

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
AIR QUALITY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Draft May 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee (AQTAC or Committee) members present via Teams or in-person.

Rob Altenburg	☒	Christine Heath	☐	Richard Shaffer	☒	Maryjoy Ulatowski	☒
Scott Brown	☒	Charles McPhedran	☒	John Shimshock	☒	Shaun Vozar	☒
Kimberly Coy	☒	Mohamed Mellaouch	☐	John Slade	☒	John Walliser	☐
Joseph Duckett	☒	Michael Nines	☒	Kevin Stewart	☒		
Joseph Guzek	☒	Marianne Payne	☐	John Tissue	☒		

CALL TO ORDER & ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Chair John Tissue called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

John Tissue requested a motion to approve the 2/6/25 meeting minutes. Joe Duckett made a motion to approve. Rob Altenburg seconded. John Tissue, hearing no opposition, moved to approve the minutes.

PRESENTATION

Arun Sharma (DEP) presented on Draft Final-Form Rulemaking Corrections to Reasonably Available Control Technology (RACT) III Requirements

Discussion

Joe Duckett asked for clarification on the presentation where one slide stated that the owner or operator of a turbine will have the option to use the correct mass equivalent basis factors. Sean Wenrich (DEP) clarified that no one yet has inquired about using the factors, whether they are correct or incorrect. If someone had inquired about using the factors, DEP would have worked with them to ensure the correct ones were being used. DEP wanted to make sure the correct factors were part of the rulemaking.

PRESENTATION

Sean Nolan (DEP) presented Particulate Matter (PM2.5) 2024 Year in Review

Discussion

Joe Duckett asked whether the annual PM2.5 standard of 9.0 µg/m³ is expected to remain in place or if it might change. Sean Nolan clarified that the 2024 PM2.5 standard already represents a reconsideration of the 2020 standard. Therefore, any further change would require another formal reconsideration. As for what will ultimately happen, DEP is awaiting guidance from its federal partners.

Mr. Duckett also sought clarification regarding the issue of exceptional events. He noted that the mapping shown in the presentation did not appear to reflect much change, despite Mr. Nolan's statement that the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) were no longer being exceeded. Mr. Nolan then revisited the mapping in his presentation and explained the differences, noting that DEP focused its exceptional event analysis on three

monitoring sites: Avalon (Allegheny County Health Department or ACHD), York (DEP), and the Fire Admin Building (Philadelphia Air Management Services or PAMS). The analysis showed that if PM2.5 data from two specific exceptional events were excluded from compliance calculations for the 2025 PM2.5 NAAQS, these three sites would no longer exceed the standard based on the 2023 PM2.5 design value period. This outcome satisfies the “regulatory significance” requirement for conducting an exceptional event analysis.

Mr. Duckett also asked whether DEP has ever conducted an analysis comparing the increased use of natural gas to PM2.5 values. Mr. Nolan responded that such an analysis has not been performed but agreed it could be a worthwhile exercise.

Shaun Vozar commented that Mr. Duckett’s questions addressed several points he had also intended to raise. He observed that DEP appears to have reduced the number of non-attainment areas from four to two, which is a positive change.

Kevin Stewart asked why the three sites were chosen as DEP did not seem to choose the highest three sites. Mr. Nolan explained that DEP had assessed all monitors across the state and identified those three sites as ones where the exceptional event analysis could potentially bring the design values below the standard. For other monitors, while there was evidence of impact from the events, the exclusion of data did not reduce design values enough to meet the federal “regulatory significance” requirement.

John Tissue asked whether there had recently been an executive order concerning exceptional events. Mr. Nolan confirmed that an executive order had called for the re-evaluation of exceptional events, but said that it does not currently impact DEP’s actions or plans. Mr. Tissue then asked whether DEP had a plan for addressing areas still exceeding the NAAQS. Mr. Nolan responded that DEP is actively evaluating strategies. Among the tools being used are PM2.5 speciation data and the Positive Matrix Factorization (PMF) model—a statistical tool that analyzes all constituents of PM2.5. Mr. Tissue asked if AQTAC would be able to see that data. Mr. Nolan stated they developed a report that DEP is currently reviewing and may be able to provide something for AQTAC to review once that work is completed.

Joseph Duckett asked about speciation of the results from the monitors, specifically how much of the PM2.5 is direct versus condensable. Mr. Nolan explained there is some limit to the technology. It is difficult with the speciation data to determine how much of the particulate matter is condensable. He added that one recent change to DEP’s monitoring network was the relocation of a speciation monitor from the Lebanon site to the Harrisburg site. DEP is continuing to evaluate the data.

PRESENTATION

Deborah Wehr (DEP) led a discussion on Potential Philadelphia Ozone Contingency Measures

Discussion

Deborah Wehr provided background on the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for ozone. In September 2023, DEP submitted the 2015 moderate ozone SIP for Philadelphia. In July 2024, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved a request to voluntarily reclassify the multi-state Philadelphia area from moderate to serious. The serious non-attainment SIP revision will be due to EPA on January 1, 2026. In December 2024, EPA issued a

document entitled “Guidance on the Preparation of State Implementation Plan Provisions that Address the Nonattainment Area Contingency Measure Requirements for Ozone and Particulate Matter”, which somewhat changed previous interpretations on contingency measures. Mrs. Wehr explained some of the contingency measure requirements discussed in the EPA document. DEP is asking AQTAC for technical guidance and ideas for contingency measures that could be put in place to assist with the non-attainment SIP. Mrs. Wehr suggested that AQTAC could submit their feedback and ideas by mid-June to ensure the SIP can be submitted by January.

John Tissue asked how DEP would like the information presented and how complete the information would need to be. Mrs. Wehr clarified that DEP is open to anything that AQTAC can come up with. DEP needs technical guidance. Every measure that seems easy to implement has already been done. So DEP needs help with things that may be more complicated or outside the box ideas.

Charles McPhedran stated he was interested in helping and asked if DEP could provide a description of what DEP is asking for and any information EPA provided after the moderate SIP submittal. Mrs. Wehr stated that the moderate SIP submittal is on E-Library and is publicly available.

Joe Duckett asked for clarification regarding the EPA contingency measures document published in December of 2024. This document was provided for AQTAC’s review prior to the meeting. Mr. Duckett indicated there is some text in bold that appears to be something that was added by DEP and not on the original document. The document has not been edited by DEP. All the text included on the document we provided is as the document appears on the EPA website. Mr. Duckett asked if DEP has recently heard from EPA about the contingency measures since the administration at the EPA has been experiencing some changes, what they will require may have changed as well. Mrs. Wehr explained that DEP can only submit the SIP based on the currently provided written guidance.

John Tissue commented that AQTAC could use SharePoint to submit any information they have on potential contingency measures that could assist DEP with preparation of the SIP. Kristina Snurkowski (DEP), the AQTAC liaison, set up a SharePoint folder for members to contribute their ideas after the meeting and sent the link out to all AQTAC members.

John Shimshock noted that, based on his understanding of the redesignation, it would lower the applicability threshold for certain major sources. As a result, some facilities that previously did not require a Title V permit might now fall under Title V requirements. Mr. Shimshock asked whether DEP had identified these specific facilities and whether they had been notified. Sean Wenrich clarified that the redesignation does not change the Title V or New Source Review (NSR) thresholds, which remain at 25 tons per year for nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). What has changed pertains specifically to RACT requirements for NOx. The VOC major source threshold under RACT III remains at 50 tons per year, but the NOx threshold has been lowered from 100 tons per year to 50 tons per year. Mr. Wenrich stated that DEP’s regional offices, along with the air quality program in Philadelphia County, have already contacted facilities that may be affected to ensure their RACT obligations are being met.

PRESENTATION

Sean Nolan presented on the 2025 Annual Monitoring Network Plan

Discussion

Joe Duckett asked why DEP continues to monitor for lead in its network if lead has not been detected for approximately ten years. Sean Nolan explained that because the area in question is designated as non-attainment for lead, DEP is still required to monitor for it. Specifically, in the North Laureldale area, once it was designated as non-attainment, DEP developed an attainment plan. That plan included a long-term strategy for maintaining compliance with the lead standard over the next twenty years, based on clean data determinations and a formal maintenance plan. These are essentially two consecutive ten-year plans, which mandate continued monitoring. Relocating the monitor to a location closer to the facility would be more indicative of the impact to the community. Mr. Nolan discussed the challenges DEP faces in areas where the primary source of lead emissions, such as certain industrial facilities, has shut down. Even in those cases, DEP is still obligated to continue monitoring to demonstrate compliance with maintenance requirements. Mr. Duckett asked if DEP considered changing from a permanently installed monitoring to a temporary monitoring station that can be moved around to drop the number of fixed monitoring stations. Mr. Nolan outlined the challenges related to different types of monitors. For example, some monitors need a climate-controlled shelter whereas other monitors can be outside on a raised platform. Additionally, DEP has to use the design value calculations on the data, which requires a three-year period of data from a set location. So ultimately, DEP has to leave the monitors in set locations to track the trend of the data over time to demonstrate compliance with the NAAQS for EPA.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

One individual signed up in advance of the meeting to provide public comments. Public comments are summarized below:

Nathan Eachus, Concerned PA Citizen of Luzerne County

Mr. Eachus provided comment regarding data centers in Pennsylvania, which are powered by on-site methane turbines. Mr. Eachus explained that the data centers are being permitted under DEP's Title V and RACT III air quality standards, despite emitting hazardous pollutants that endanger public health. The expansion of data centers in Pennsylvania presents a growing public health and environmental challenge. Mr. Eachus expressed concerns about DEP's and AQTAC's silence regarding environmental issues related to data centers and believes that Pennsylvanians deserve full disclosure, real protections, and an agency that puts human health before industry.

OLD & NEW BUSINESS / OPEN DISCUSSION

John Tissue opened the meeting for AQTAC business/open discussion.

John Tissue asked if any AQTAC members had questions about the Update on Rulemakings and SIP Revisions document. No members indicated they had questions at the meeting. If any questions come up, they can be emailed to the AQTAC Liaison at RA-EPAQTAC@pa.gov.

Old Business:

John Tissue discussed AQTAC's project to review air quality guidance documents. The last meeting of the group of AQTAC members who are working on this project was held on April 24, 2025. DEP has set up a SharePoint folder so that AQTAC members can collaborate online for this work. The subgroup has requested that DEP

develop a list of documents that AQTAC should focus on to help guide the direction of the project. The AQTAC subgroup is working on identifying key documents, including some from other states, that can be used as reference for this project.

Joe Duckett asked about the status of the Health Department well study. Kristina Snurkowski explained that the last update on the well study was that Acting Secretary, Jessica Shirley, wrote a letter of response to the AQTAC members and Joe Tissue had shared that letter with the other committee members through email. The office of the Secretary also conveyed AQTAC's letter to the Health Department. That update was outlined during the February 2, 2025 AQTAC meeting. There has been no new information since then. Mr. Duckett commented that DEP should not let this subject drop and should keep pushing for a follow-up study to be conducted. John Tissue asked about the other study that DEP mentioned in the letter sent by the secretary. Sean Nolan outlined the new air monitoring study being conducted on one of CNX's well pads in Washington County. DEP is in the background phase of the study currently. They plan to monitor VOCs and PM2.5 throughout the lifecycle of the well pad. Mr. Nolan stated that perhaps DEP could provide an update to AQTAC regarding that project at a future meeting.

New Business:

Kevin Stewart commented that AQTAC should consider a future agenda item regarding the public comment provided by Nathan Eachus about data centers. Charles McPhedran commented that he agrees the data center issue is coming to Pennsylvania and can be a major impact on air quality. Mr. McPhedran agrees the AQTAC members should be informing themselves regarding data centers. Committee members discussed data centers and what information about data centers should be discussed at future meetings. DEP will discuss this suggestion and try to plan an agenda item related to data centers for a future meeting.

Joe Duckett asked if DEP has been in recent communication with their partners at EPA and could provide any insight as to how changes in the federal government may impact Pennsylvania. Nancy Herb (DEP) explained that DEP is watching what is going on at the federal level and keeping an eye on the announcements and actions that occur. DEP is continuing their work on anything that is a federal requirement based on the current deadlines so DEP will meet those deadlines unless they are changed. If EPA takes an action, then DEP will re-evaluate, but DEP can't change course based on announcements.

John Tissue announced that the May 8, 2025, meeting is the last meeting of the 2023-2025 AQTAC terms. Reappointment letters and email correspondence will be sent out to AQTAC members before the next scheduled meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before AQTAC, John Tissue requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kevin Stewart made a motion to adjourn. Joe Duckett seconded. John Tissue, hearing no opposition, adjourned the meeting at 11:28 am.

The next AQTAC meeting is August 14, 2025.

Minutes prepared by Kristina Snurkowski Air Quality Program Specialist (AQPS). For additional information about AQTAC, please contact the AQTAC Liaison (RA-EPAQTAC@pa.gov) or by visiting the AQTAC Web page at: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dep/public-participation/advisory-committees/air-advisory-committees/air-quality-technical-advisory-committee.html>