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May 24, 2023

Takis Karantonis, Chair, Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC)
CEEPC Committee Members
777 North Capitol St. N.E.
Suite 300,
Washington, DC 20002

Chairman Karantonis and CEEPC members:

I am writing to request an opportunity to provide short public comment at your meeting on Wednesday, May 24, 2023. I understand that there is not a routine opportunity for public comment provided at CEEPC meetings, but that public comment can be included as part of the meeting with approval of the Chair. I believe that CEEPC, being a policy committee, should revisit its public comment policy and always provide an opportunity for public comment as part of CEEPC meetings.

Should the Chair be unable to accommodate my request because of a full agenda or other reasons, I respectfully request that this letter, which is addressed to the full Committee, be made available to the Committee in advance of the meeting and also included as part of the meeting package for May 24.

My name is Tad Aburn. Last year I was the Chair of the MWAQC Technical Advisory Committee. I was an MWAQC member for over 10 years. For almost 20 years I was the director of the air pollution program in Maryland. During my time at the Maryland Department of the Environment, I was lead staff to the State's Climate Change Commission and the Commission's Mitigation Working Group. I have an environmental engineering degree from Brown University. I am now retired and commenting today as a volunteer for several environmentally overburdened communities in Prince George's County and as a member of the general public.

This letter builds from my letter submitted for consideration at your March 22, 2023 meeting that provided comments on critical climate change, energy and environmental issues facing the Metropolitan Washington region that have not been fully discussed by CEEPC. Examples of these critical issues include:

- The need for the region to strengthen its climate change goals to be consistent with the current science and goals set in other leadership areas. A discussion of this issue began at your March 22, 2023 meeting.
- The need to ensure that the routine (usually annual) process for ensuring that new regional transportation plans are consistent with regional air quality goals also include climate change goals, not just air pollution goals. This process called “transportation conformity” currently only looks at air pollutants, not greenhouse gasses ... even though the data for greenhouse gasses is available as part of the modeling process used.
- The need to develop a plan to address the inequitable exposures to air pollution and climate change injustices in environmental justice communities. These communities are often communities of color. The data is very clear that these inequities exist and that there are “air pollution hot-spots” in and around communities of color. At the February MWAQC meeting Dr. Russell Dickerson called the measured air pollution levels in the Districts Ivy City environmental justice area “Alarming”.
- The need to ensure that critical laws and policies designed to reduce exposure and risk from air pollutants and to address climate change are actually being implemented.

I have submitted several earlier letters to TPB, MWAQC and other Committees at MWCOG. These letters provide additional information on these environmental issues and are available from MWCOG staff.

As the region’s key policy advisory group on climate change, environmental and energy issues, CEEPC can play a key role in paving the way for the other MWCOG policy committees to establish specific programs to address these difficult, but critical issues.

CEEPC and MWCOG are recognized nationally for being a leader on addressing these kinds of issues. That said, it is important for CEEPC to discuss and make recommendations on these issues for the MWCOG region to continue to be on the leading edge of environmental policy. As a local laboratory of environmental innovation,

the MWCOG region can actually drive national policy. I urge you to discuss and take action on these issues ... It is a critical time for environmental policy.

In closing, I would also like to respectfully request a response to my recent letters consistent with MWCOG public comment and participation policy. I believe that given that my concerns all focus primarily on mobile sources and how environmental issues are addressed in the transportation planning process, that the TPB public participation guidance is most relevant.

Thank you again for allowing public input. I would be happy to discuss these comments during a future meeting or with a smaller group of CEEPC leadership.

George S. Aburn Jr

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cc (to be distributed to MWCOG members by MWCOG staff):

Kate Stewart, Chair, MWCOG BOD

Anita Bonds, Chair, MWAQC

Tom Dernoga, Vice Chair, MWAQC

Reuben Collins, Chair, TPB

Dr. Sacoby Wilson, UMCP CEEJH