

Ask all Allegheny Council Members to VOTE YES and PASS the ordinance change to increase fees on Air Pollution Permits

BACKGROUND:

- The Allegheny County Board of Health approved the resolution “Penalties, Fines and Interest (2109.7)” in September 2024 after it received a request from the ACHD administration for the resolution and with overwhelming support from residents, nonprofits and the Allegheny County Controller.
- For nearly a year, ACHD has cautioned it anticipates a \$1.85 million budget shortfall.
- **The Clean Air Act requires ACHD to charge Title V facilities fees that are sufficient to cover the cost of administering the program.**
 - **This critical fee upgrade is long overdue and is something the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) recommended in their [2018 audit of the ACHD Title V air program](#)**
- Approving the fee increase places **the burden of covering these costs on, in most cases, million-dollar industries that can well afford to pay the fee increase.**

CALL TO ACTION:

Email and call all members of the Allegheny County Council and **urge them to PASS the resolution and increase the fees on air pollution permits. Supporting this measure will protect the health of Allegheny County residents.**

Additional messaging points in support of the increased permitting fees:

- Increased permitting fees would be paid by plant operators and applicants – **NOT taxpayers.**
 - This is especially important as the County is facing a large budget deficit.
 - **The fee increases are monies that would supplement the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) Air Program budget at no cost to taxpayers.**
- An adequately funded ACHD is critical to protecting the health of Allegheny County residents, yet the staff currently working to protect our air quality is under-resourced and overworked. <https://www.post-gazette.com/news/health/2025/01/26/iulia-vann-allegheny-county-health-department/stories/202501190046>
- A properly funded Air Program could mean more health protections from dangerous air pollution.
- Without the increased permitting fees, the Air Program could be weakened, putting more Allegheny County residents in harm’s way.
- **U.S. Steel is lobbying hard against the increased fees, but it is not about the money – but they can easily afford to pay these increased permit fees:**

- U.S. Steel makes the dubious claim that the fee increases would have a detrimental impact. Yet U.S. Steel's three Mon Valley facilities each currently pay an annual fee of \$8,000 for the facility's Title V permit. The Clairton facility alone released [1.1 million pounds of toxic emissions into the air](#) in 2021.
- **Under ACHD's proposed fee increases, U.S. Steel's annual total Title V fees for its Allegheny County facilities would be \$165,000, just 0.009% of U.S. Steel reported earnings of \$2.14 billion in 2023.** Compared to such monumental earnings, any claim that the significantly smaller Title V renewal permit fee, required only once every five years, would impact U.S. Steel's coffers further strains credulity.
- Despite all evidence to the contrary, U.S. Steel also argues that its "steelmaking process is done in the safest and most environmentally responsible manner." **Yet in just the first quarter of 2023, ACHD found more than [1,500 instances of non-compliance](#) at U.S. Steel's Clairton Plant alone.** U.S. Steel's egregious level of noncompliance required significant ACHD resources to identify and rein in, including for inspections and enforcement actions. This imbalance between ACHD's time and effort necessary to ensure compliance and the current fee structure exemplifies that raising the fees is needed and warranted.
- Additionally, for **smaller facilities that emit less than 50 tons per year, the current fee of \$8,000 will increase to only \$15,000.**
- **The fee schedule thereby ensures that the largest facilities that most burden the community and ACHD are the focal point of these fee increases.**

We strongly urge Allegheny County Council to support ACHD's proposal and to vote YES on this reasonable permit fee rate increase that requires facilities that are responsible for the pollution affecting the county's air to cover the cost of ACHD protecting our communities.

Contact Allegheny County Council Members:

[Council Members Allegheny County, PA 412-350-6490. One call goes to all 15 members.](#)

Email Addresses, Twitter handles for Allegheny County Council Members:

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Be sure to provide your name and contact information when you reach out to Council.

And please share this important action alert with other Allegheny County residents!

There will be opportunities to provide public comments to Allegheny County Council in the coming weeks.

We will provide updates on when those meeting will occur. We would love to have you join us in a show of support for this critical issue.

Thank you.

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