



Newsletter

Environmental Connection

Spring 2013

Contents

- Winter Inversions Prompt Transportation Innovations
- 2013 Legislative Session/Legislators Shine Light on Air Quality Bills
- DEQ Promotes Sustainability at Annual Conference
- Division of Air Quality Ends Wood Burning Restrictions; Prepares for Summer Ozone

Sponsored by the Utah Department of Environmental Quality

Donna Kemp Spangler, Editor

Winter Inversions Prompt Transportation Innovations

This winter's bad air quality has prompted some Utah companies and agencies to do what they can to reduce air pollution. Recognizing that 57 percent of the air pollution during winter inversion periods comes from automobiles, companies and agencies are looking at alternative transportation strategies with the goal of having fewer cars on the road.

"I applaud Utah companies for taking the initiative to encourage employees to use alternative transportation," said Bryce Bird, director of the Division of Air Quality. "This sets an important example that it will take all of us to improve our air."

The following companies are utilizing alternative transportation strategies that include: carpools/vanpools, bike to work, public transit and teleworking programs:

The Utah arm of the Federal Highway Administration chose to develop a policy to provide employees with the option of teleworking during periods of unhealthy air quality conditions.

Steven Call, program performance team leader, coordinates the effort. He monitors [EPA's AirNow website](#) and alerts participants by email when there is unhealthy air quality conditions, meaning the Air Quality Index exceeds 100. (Approximately half of the 17 employees participate in the telework program.)

As an asthmatic, Call understands the intrinsic link between air quality and personal health. "In the final analysis, individual health considerations were a compelling reason for employees to participate in this program," he said. Call participated in the teleworking program 10 times this winter, believing that he can be as productive at home as in the office. He believes that he should do what he can during inversion periods, both as an individual and an employee.

Intermountain Healthcare (Intermountain) just teamed with UDOT's TravelWise program to work together to enhance their alternative transportation program. Intermountain believes that

they must be clear in what they hope to achieve and make options as easy as possible in order to have a successful alternative transportation program.

“Intermountain believes that an alternative transportation program is the right thing to do,” said Steven Bergstrom, sustainability director. “Whether you view an alternative transportation program from a good business case, it will reduce your expenses; or CSR standpoint, as one of the largest businesses in the community we need to set the example; or from a healthy environment, we need to make sure that we are not causing harm to our communities, customers or patients.”

Currently, Intermountain provides discounted UTA passes and exclusive parking for car-pools, hybrid or electric vehicles. At most facilities, bicycle riders are provided bike racks or storage, changing/shower rooms, and lockers. As a part of Intermountain’s Healthy Living Program, employees can earn points for prizes for many activities associated with alternative transportation.

At ATK Aerospace Systems, employees can post carpool and vanpool ads on the ATK Intranet. The classified ads are published twice a month and are a free service for any ATK Utah employee. In addition to the classified ad posting, ATK also provides a direct link to UDOT’s Commuterlink site on the Intranet. UDOT’s Commuterlink includes photos, videos and traffic data to communicate Utah's traffic status to the public to make driving in Utah more efficient, resulting in less air emissions.

Rob Yarosik, Environmental Engineer, takes advantage of the Flex Commuter Benefit by purchasing monthly UTA bus and train passes (UTA) through pre-tax payroll deductions.

“Ultimately, our individual and commuting choices do have an effect on our air quality and our company is committed to making a difference in the air that we breath,” concludes Yarosik. One of the best environmental initiatives that a company or agency can do to significantly reduce its environmental footprint is to provide alternative transportation programs, benefits and incentives to employees. Implementing employee carpools, bike to work, public transit and telework programs all support the goal of having fewer cars on the road.

This article was written by Frances Bernards, business assistance consultant for DEQ.

2013 Legislative Session Legislators Shine Light on Air Quality Bills

With the exception of air quality, the 2013 legislative session was relatively quiet for the Department of Environmental Quality. Here is a summary of environmental bills introduced during the session.

Air Quality

Air quality dominated this year’s legislative session, as a succession of winter inversions led to unhealthy pollution levels that made national news and captured the attention of legislators and the public. While not all the clean air bills introduced made it into law, the issue sparked thoughtful discussions on possible solutions to a perennial problem. Successful legislation included increased support for the use of natural gas vehicles and requirements for state agencies and school districts to develop and implement plans to mitigate emissions.

HB 96 Cleaner Burning Fuels Tax Credit Amendments (Rep. Draxler, R-Logan)

This legislation extends individual and corporate tax credits for cleaner burning fuels to the end of 2014. The bill applies a tax credit for qualifying electric or hybrid vehicles, vehicles fueled by natural gas, and natural gas conversion equipment. It retains the current tax credit of \$605 for purchase of new electric or hybrid vehicle, \$2,500 credit for purchase of a natural gas vehicle, or 50 percent of the cost of equipment for conversion minus any clean fuel grant money received, up to a maximum of \$2,500. The bill also requires transfers from the General Fund into the Education Fund for the amount of the tax credit claimed that exceeds \$500,000.

HB 168 Air Quality Mitigation by Government Entities (Rep. Arent, D-Salt Lake)

Designed to improve air quality by reducing emissions from government entities, this legislation requires agencies and school districts to report on current air quality mitigation efforts and develop and implement, within one year, a plan to mitigate emissions. Mitigation efforts are focused on agencies and school districts located in eight counties that are either in nonattainment areas or are experiencing significant pollution problems.

HB 210 Motor Vehicle Emission Amendments (Rep. Redd, R-Logan)

This legislation provides the means for Cache County to implement a vehicle emissions program to comply with requirements of the proposed PM_{2.5} State Implementation Plan (SIP). The bill allows a county required to implement a new vehicle emissions inspection and maintenance program for which no SIP currently exists to determine, in consultation with the Air Quality Board, the frequency of these tests.

SB 275 Energy Amendments (Sen. Adams, R-Layton)

This legislation encourages the use of natural gas vehicles by providing a bonding/borrowing mechanism for local governments who wish to invest in natural gas fleet conversions and fueling infrastructure. It directs the Public Service Commission to explore and develop opportunities for expanding the use of natural gas vehicles to improve air quality and make recommendations for the expansion of natural gas fueling and maintenance facilities. The bill also provides a cost recovery mechanism for natural gas companies who construct, operate, or maintain natural gas facilities.

Bills Introduced But Not Passed

HB 138 Individual Income Tax Credit for Purchase of Public Transit Pass (Rep. Poulsen, D-Salt Lake)

This bill would have provided an individual income tax credit for the purchase of transit passes.

HB 346 Air Quality Amendments (Rep. Chavez-Houck, D-Salt Lake City)

This legislation would have repealed current statutory provisions prohibiting the Division of Air Quality from adopting rules more stringent than federal regulations.

HB 394 Outdoor Wood Boilers (Rep. Noel, R-Kanab)

This bill would have barred the Air Quality Board from prohibiting the sale, installation, replacement or operation of an outdoor wood boiler differently from other solid fuel burning devices. The Air Quality Board recently issued rules prohibiting outdoor wood boilers in nonattainment areas as part of the proposed PM_{2.5} State Implementation Plan.

HB 405 Clean Air Public Transit Pilot Program (Rep. Briscoe, D-Salt Lake)

This bill would have created a pilot program for free transit passes during January and July to encourage ridership and reduce emissions during peak pollution months.

HB 411 Public Transit Funding Amendments (Rep. Briscoe, D-Salt Lake)

This legislation would have created the Community Clean Air Public Transit Fund to administer loans and grants for public transit services or facilities that would improve air quality.

Radiation Control

A legislative audit last fall identified areas for improvement in the regulation of low level radioactive waste in Utah. Legislative amendments to current radiation control statutes focused on audit recommendations and provided the Division of Radiation Control with additional tools to regulate radioactive waste disposal in the state. The legislature also issued a concurrent resolution to increase public awareness of the dangers posed by radon gas.

HB 124 Radiation Control Amendments (Rep. Dee, R-Ogden)

This legislation establishes that certain funds in the Environmental Quality Restricted Account (EQRA) will be applied to cover the costs of administering radiation control programs. It grants rulemaking authority to the Radiation Control Board for radioactive waste licensing requirements, including rules categorizing the level of review required for approval applications. It increases civil penalties to a maximum of \$10,000 per violation, up from the previous \$5,000 maximum. The legislation also gives the Division Director authority to deny a generator access permit to a generator or broker unless the generator agrees to grant the division reasonable access to its facilities for inspection or verification purposes.

SCR 11 Concurrent Resolution on Radon Gas (Sen. Valentine, R-Orem)

This resolution designates January 2014 as Radon Action Month and urges citizens throughout the state to educate themselves about the dangers of radon and take steps to prevent exposure.

Drinking Water

The legislature addressed standards for fluoride in drinking water systems.

HB 72 Safe Drinking Water Disclosure Act (Rep. Barrus, R-Centerville)

This legislation requires that fluoride added to public drinking water systems meets certain certification standards and requires local health departments to temporarily remove fluoride from water systems if the fluoride being used does not meet these standards.

Solid and Hazardous Waste/Environmental Response and Remediation

The legislature modified provisions for the fees charged for hazardous waste and mixed waste and issued a concurrent resolution approving a landfill in Tooele County to receive specified nonhazardous solid waste. It also passed legislation that required DEQ to study the financial viability of the Underground Petroleum Storage Tank Trust Fund.

HB 231 Hazardous Waste and Mixed Waste Fees (Rep. Nelson, R-Grantsville)

This bill requires the Department of Environmental Quality to complete a review of the program costs and indirect costs of regulating mixed waste and establish a fee schedule for the treatment and land disposal of mixed waste. It also allows a facility treating or disposing of hazardous waste or mixed waste to collect a fee from the waste generator.

SCR 1 Concurrent Resolution Approving Solid Waste Landfill Facility Permit (Sen. Hinkins, R-Orangeville)

This resolution grants approval to the Five Mile Recycle Landfill to operate as a Class VI landfill and receive nonhazardous construction and demolition waste, inert waste, and yard waste. The

operating plan will be subject to DEQ approval and the landfill is required to apply for and receive approval from DEQ if it wants to change its waste stream.

[HB 241 Underground Petroleum Storage Tank Financial Viability Study](#) (Rep. Eliason, R-Sandy)

This bill requires DEQ to study the financial viability of the Environmental Assurance Program and the Petroleum Storage Tank Trust Fund. This legislation also modifies the maximum cash allowance of the Trust Fund. It allows the Executive Director of DEQ to use money from the Trust Fund to pay for the actuarial study. Study results are slated to include strategies and recommendations to minimize the adverse selection of participants in the Fund to reduce or eliminate the actuarial deficit of the Trust Fund.

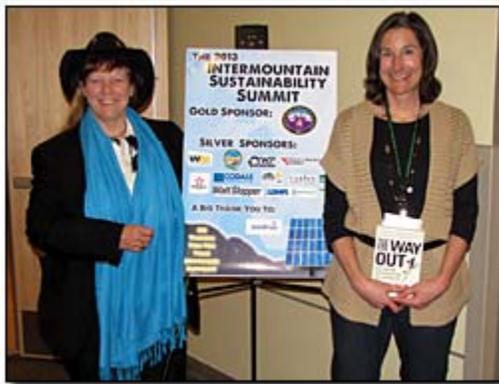
Water Quality

[SB 216 Water Pollution Task Force](#) (Sen. Okerlund, R-Monroe)

A bill to create a Water Pollution Task Force to review and make recommendations to address nutrient pollution in Utah waterways from nonpoint sources was referred for committee study during interim.

DEQ Promotes Sustainability at Annual Conference

DEQ Promotes Sustainability at Annual Conference

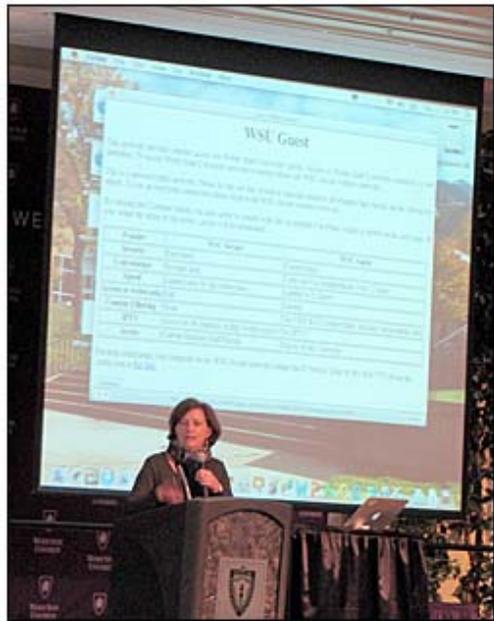


Conference sponsors are diverse and include the Goddard School of Business and Economics at [Weber State University](#), [Rocky Mountain Power](#), UAMPS Smart Energy, Codale Electric Supply, [WattStopper](#), Varian Medical Systems, [Manufacturing Extension Partnership](#) (MEP), Republic Services, [Rocky Mountain Recycling](#), [Utah Department of Environmental Quality](#), [Sodexo](#), Interwest Paper, and [Waste Management](#).

Here keynote speaker Hunter Lovins of Natural Capitalism and DEQ's Biz Help Coordinator Frances Bernards talk about Lovins' new book and sustainability techniques that boost the bottom line for business.



Paul Olsen and Manufacturing Extension Partnership or MEP was a big hit with attendees. Several mentioned the benefit of learning about MEP's services and incorporating them into work with clients.



Lori Duvall was among the speakers found to be "engaging and invigorating." Her discussion focused on grassroots Green Teams in the workplace. Ninety percent of attendees said they would return simply for the networking opportunities, valuable information relevant to them that is worth the low cost to attend.



More than 30 vendors participated in the event, which is known for its excellent networking opportunities.



The [Southern Utah Recycling Coalition](#) traveled to Weber State to educate attendees about their recycling programs, which were a popular theme among vendors. Conference attendees come from all parts of Utah and southern Idaho.



Students are an important part of the summit. In addition to getting job leads they can learn about opportunities to improve sustainability on their campuses from vendors like Hannah Debelius from the national office of [Center for Green Schools](#).

This article was written by Stacey Adams, planning consultant for DEQ's Office of Planning Affairs.

Division of Air Quality Ends Wood Burning Restrictions; Prepares for Summer Ozone

Residents and regulators alike are breathing a sigh of relief as the winter wood burn season comes to an end. This winter's snow cover and meteorological conditions prompted multi-week-long inversions - among the worst air quality seen along the Wasatch Front since 2006. Yet the season was also a test run for a new rule designed to proactively lower emissions and better protect public health.

The unpredictability of the air season was primarily due to weather with a lot of high pressure pollution trapping inversions that triggered a cascade of spikes in particulate pollution, known as PM2.5. These inversions resulted in a high number of no-burn days along the Wasatch Front. Another factor calling more "no burn" days was the implementation of a more aggressive strategy by the Division of Air Quality (DAQ) to severely limit the impact of solid fuel burning during those inversions. Historically, a no burn day was called when PM2.5 exceeded the 35 microgram per cubic meter federal standard. This past winter, thanks to one of the numerous new rules the Air Quality Board adopted as part of the state's PM2.5 plan, the wood burn calls were made any time DAQ meteorologists predicted the onset of an inversion that could result in PM2.5

concentrations above 25 micrograms per cubic meter - a change that proactively reduces emissions and, potentially, the peak concentrations of PM2.5 during the inversion.

"We had some of the highest PM2.5 concentrations we've ever seen this season," said Bo Call, manager of the Air Monitoring Center. "While the bad news is the inversions took a toll on our air quality, the good news is that the long-term trends show that air quality along the Wasatch Front is getting better. Ten years ago people were alarmed when we had values over 70 micrograms. Today we are calling a warning before it approaches 35 micrograms."

DAQ scientists say that more than 192,000 tons of air emissions have been reduced in the years between 2002 and 2011. Further reductions in emissions are expected due to the new PM2.5 rules that took effect late last year and those that will be developed this year.

"We will see a significant improvement in our air quality by 2014," said Bryce Bird, director of DAQ.

As DAQ continues finding ways to curb winter pollution it has begun working with the Utah Department of Health (DOH) on a series of new messages that separate the health and action alerts. This past winter, instead of calling "Red," "Yellow," or "Green" Burn days, DAQ has begun issuing "Mandatory," "Voluntary," or "Unrestricted" Action Days, depending on predicted pollution concentrations. DOH issues a color-coded health alert based on the nationwide federal Environmental Protection Agency's Air Quality Index or AQI.

The goal of the new messages is to provide clear and meaningful information so residents know from DAQ what they can do to reduce their own emissions, and from DOH what they need to do to protect their health.

This same set of new air action and health messages, along with tips to reduce emissions, will also be part of an ozone communication plan to be unveiled later this spring to help solve our summer ozone problem in northern Utah. Businesses and the public will be encouraged to participate in this year's Clear the Air Challenge taking place in July. The Utah Clean Air Partnership, or UCAIR, will also be rolling out public information throughout the summer. Details can be found on DEQ's social media pages and on the following websites:

- [Division of Air Quality](#)
- [Clear the Air Challenge](#)
- [UCAIR](#)



- [facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [YouTube](#)

This article was written by Stacey Adams, planning consultant with DEQ's Office of Planning and Public Affairs.