

August 11, 2025

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
EPA Docket Center, Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2018-0794
Mail code: 28221T
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Attention: Docket No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2018-0794

Re: Proposed Rulemaking: Repeal of Specific Amendments to the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) for Coal- and Oil-Fired Electric Utility Steam Generating Units (EGUs). 90 FR 25535 (June 17, 2025)

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed repeal of the 2024 amendments to the NESHAP for Coal- and Oil-Fired EGUs, commonly referred to as the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS), that were promulgated on May 7, 2024 (89 FR 38508). (Proposed MATS Repeal). The two provisions within the 2024 MATS amendments that specifically affect sources in Pennsylvania are the revised filterable particulate matter (fPM) standards and the revised fPM emission standard compliance demonstration requirements to use PM continuous emission monitoring systems (CEMS).

The 2024 MATS amendments lowered the fPM emission standard, which serves as a surrogate for non-mercury hazardous air pollutant (HAP) metals, from 0.030 lb/MMBtu to 0.010 lb/MMBtu from subject existing coal-fired EGUs. 89 FR at 38510. PADEP disagrees with EPA that it is cost prohibitive to achieve the lower fPM standard. PADEP has determined that fourteen coal-fired EGUs in the Commonwealth are subject to the lower fPM standard. Nine of these EGUs already meet the 0.010 lb/MMBtu fPM standard, including five waste coal-fired EGUs, showing that this level of control is cost-effective. PADEP believes that the other five EGUs, all of which burn waste-coal, could achieve the 0.010 lb/MMBtu fPM standard through feasible efficiency improvements and control technology optimization.

The non-mercury metal HAPs regulated by the 2024 MATS amendments include, arsenic, cadmium, chromium, lead, nickel, and selenium, which are associated, individually and in mixtures, with a wide range of serious health harms, including adverse neurological, cardiovascular, immunological, reproductive, liver, kidney, and respiratory effects, as well as cancer.¹ Serious health harms are also associated with the fPM, in particular the fine PM or PM_{2.5} (fine particles that are less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter) components. PM_{2.5} can accumulate in the respiratory system and is associated with numerous adverse health effects. Certain sensitive groups, including the elderly, individuals with cardiopulmonary disease such as asthma, and children, appear to be at greatest risk from inhalation of PM_{2.5}. The MATS

¹ See Comments of the Attorneys General of Massachusetts, et al. at 5 (June 23, 2023), Docket ID No, EPA-HQ-OAR-2018-0794-5988.

amendments are expected to reduce PM_{2.5} emissions by 46.7 tons each year from five waste coal-fired power plants in Pennsylvania. The PADEP expects that the EPA's proposed repeal would result in backsliding on air quality improvements.

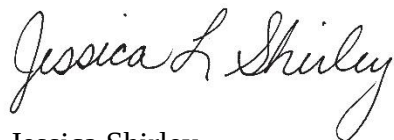
In addition, the five waste coal-fired plants are all in counties near or adjacent to Dauphin, Lancaster, and York Counties, all of which have 2022 and 2023 annual PM_{2.5} design values that are in excess of the primary annual 2024 PM_{2.5} National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The NAAQS is designed to protect public health from the PM_{2.5} by limiting the amount of that pollutant present in the ambient air.² Thus, not only will residents of the Commonwealth receive health benefits from reduced emissions of non-mercury metal HAPs and the associated PM_{2.5} that the 2024 MATS amendments require, those emission reductions will assist the Commonwealth in meeting its regulatory obligations under the federal Clean Air Act to come into compliance with the NAAQS.

The MATS amendments require all subject EGUs to begin using PM continuous emission monitoring systems (CEMS). 89 FR 38510. PADEP disagrees that the use of PM CEMS for compliance demonstration is an unnecessary expense for the owner or operator of the source. Consequently, PA DEP does not support the reinstatement of the optional low emitting EGU (LEE) program since the PM CEMS requirement renders the LEE program superfluous. As previously noted by EPA in the 2024 MATS amendments, PM CEMS enable power plant operators to quickly identify and correct problems with air pollution control devices. 89 FR 38510, 38511. The use of PM CEMS will assist the Commonwealth in demonstrating attainment with PM_{2.5} NAAQS and protecting the surrounding communities from the harms of those emissions.

In conclusion, the repeal of the revised filterable particulate matter (fPM) standards and the revised fPM emission standard compliance demonstration requirements would be contrary to Pennsylvania's interest in reducing air pollution from Coal- and Oil-Fired EGUs in the Commonwealth.

PADEP appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the EPA's proposal to repeal the 2024 MATS amendments. Should you have questions or need additional information, please contact Nick Lazor, Director of the Bureau of Air Quality, by e-mail at nlazor@pa.gov.

Sincerely,



Jessica Shirley
Secretary

² PADEP Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee, *Fine Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}), National Ambient Air Quality Standard 14-15* (Apr. 4, 2024), https://files.dep.state.pa.us/Air/AirQuality/AQPortalFiles/Advisory%20Committees/Air%20Quality%20Technical%20Advisory%20Committee/2024/4-4-24/PM2.5_AQTAC_PRESENTATION_4-4-24.pdf.