



## METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE (MWAQC)

May 22, 2024  
12:15 P.M. – 2:00 P.M.  
In-Person/Hybrid Meeting

Chair: Kenny Boddye, Prince William County

### MEETING SUMMARY

#### MWAQC MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES

- Kenny Boddye, Prince William County (Chair)
- Tom Dernoga, Prince George’s County (Vice Chair)
- Dave Snyder, City of Falls Church (Vice Chair)
- Hannah Ashenafi, District Department of Energy and Environment
- Tom Ballou, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
- Collin Burell, District of Columbia
- Virginia Burke, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Sophia Cortazzo, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Susan Cunningham, Arlington County
- Andrew Debraggio, District of Columbia
- Stan Edwards, Montgomery County
- Shana Fulcher, City of Takoma Park
- Sylvia Glass, Loudoun County
- Dawn Hawkins-Nixon, Prince George’s County
- Christina Henderson, Transportation Planning Board
- Alan Hew, City of College Park
- Joseph Jakuta, District Department of Energy and Environment
- Julie Kimmel, Air and Climate Policy Advisory Committee Chair
- Keith Levchenko, Montgomery County

- Kristin Mink, Montgomery County
- John Morrill, Fairfax County
- Amalia Pleake-Tamm, Calvert County
- Jim Ponticello, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Evandro Santos, Prince William County
- Maria Sinner, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Meredith Soniat, District Department of Transportation
- Dan Storck, Fairfax County
- Roger Thunell, Maryland Department of the Environment
- James Walkinshaw, Fairfax County
- Kristen Weaver, City of Greenbelt

#### OTHERS

- Tauhirah Abdul-Matin, AECOM
- Tad Aburn, Citizen
- LaTricea Adams, Young, Gifted and Green
- Charles Brown, Equitable Cities
- Anthony David Jr., Empower DC
- Dr. Russell Dickerson, University of Maryland
- Dr. Shizuka Hsieh, Trinity Washington University
- Tiara Lester, Frederick County
- Tene Lewis, Sierra Club
- Gwendolin McCrea, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

- Leila Mekias, AECOM
- Karen Moe, Citizen
- Regina Moore, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Julia Mosley, Citizen
- Ray Mosley, Citizen
- Mayor Kayce Munyeneh, Town of Cheverly
- Danielle Simms, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

- Environmental Programs
- Jeff King, COG Climate, Energy, and Air Program Director
- Sunil Kumar, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Tim Masters, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Mark Moran, COG Department of Transportation Planning
- Wanda Owens, COG Department of Transportation Planning
- Jane Posey, COG Department of Transportation Planning
- Dusan Vuksan, COG Department of Transportation Planning

**COG STAFF**

- Leah Boggs, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Heidi Bonnaffon, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Jen Desimone, COG Department of

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD, APPROVE MINUTES, CHAIR’S REMARKS**

*Kenny Boddye, MWAQC Chair*

Chair Kenny Boddye called the meeting to order. The committee heard from numerous speakers providing public comments that addressed air quality concerns in relation to environmental justice (EJ). Speakers highlighted the collaborative efforts between local communities and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to improve air quality through partnerships and air monitoring and stressed the importance of utilizing data to take immediate action against air pollution, especially to protect vulnerable populations in affected areas. Speakers also discussed the significant findings from carbon monitoring in various neighborhoods, underscoring the need for actionable steps beyond data collection. Speakers highlighted the need for better zoning and land use planning and recommended establishing a regional support center to assist in funding and building these networks across overburdened communities. Overall, the speakers called for immediate and practical measures to mitigate air pollution and protect vulnerable populations. Public comments can be found in the [meeting materials](#). The February MWAQC meeting summary was approved without any changes.

**2. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC) – Julie Kimmel (ACPAC Chair)

ACPAC held a webinar meeting on May 20:

- ACPAC launched the 2024 Climate and Energy Leadership Awards Program on Earth Day (April 22). The awards program began in 2014 to highlight governments, NGOs and educational institutions in the region that have implemented innovative climate stewardship projects and programs, particularly those that engage and serve the region’s underserved communities. This year, ACPAC is awarding two jurisdictions in the government category: a small jurisdiction with a population of 90,000 people or less and a large jurisdiction with a population of over 90,000 people. The NGO and educational institution categories will still have one award each.
- MWAQC’s EJ Subcommittee kickoff meeting was held on May 2, which three ACPAC members were appointed to, including ACPAC’s Chair Julie Kimmel, Vice Chair William Washburn, and Jacqueline Norris.
- ACPAC has developed an air-related recommendations memo (included in the [meeting materials](#)) that they want MWAQC to consider. ACPAC also developed a list of climate-related

- recommendations for CEEPC to consider. A memo was presented to CEEPC this morning.
- The next ACPAC meeting is July 15.

#### Clean Air Partners – Jen Desimone (COG Staff)

Clean Air Partners have been involved in the following:

- Clean Air Partners kicked-off their summer campaign during Air Quality Awareness Week (the first week of May), with the announcement of a gas-powered lawn equipment exchange. Residents can register to bring gas-powered equipment into participating Ace Hardware stores in exchange for new electric equipment. Available equipment for exchange will include lawn mowers, weed trimmers, and leaf blowers. The gas-powered equipment will be taken to a recycling partner to be disposed of. Clean Air Partners anticipate exchanging approximately 125 - 150 pieces of equipment and currently have a waitlist of over 100 registrants. The exchange will take place on the weekends of May 18 and June 1. It will also be accompanied by Clean Air Partners backyard bubble events, which includes an exhibit to educate the public about ways to reduce emissions related to lawn and gardening.
- The month of August will be designated as Ozone Action Month. To heighten awareness during the hottest time of the summer, Clean Air Partners will be traveling around the Baltimore-Washington region with our interactive Eco-Driving exhibit (car bubble) to educate residents on how to reduce vehicle emissions.

#### Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) – Jeff King (COG Climate, Energy, and Air Program Director on behalf of CEEPC leadership)

CEEPC held a webinar meeting on May 22:

- At the last CEEPC meeting, members adopted the work program and budget for the year and heard from speakers on solar programs in the region, including speakers from Solar For All, SolSmart and WMATA.

### **3. OZONE SEASON UPDATE**

*Sunil Kumar, COG Environmental Engineer*

Sunil Kumar's presentation addressed air quality data for the current season, focusing specifically on fine particulate matter (PM 2.5), as well as Ozone in parts per billion (PPB) for March, April, and May. Most days registered good air quality (green), with only a few moderate (yellow) days and no code orange, red, or purple days. Historically, the data shows a downward trend in the number of days exceeding air quality standards since the late 1990s, indicating significant progress in reducing both the frequency and severity of high ozone days. However, in 2023, there was a notable increase in exceedance days primarily due to smoke from wildfires in Canada, which also affected PM 2.5 levels.

Sunil also discussed the relationship between ozone levels and temperature, noting that high temperatures (90 degrees and above) historically correlate with higher ozone days. Despite this, the reduction in emissions has led to fewer exceedance days even during hot periods. A similar trend is observed with PM 2.5, where historical data shows substantial improvement in air quality, with 2023 again being an outlier due to wildfire smoke. Preliminary data for 2024 indicates no exceedance days so far. To ensure continued progress, the region is seeking an exceptional events exemption from the EPA for wildfire smoke-impacted data. Additionally, the air quality forecasting approach will be refined, splitting the metro Washington region into four sub-regions to provide more localized and accurate forecasts. This detailed and strategic approach underscores the ongoing commitment to air quality improvement and regulatory compliance.

Discussion:

- There was discussion regarding micro-area pollution not being detected by existing air quality meters and questions arose about whether the current monitoring sites should be relocated or

if the pollution elements being measured should be adjusted. Sunil explained that there are specific EPA criteria for siting air quality monitors, which are jointly followed by the states and the EPA. The discussion highlighted the difference between officially monitored pollutants for attainment and hyper-local air quality concerns. The need for additional types of monitors to address local issues was acknowledged. There was a call for a memorandum explaining the locations and purposes of current air quality meters, and the legal and technological means to address hyper-local pollution issues. It was suggested to collaborate with state pollution monitor managers for a better understanding and possibly have a presentation on this. There was an agreement on the importance of utilizing monitors effectively and the need for a report to understand how monitoring feeds into their work and identify gaps. Members also mentioned local resources such as NASA Goddard researchers and citizen science projects as potential contributors to addressing hyper-local air quality issues.

- There was also a request for slides with charts that exclude data impacted by Canadian wildfires to better assess regional air quality progress.

#### **4. FY 2025 WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET**

*Jen Desimone, COG Air Program Chief*

MWAQC's fiscal year (FY) 2025 Draft Work Program outlines key priorities and budget allocations for July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. Major priorities include developing a Maintenance Plan and Redesignation Request (MP/RR) for the 2015 ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), crafting an Environmental Justice (EJ) Action Plan, and monitoring ozone and fine particles. The program emphasizes collaboration with members to implement air pollution reduction initiatives, track regulatory actions, and communicate improvements to regional leaders and the public. The proposed budget totals \$591,320, reflecting a 2.74 percent increase from FY 2024, with funding contributions evenly split between local members, transportation agencies, and state air agencies.

The core work areas for FY 2025 encompass emissions inventory development, regional control measures, transportation conformity/mobile emissions analysis, public participation, MWAQC support, and program management. Significant tasks include developing inventories for the 2015 ozone NAAQS attainment MP/RR, supporting environmental justice initiatives, and assisting local programs to reduce emissions. The budget dedicates 64 percent to technical work and 36 percent to public participation and administrative functions. The work program aims to ensure compliance with air quality standards, advance EJ, and promote public engagement through strategic communication and outreach efforts.

**Action: The FY 2025 work program and budget was unanimously approved.**

#### **5. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE – WHAT WOULD MEMBERS LIKE TO SEE IN THE ACTION PLAN**

*Jeff King, COG Climate, Energy, and Air Program Director*

Jeff outlined MWAQC's mission with regard to formulating, adopting, and submitting regional air quality plans to the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia for incorporation into State Implementation Plans (SIPs). MWAQC's role is to develop air quality maintenance plans, fulfill obligations necessary for maintaining regional air quality policies, and perform additional functions to enhance regional air quality upon request. Jeff then discussed the establishment of the Environmental Justice (EJ) Subcommittee, which aims to incorporate EJ and equity into MWAQC's work. The subcommittee's mission includes developing policies and initiatives to support environmental justice and equity programs. This involves creating an Action Plan with strategies to integrate equity into air quality-related policies, programs, and projects. The Action Plan includes a technical memo analyzing existing air monitoring data, identifying gaps in air quality knowledge, and reviewing best practices and climate change impacts. The engagement report will document stakeholder outreach results, and the final Action Plan will be presented. The subcommittee's kickoff meeting discussed MWAQC's mission, public engagement, and initial priorities. Key team members from AECOM and Equitable Cities lead various aspects of this

initiative.

*Tauhirah Abdul-Matin, AECOM Project Manager*

Tauhirah discussed the development and implementation of an EJ Action Plan. The primary goal is to integrate EJ and equity considerations into air quality policies, programs, and projects. Key components include analyzing existing air quality data, identifying gaps, and reviewing best practices. Stakeholder engagement is crucial, involving outreach to various groups to gather input and ensure diverse perspectives are considered. The project kick-off includes the development of a comprehensive action plan, starting with technical memos and stakeholder engagement strategies. The approach emphasizes collaboration with stakeholders, including local jurisdictions, state agencies, and public advisory committees. Deliverables include technical memos, engagement reports, and the final action plan, with ongoing feedback and adjustments based on stakeholder input. The plan aims to address air quality issues equitably, leveraging partnerships and best practices to achieve sustainable and just outcomes.

Discussion:

- There was discussion regarding the challenge of EJ being a local issue while air quality is regulated at the state level. In some jurisdictions there are multiple air quality monitoring sites, but sometimes only a limited number have recent and actionable data. It is crucial to start with good data for identifying local air quality issues. It was suggested that state air agencies could be more involved in capturing more granular air quality monitoring data. However, state air agency representatives explained that their monitoring is regional, focusing on pollutants like ozone and fine particulate matter, not local hotspots. COG staff mentioned EPA's new hyper-local monitoring initiative and suggested inviting EPA to future discussions.
- Some members emphasized balancing regional compliance with federal requirements and local monitoring. Others stressed the importance of community engagement in EJ issues. Another member suggested involving local government land use officials in the process. COG staff indicated they need to plan how to engage with local planning directors effectively.

## **6. ADJOURN**

*Kenny Boddy, MWAQC Chair*

Chair Kenny Boddy adjourned the meeting. The next MWAQC meeting is scheduled for September 25, 2024.