spent 14 years at EPA and served as CEQ’s General Counsel during the Obama Administration. The CEQ advises the president on environmental issues and is the entity responsible for the National Environmental Protection Act, which requires environmental review of federal projects and programs. For further information: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/04/14/ceq-welcomes-brenda-mallory-as-new-chair/>

The Week Ahead

- [The Woodrow Wilson Center Virtual Discussion on "The Ocean: Turning a Climate Change Problem Into a Solution"](#) – April 19, 2021
- [The Environmental and Energy Study Institute Virtual Briefing on "Climate Adaptation and Resilience: The Road to COP26 - Raising Global Ambition to Address Climate Impacts"](#) – April 19, 2021
- [Accelerating the Energy Transition: Infrastructure, Jobs and Equity: A Virtual Climate and Energy Forum](#) – April 19, 2021
- [House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy Hearing on "Generating Equity: Deploying a Just and Clean Energy Future"](#) – April 20, 2021

- [House Foreign Affairs Europe, Energy, the Environment and Cyber Subcommittee Hearing on "Restoration of the Transatlantic Dialogue: The Global Fight Against Climate Change"](#) – April 20, 2021
 - [House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources Hearing on Building Back Better: Reducing Pollution and Creating Jobs Through Offshore Wind](#) – April 20, 2021
 - [House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis Hearing on Making the Case for Climate Action: Creating New Jobs and Catalyzing Economic Growth](#) – April 20, 2021
 - [Senate Committee on Appropriations Hearing on The American Jobs Plan: Infrastructure, Climate Change, and Investing in Our Nation's Future](#) – April 20, 2021
 - [House Appropriations Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee Hearing on "FY2022 Budget Request for the Environmental Protection Agency,"](#) (Including testimony from Administrator Michael Regan) – April 21, 2021
 - [House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology Hearing on Working Towards Climate Equity: The Case for a Federal Climate Service](#) – April 21, 2021
 - [House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment Hearing on "Sustainable Wastewater Infrastructure: Measures to Promote Resiliency and Climate Adaptation and Mitigation,"](#) – April 21, 2021
 - [Leaders Summit on Climate](#) – April 22-23, 2021
 - [House Committee on Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on the Environment Hearing on the Role of Fossil Fuel Subsidies in Preventing Action on the Climate Crisis](#) – April 22, 2021
 - [Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Hearing on 21st Century Communities: Capitalizing on Opportunities in the Clean Energy Economy](#) – April 22, 2021
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