

New Jersey Clean Air Council
P.O. Box 027, 401 E. State St.
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www.state.nj.us/dep/cleanair

Air Pollution

- *Effects on Public Health*
- *Health Care Costs*
- *Health Insurance Cost*



New Jersey Clean Air Council Annual Public Hearing

April 13, 2005
9:30 a.m.
New Jersey Department of
Environmental Protection
Public Hearing Room
401 E. State St.
Trenton, NJ

Clean Air Council 2005 Hearing

Public Health Costs and Air Pollution

The Clean Air Council invites you to attend its annual public hearing at 9:30 a.m. on April 13 in the public hearing room at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Based on testimony offered during the hearing, the Council will be making recommendations to the DEP to address the impact of air pollution on health care costs.

The Challenge

Poor air quality is predominantly a public health issue, but it also creates important and widespread economic problems. For example:

- People sickened by poor air quality need medical care, at a constantly rising cost.
- Rising health care costs bring rising premiums for health insurance, with health insurance costs cutting into personal income and business profits.
- More than 2 million New Jerseyans under age 65 lack health insurance, and the care New Jersey hospitals provide these uninsured strains the state's budget and costs New Jersey taxpayers.

- Businesses see productivity decline when asthma and other air-quality related illness keep employees away from work or when employees take time off to care for children suffering from these conditions.

- Worker's compensation and liability costs rise when employees suffer from long-term disabilities either caused or exacerbated by poor air quality.

Economists have estimated that poor air quality annually costs \$800 million in direct and indirect medical costs nationwide. These estimates include \$660 million in direct and indirect annual medical costs for occupational related lung disorders and asthma, which are caused or aggravated by exposure to workplace air contaminants. ¹

The New Jersey Clean Air Council is an advisory body to the state Department of Environmental Protection. Each year the Council releases a report highlighting air issues affecting New Jersey. This year, the Council is seeking information and public comment on the health costs of air quality and on the most productive strategies for reducing pollutants and related health care costs.

¹ Leigh, J. et al. (2002). Costs of COPD and Asthma. Chest 121: 264-272.

Questions for the Hearing

The Clean Air Council would like input in response to the following questions at the public hearing:

- ☐ What medical conditions are caused or aggravated by poor air quality?
- ☐ What is the incidence of asthma among children and adults in New Jersey and how does poor air quality affect people with asthma?
- ☐ What can the public and private sectors do to improve air quality?
- ☐ Does outdoor air pollution have similar effects on health as indoor air pollution?
- ☐ What are the short term (e.g. asthma attack) and long term (e.g. mortality) costs of poor air quality, both in financial and public health terms?
- ☐ How do the public health effects and health care costs of naturally occurring air contaminants, such as pollen, compare to man-made air contaminants?
- ☐ What is the rate of work-related asthma among New Jerseyans and what are its productivity and health care costs?
- ☐ How does poor air quality effect the demand for and costs of health care services?
- ☐ What is the geographic distribution of air pollution within the state of New Jersey and how does this relate to the

- patterns of health care demand and costs?
- ☐ What is the relationship between New Jersey’s air quality and environmental justice? How do illnesses linked to poor air quality disproportionately affect low-income communities and communities of color?
 - ☐ How does second-hand smoke affect public health and air quality?
 - ☐ How do the per-capita societal costs of poor air quality nationwide compare to the costs in New Jersey?

Hearing Procedures

The Clean Air Council has invited guest speakers who will address many of these topics and provide suggestions to help New Jersey meet its air quality challenges. Interested residents of New Jersey also are invited and encouraged to participate.

Anyone wishing to attend and also testify during the public hearing is asked to complete the attached Notice of Intention to Attend and mail it to the Clean Air Council by March 15, 2005.

Anyone wishing to testify also can contact Sonia Evans by telephone at (609) 633-2007, by e-mail at cac@dep.state.nj.us or by fax at (609) 984-6369. Presenters will be allowed 10 minutes and are asked to bring 25 copies of their remarks for use by Council members, the hearing transcriber and the press.

The hearing record will remain open until May 6, 2005, to allow the receipt of addi-

tional written testimony. Such testimony may be mailed to the following address:

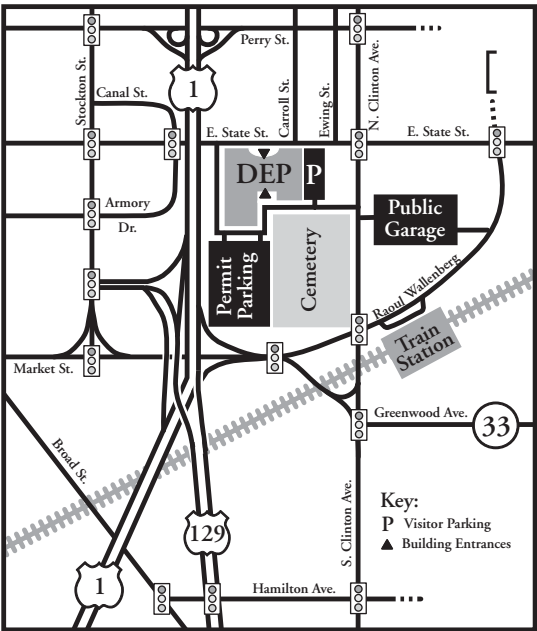
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The Clean Air Council

First convened in 1968, the Clean Air Council was created by the Legislature to make recommendations to the state of New Jersey on matters and programs pertaining to air pollution control.

For more information on the Clean Air Council, visit www.state.nj.us/dep/cleanair.

Directions to DEP



Public Hearing
Notice of Intention to Attend

- ☐ I plan to attend the April 13, 2005, Clean Air Council public hearing.
- ☐ I plan to testify at the public hearing.

Name _____

Company _____

Organization _____

Title _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

E-mail _____

Please mail by March 15, 2005 to: New Jersey Clean Air Council, 401 E. State St., P.O. Box 027, Trenton, NJ 08625-0027