



WHAT WE CAN DO TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY IN THE COG REGION

February 6, 2019, 10:30am - 11:40am

Webinar Highlights

Attendees:

Michael Stricker, Maryland Department of the Environment
Cecily Beall, District Department of Energy & Environment
Alexandra Catena, District Department of Energy & Environment
Chris Voigt, Virginia Department of Transportation
Regina Moore, Virginia Department of Transportation
Malcolm Watson, Fairfax County
Stan Edwards, Montgomery County
Lisa Goldberg, City of Alexandria
Khoa Tran, City of Alexandria

Staff:

Sunil Kumar, COG/DEP
Jen Desimone, COG/DEP
Erin Morrow, COG/DTP
Jane Posey, COG/DTP

“What We Can Do” Project

Background

The *What We Can Do* project came from a priority set by MWAQC to identify actions that could be taken in our region, particularly by local governments, to reduce ozone pollution to a level that would result in no unhealthy air days and the attainment of the 2015 ozone standard by the deadline (August 2021). MWAQC asked COG staff to work with the Air & Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC) to develop a report that would include a set of NO_x emission control measures that will help achieve the region the above stated goals. A draft report containing such measures with cost/benefit analysis was presented to MWAQC on May 23, 2018. In this meeting, MWAQC directed COG staff to work with state and local governments on the implementation of these measures with a focus on local governments. Following this, a workshop of local governments was held on June 21, 2018, which provided a number of suggestions regarding these measures, which are listed below.

- A. Transportation programs and planning to reduce emissions from light-duty vehicles by encouraging increased reliance on alternative modes, for example, improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, rideshare and telework programs,
- B. Reducing emissions from heavy duty on-road vehicles and construction equipment, especially anti-idling,
- C. Peak shaving with battery storage and reducing peak emissions from back-up generators
- D. Education, outreach, and advocacy
- E. Tree and forest cover and green infrastructure for air quality, water quality, and community benefits

Subsequently, MWAQC was briefed on the outcomes of the above workshop on July 25, 2018. MWAQC decided and directed COG staff to further follow up with local governments on the measures suggested in the above workshop.

Summary of Webinar

A webinar was held on February 6, 2019 to discuss one of the anti-idling measures suggested in the June 21st workshop. The measure suggested was to reduce idling and the associated NOx emission from motor vehicles and construction vehicles and equipment in the Washington region.

MDE's IdleFree MD Initiative

Michael Stricker from Maryland Department of the Environment was invited to talk about Maryland's initiatives to reduce NOx emission from idling motor vehicles.

Mr. Stricker talked in detail about various approaches MDE is using to promote idling reduction among the general public, at schools, and in the trucking industry.

General public – MDE has developed fact sheets and related materials for distribution. It has also been running campaigns on social media. MDE has additional materials (interactive and text) on its web-site.

Schools – MDE has partnered with Maryland State Dept of Education to work on programs for students, staff, parents, delivery drivers and community. MDE has developed classroom materials and curriculum and encourages school participation with pledges for schools and parents to sign. Participating schools receive metal signs, window decals, and certificate, and online acknowledgement. MDE is also coordinating with Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE) and organizes trainings. Schools get signs and window decals for the front of the school or the office. They also get Certificates of Participation to hang in the school office, displaying idle free status in addition to the online listing as an MDE Idle Free MD School Partner. Schools can apply for U.S. Green Ribbon School recognition and may also joint certify with Eco-Schools USA as they work towards Maryland Green School status.

Schools can set up policies that can include an Idle Reduction Policy in the student handbook and provide to bus drivers. They can inform all drivers, regularly tell parents, teachers, staff, delivery truck drivers and bus drivers about the new policy and the campaign.

Schools can take pledges to ask all drivers to sign a pledge not to idle unnecessarily and hold a contest to see which class returns the most pledges. Schools share their idle-reduction efforts with MDE via social media.

Anti-Idling for Construction Vehicles/Equipment

Sunil Kumar from MWACOG talked about various initiatives that can be taken to reduce NOx emission from idling of construction vehicles and equipment.

Idle emission from on-road and off-road mobile sources are important contributors to NOx emission. Most states in the country have anti-idling rules and/or incentive programs. Construction vehicles and equipment, part of off-road source, contribute to idle NOx emission and therefore to ozone and fine particle problems. Average idle time for heavy equipment is 40%. From a business perspective, excessive idling can be enormously expensive, even for a small or medium-size operation. Excessive idling can shorten vehicle and equipment life. He outlined anti-idling rules focusing on construction vehicles and equipment in the District, Maryland, and Virginia. He also discussed various challenges and approaches to reduce idling by these

vehicles. These are:

- Enforcement of anti-idling rules is an important issue for construction vehicles and equipment given the resource it takes to do so or sometimes the language of the rule is not clear.
- The use of Alternative Fueled Vehicles/Equipment, where reasonable can be required in the government fleet.
- Education & Outreach plays a very important role and seems a practical approach to reduce idling. Posting anti-idling signs near construction sites, providing educational materials for construction vehicle/equipment operators, providing owners with info- on benefits of idle reduction (monetary, environmental, health of operators) can certainly help raise awareness of about this issue.
- Incentives such as, low interest loans, tax credit and exemption, rebates or reimbursements, diesel emission reduction grants can be offered to vehicle/equipment owners for employing AF equipment and idle reduction technologies. Additional points can be awarded to contractors using vehicle/equipment with idle control technologies.
- Technology can also be of big help in automatic idle reduction. The use of technology such as, automatic engine shut-off based on set time period and Telematics data to develop best practices to avoid unnecessary idling can be employed.