

Tracking the Maryland Healthy Air Act

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In 2006 the Maryland legislature passed the Healthy Air Act [HAA]. This Act affected all the coal-fired generating stations in the State and called for cuts in the emissions of sulfur dioxide [SO₂], oxides of nitrogen [NO_x] and mercury [Hg] and also required that the State join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative [RGGI] to manage reductions in carbon dioxide [CO₂].

Overall, the emission reductions were similar to those called out in the then federal rules – Clean Air Interstate Rule [CAIR] affecting SO₂ and NO_x and the Clean Air Mercury Rule [CAMR] – but was on a significantly more aggressive schedule. The phase 1 NO_x reductions took effect on January 1, 2009 and the phase 1 SO₂ and Hg reductions began on January 1, 2010. Maryland has also participated in the RGGI cap-and-trade program with each generation company acquiring sufficient emission allowances to cover their CO₂ emissions. At the end of 2010 all affected facilities were in compliance with their HAA emissions caps.

This poster will describe the emission reductions achieved under the HAA and the response in the regional monitors to these reductions. Predictive modeling associated with the passing of the Act will also be compared. A brief assessment will be made of the benefits of the newly passed federal rule – the Cross-State Air Pollution Control Rule [CSAPR] particularly as it relates to reductions in nutrient-nitrogen delivered to the Chesapeake Bay.