

CHESAPEAKE BAY AND WATER RESOURCES POLICY COMMITTEE Meeting Summary-DRAFT

November 18, 2022

LINK TO ALL MEETING PRESENTATIONS AND MATERIALS:

<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2022/11/18/chesapeake-bay-and-water-resources-policy-committee/>

DECISIONS AND ACTIONS

1. Members approved the draft summary of the September 2022 CBPC Meeting and Forum.
2. Mr. Bieber provided a recap of the COG Board briefing on September 14. A coalition of regional water utilities briefed the Board about Delegate Holmes Norton's provision in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) Bill for an U.S. Army Corps water resiliency study, to look at alternative sources of water to the Potomac. The Potomac River provides 80% of the water for the region. The COG Board supported the alternative water supply study and appropriations. The WRDA Bill passed in December.
3. The CBF Potomac River Boat Tour will be October 21, leaving from Alexandria, followed by an "Oyster Week" Happy Hour. Chair Jackson said it is educational and includes trolling for fish. Ms. Bonnaffon collected RSVPs.
4. The November meeting coincides with the National League of Cities' conference in Missouri.

1. WELCOME

Maria Mackie, CBPC Vice Chair

Chair Jackson had a conflict, so Vice Chair Mackie assumed leadership for the day. Vice chair Mackie congratulated members who recently won their reelections and congratulated Shannon Moore on Frederick County's receipt of COG's Climate and Energy Leadership Award.

2. MEETING SUMMARY APPROVAL

Maria Mackie, CBPC Vice Chair

Members approved the draft summary of the September 2022 CBPC meeting.

3. COG'S EQUITY ADVANCES

Monica Beyrouiti Nunez, COG

Aubin Maynard, COG

A. COG's Chief Equity Officers Committee Racial Equity Progress

Monica Nunez, lead staff for COG's Chief Equity Officers' Committee, provided an overview of the committee's work over the last few years. She highlighted equity work at COG, and shared resources below. Ms. Nunez said COG's role has been to help local governments advance equity policies internally and work on regional initiatives. The members meet monthly and have enjoyed learning from each other, especially since equity officer positions are recent appointments for most. They have participated in 10-month equity trainings and have been cross-sharing policies and practices to increase racial equity. A third training series for COG members is slated for spring 2023.

A few highlights of COG's equity advances thus far include:

- ensuring equitable distribution of the Covid vaccine,
- analysis of the continuum of care for homeless populations,

- developing a fair housing plan to fight discrimination and ensure equal access to safe, affordable housing,
- creation of an environmental justice tool kit for ensuring equity in air quality, and climate and energy planning. and
- the Equity Emphasis Areas (EEA) tool, developed by the Transportation Planning Board in 2021, which is applicable for environmental planning as well.

Racial equity extends beyond human resources and can be applied in all of COG's planning areas. COG looks forward to continuing to support members and receive feedback.

Ms. Nunez provided these additional resources:

- [COG Board Resolution on Racial Equity](#)
- [Chief Equity Officers Committee](#)
- [Equity Emphasis Areas](#)
- [Environmental Justice Toolkit](#)
- Contact: Monica Beyrouti Nunez, COG Government Relations Manager, mbeyrouti@mwkog.org; (202)962-3212

B. COG's Equity Emphasis Areas (EEA) Tool: Example of its application

Aubin Maynard, COG Environmental Planner, normally working in streams, described how COG's EEA GIS tool was integrated in the Anacostia watershed. It is an example how staff at all levels can apply the equity tool, even in a small budget program such as the Anacostia tree planting program. The Backyard Buffer Program normally distributes saplings to home owners who have to drive to a site to get the trees, but COG's Anacostia program facilitates access to the saplings, normally notifying residents about the availability of two hundred trees via an email. This year, Mr. Maynard reached out to green team coordinators in the EEAs two weeks ahead of the broader outreach. Thirty percent of the sapling recipients were in the EEA areas.

Member Discussion:

- Shannon Moore commented that discriminatory housing practices in the 1950s also resulted in fewer trees in underserved communities. Maryland and EPA have environmental justice tools and Maryland is trying to correct for this with the five million trees initiative, where a portion of the trees need to be planted in traditionally underserved communities.
- Mr. Maynard mentioned that the American Forest's tree equity tool is going to integrate heat island effects, air quality, existing canopy, etc. Here is more information on that tool: <https://www.americanforests.org/tools-research-reports-and-guides/tree-equity-score/>

3. WATER INFRASTRUCTURE NATURAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS & RESILIENCE

Mark Scott, Critical Infrastructure Specialist, DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA)

Mr. Scott provided an overview of the proposed strategic framework that HSEMA is developing.

- The District of Columbia follows the Department of Homeland Security's sixteen critical infrastructure sectors to ensure they are not just secure but resilient. Resilient means to prepare for, respond to, and recover from any type of disruption.
- HSEMA increasingly has focused on supply chains, specifically for food and water supply.
- HSEMA's work is done in cooperation with the fuller metropolitan Washington jurisdictions, since transportation systems and supply chains are interconnected. COG has a National Capital Region Critical Infrastructure Protection Working Group that meets every month.

- Through a FEMA grant, the Work Group has been analyzing impacts to health care supplies, food and water supply chains if there were a catastrophic event. Rather than focusing on a specific type of hazard they are developing a framework to respond to and recover from a range of disruptions.
- For water, they have analyzed the water sources, who is supplying water, who the customers are, and identified gaps. They met with water utility staff and will meet with utility staff once the framework is developed to see if it resonates and how it can be integrated with utilities' existing plans. The framework outlines how to prepare for, respond to a disruption (e.g., distribute bottled water, and get out information), and recover critical infrastructure, via proven practices. They will monitor the framework during actual events and adjust as needed.
- They are working on trainings, and on including equity considerations—how to better serve already vulnerable populations. Mr. Scott said he would like to further discuss how to build equity into water supplies.

Member Discussion:

- Vice Chair Mackie commended HSEMA's and the National Capital Region Critical Infrastructure Protection Working Group's proactive approach and looks forward to a future update.
- Supervisor Gross was delighted to hear about this planning, rather than “building the plane while flying it.” On the issue of communication, it is important that cultural considerations be considered. She gave the example of lessons learned about culturally appropriate food distribution and dietary restrictions during a storm in Fairfax County.
- Councilmember Whitney mentioned “life straw” technology as a potential solution during water supply disruption.
- Vice Chair Mackie inquired about sewage overflows during emergencies. Mr. Scott said HSEMA coordinates with DC Water and is aware that they are working to manage stresses on systems to reduce sewage overflows.

4. STAFF & MEMBER UPDATES

- Ms. Bonnaffon requested members to review COG's 2022 water legislative priorities and to email her with any minor suggestions for 2023.
- Vice Chair Mackie shared her priority topics for the 2023 calendar, including continuing equity conversations, sharing information on grants and funding opportunities, and environmental education. Supervisor Gross seconded interest in hearing more about educational experiences, such as the Bay Program's “meaningful watershed experiences” for students. Staff will work to address these requests.
- Councilmember Boddye provided that he attended the Fairfax Water Summit at the Occoquan Reservoir. It was a holistic talk about the regional water supply and covered salinity (e.g., household detergents), and drought management. It was a great summit and gave policy makers issues to proactively address in Virginia. Steve Bieber commented on two of Councilmember Boddye's points. He mentioned that the November *Bay Journal* had an article about the ongoing study of salinity in the Occoquan watershed, which is supported by COG and the National Science Foundation. Secondly, the Virginia Commonwealth drought plan does not mirror the one developed by COG and used by Maryland, which could complicate drought messaging in Virginia.
- Vice Chair Mackie announced that pending COG board approval, she will be serving as chair and Councilmember Boddye as vice chair next year.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Mackie adjourned the meeting at 11:45 A.M.

PARTICIPANTS

Members and Alternates:

Cindy Dyballa, City of Takoma Park
J. Davis, City of Greenbelt Council
Kenny Boddye, Prince William County Council
Maria Mackie, Vice Chair, College Park Council
MC Keegan-Ayer, Frederick County Council
Penny Gross, Fairfax County Supervisor
Susan Whitney, College Park Council
Tom Ross, City of Fairfax Council
Allison Deines, Alexandria Renew Enterprises
Heather Gewandter, City of Rockville
Jessie Maines, City of Alexandria
Joel Caudill, WSSC Water
Nicole Rodriguez-Hernandez, Montgomery County Council
Shannon Moore, Frederick County
Steve Shofar, Montgomery County
Tiffany Wright, City of Bowie

Guests:

Jessica Lassetter, City of Alexandria
Kathie Hoekstra, Alexandria EPC chair
Kyle Redden, Charles County
Mark Scott, HSEMA
Tiera Richardson, Frederick County

COG Staff:

Ata Adeel
Aubin Maynard
Christine Howard
Heidi Bonnaffon
Lisa Reynolds
Monica Beyrousti Nunez
Steve Bieber
Wyetha Lipford