



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Debra Smit, Breathe Project
dsmit@breatheproject.org, 412-760-7677

Environmental Groups, Residents to Hold Press Conference and Rally TODAY to Voice Allegheny County Leadership's Lack of a Public Debate on the Permit Fee Increase

Rally Will Be Held in the City-County Courthouse Alcove Rain or Shine!
Walk From PennFuture Cancelled Today Due to Thunderstorm Warnings

Pittsburgh, Pa., – For nearly a year, Allegheny County residents have waited for a vote by Allegheny County Council leaders on the resolution “Penalties, fines and Interest (2109.7).” Residents and air quality activists are calling for an end to council’s silence and ask that council leadership be transparent in its plans for the resolution and the need to support the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) with the resources it needs to be fully staffed to address ongoing air quality problems.

Environmental advocates and residents will call on leadership TODAY at 4 p.m. to move forward with a public discussion on this important vote. A rally and press conference will be held in the Allegheny County Courthouse Courtyard to call for leadership transparency on this issue.

PRESS CONFERENCE and RALLY Wednesday, May 21st at 4:00 p.m.

The Press Conference will begin about 4:15 p.m.

Groups will then attend the Council Meeting in the Gold Room at 5 p.m.

The walk from PennFuture’s offices has been cancelled due to Thunderstorm warnings.

Speakers

Qiyam Ansari, Valley Clean Air Now (Mon Valley)
NaTisha Washington, Breathe Project
Patrick Campbell, GASP

Jim Highland, Pa. Interfaith Power and Light
Jay Walker, Clean Air Council
Aarushi Pant, Allegheny County Clean Air Now
Bob Mitchell, SWPA Town Halls

Our Health Department's Air Quality Program is currently underfunded due to permit fees that have not covered the cost of the program, preventing ACHD from hiring a full staff to execute their duties related to air monitoring and improving air quality.

These fees are the cost the county needs to operate the air quality program and keep it running efficiently.

The Allegheny County Health Dept. approved the resolution 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 at the time.

For the last 10 months, ACHD has repeatedly cautioned it anticipates a \$1.85 million budget shortfall. At a meeting last year, ACHD indicated the air quality program had a deficit of \$544,443 for 2024 and approved using Clean Air Funds as a partial stopgap. Article 21 permits ACHD to use 5% of the balance of Clean Air Funds for its operational needs; however, the money is supposed to go to community members from past air emissions violations.

Approving the fee increase places the burden of covering these costs on, in most cases, multi-billion-dollar industries that can well afford the to pay the permit fee increase.

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