

**MEMORANDUM***District of Columbia**Bladensburg\***Bowie**College Park**Frederick**Frederick County**Gaithersburg**Greenbelt**Montgomery County**Prince George's County**Rockville**Takoma Park**Alexandria**Arlington County**Fairfax**Fairfax County**Falls Church**Loudoun County**Manassas**Manassas Park**Prince William County**\*Adjunct member***February 4, 2008**

**TO:** COG Board of Directors

**FROM:** Nancy Floreen, Chair *NF*  
Climate Change Steering Committee

**SUBJECT:** Recommendation on Participation in Cool Capital Challenge (R6-08)

**Recommendation Summary**

COG's Climate Change Steering Committee, recommends that the COG Board of Directors adopt Resolution R6-08, endorsing participation in the "Cool Capital Challenge" by COG member governments and by COG as a corporate entity. Participation in the "Challenge" is a voluntary, positive step that can be taken by government, business and citizens which will contribute toward reducing greenhouse gases in our region, as well as saving energy and promoting environmental stewardship.

**COG's Climate Change Initiative**

On April 11, 2007, the COG Board adopted Resolution R31-07, establishing COG's Climate Change Initiative. The essence of this initiative is the development of a regional greenhouse gas emission reduction goal, coupled with integration of ongoing regional and COG-member local government activities that contribute to greenhouse gas reduction, the sharing of best practices, development of information and measurement tools, and development of an outreach and education campaign for governments, businesses and citizens.

**Charge to COG's Climate Change Steering Committee**

R31-07 created the Climate Change Steering Committee (CCSC) to lead this effort. The CCSC's overall charge is to advise the Board on development of the region's climate change program. Our report to the Board is due by the end of April, 2008, and it will cover:

- Regional greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.
- A catalogue of greenhouse gas reduction activities already underway

and best practices to achieve greenhouse gas reductions.

- A method for measuring progress in meeting reduction targets.
- Examination of local impacts of climate change on the Washington region and potential need for adapting to the effects of climate change.
- Recommendations on how climate change should be addressed in the future within the COG governance structure.

The CCSC was also charged with developing advocacy positions on federal, state and local climate policies. In October, 2007, the Board adopted Resolution R64-07, reflecting our committee's recommendations on federal energy legislation. The Congress enacted such legislation in December, 2007, largely reflecting COG's positions.

### **Need for Government-Business-Community Partnership**

COG Staff analysis of the region's greenhouse gas emissions indicates that greenhouse gas emissions attributable to government operations represent only about four percent (4%) of the region's emissions, while the rest of the regional community (business, industry, daily individual activities) results in the remaining ninety-six percent (96%). Therefore it is clear to the CCSC that reducing regional emissions requires a partnership between government, businesses and the community to achieve success.

In the course of its deliberations, the CCSC learned about many climate change activities being implemented by various entities through out the region. The CCSC was pleased that some of these activities involve citizens, businesses, and community organizations. The CCSC recognizes the value of greater participation and coordination of existing initiatives especially those initiatives that have complementary activities and goals.

### **Proposed Participation in the Cool Capital Challenge**

The Cool Capital Challenge is a grass-roots campaign designed to obtain commitments for reducing one billion pounds of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions in the Washington region by April, 2008. One million pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> is approximately one-half a metric ton. For comparison, total greenhouse gas emissions in the Washington region equals approximately 74 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents.

The Cool Capital Challenge was started in early 2007 by volunteers from business, institutions, government agencies, congregations, and community and environmental organizations in the Metropolitan Washington region. It is coordinated out of the offices of Washington Parks & People in the Josephine Butler Parks Center.

The Cool Capital Challenge is structured like a capital campaign with "contributions" of greenhouse gas reductions instead of cash. According to the Cool Capital Challenge website (<http://www.coolcapitalchallenge.org>), the effort has already amassed over 270,000,000 pounds of greenhouse gas reduction pledges during the first six months since it was launched, which will produce an estimated energy cost saving for household, businesses, agencies, and communities across the Washington region of over \$26 million.

Further information on the Cool Capital Challenge is found in Attachment 1.

## **Endorsement of Cool Capital Challenge**

The CCSC reviewed potential participation in the Cool Capital Challenge over several meetings and concluded that engagement by COG and its members would make an important difference in reducing the region's greenhouse gas emissions, as well as raise awareness how individuals, businesses, non-profit organizations, and government can take action now to reduce their emissions and save energy and promote environmental stewardship.

It was specifically noted that several of COG's members are already participating or are considering a formal declaration in the near future. A substantial number of non-governmental organizations have also joined the Cool Capital Challenge.

Based on its assessment, today the CCSC recommends that COG endorse the Cool Capital Challenge to help COG, its members and the region move forward with actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

## **Implementation of Recommended Action**

The Climate Change Steering Committee recommends the following steps be taken by the Board, COG's members, the COG corporation and the COG staff to facilitate participation in the Cool Capital Challenge.

1. **Endorse the Cool Capital Challenge** and encourage COG-member jurisdictions to participate. This endorsement involves encouraging individual COG members and their citizens to join the Challenge, and could include co-sponsorship of certain activities.
2. **Direct the COG staff to help disseminate information to COG's members** about how to join the Cool Capital Challenge. Staff will also seek data from jurisdictions that have joined or elect to join the Challenge and their reduction actions or commitments made by April, 2008.
3. **Direct the COG staff to work with the leadership of the Cool Capital Challenge**, seeking to develop recognition tokens and/or individual member branding to indicate that COG members have joined the Challenge.
4. **Lead by example and as a corporate entity and partner by joining the Cool Capital Challenge.** COG has begun an internal "greening" initiative for its own operations and staff activities, several of which could be pledged as commitments to the Challenge. In addition, COG is a 1/3 owner of 777 North Capitol Street, NE, and in collaboration with COG's building partners, COG may be able to extend its commitments by quantifying energy efficiency and technological improvements in COG's headquarters building and committing some of these initiatives to the Cool Capital Challenge.

In summary, the Climate Change Steering Committee believes regional participation in the Cool Capital Challenge represents a positive step toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the Washington region. The Cool Capital Challenge is an excellent way of engaging governments, businesses, and the community at large in this very important effort.

Therefore, the Board is strongly urged to adopt Resolution R6-08 which formalizes the endorsement actions.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 240-777-7959, or the COG staff (Stuart Freudberg at (202) 962-3340 or George Nichols (202) 962-3355) for further information.

Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation.

## **Attachment**

### **Background on Cool Capital Challenge**

**February 4, 2008**

#### **What is the Cool Capital Challenge?**

The Cool Capital Challenge is a positive campaign to prevent one billion pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the Washington region in the next year – 2008 (or 0.45 million metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e. For comparison, total greenhouse gas emissions in the Washington region equals approximately 74 million metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e.”

The Cool Capital Challenge was started in early 2007 by volunteers from business, institutions, government agencies, congregations, and community and environmental organizations in the Metro Washington region. It is coordinated out of the offices of Washington Parks & People in the Josephine Butler Parks Center.

Cool Capital is structured like a capital campaign with contributions of carbon saving instead of cash. According to their website(<http://www.coolcapitalchallenge.org>), the Campaign has already amassed over 270,000,000 pounds of carbon reduction pledges during the first six months since it was launched, which will produce an estimated energy cost saving for household, businesses, agencies, and communities across the Washington region of over \$26 million.

#### **What Does It Mean to Join the Challenge?**

A Cool Capital Challenge partner means that an agency or organization shares a commitment to helping the people and institutions in our region combat global warming through a transition to an energy-efficient economy that reduces, and eventually eliminates, unsustainable emission of greenhouse gases. As a Cool Partner, organizations and jurisdictions become leaders in this effort by committing to specific reductions of greenhouse gases through energy efficiency improvements, renewable energy use, and/or a reduction in consumption. By endorsing this program, COG and its members could increase their capacity to engage citizens in taking actions at home and at work to reduce greenhouse gases, and broaden the ability to meet the region’s reduction goal. An example of a possible action that local governments in our region could embark on for the Cool Capital Challenge is a pledge to replace existing light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs or light-emitting diodes (LEDs). Communities could also pledge to conduct energy audits for existing buildings, encourage van pooling, and help low-income residents weatherize their homes, or employ transit-oriented development strategies. COG and the Cool Capital Challenge could help jurisdictions calculate the energy savings and greenhouse gas reductions of specific actions.

#### **Existing Cool Capital Challenge Participants**

Several local government offices and staffs have offered support for the Challenge, and at least two COG member governments are considering joining the Challenge. This support has come from both elected and senior officials, representing the District of Columbia, Montgomery, Arlington and Fairfax Counties. These local governments note that official recognition as a

partner may be requested in the future.

The following Cool Capital Challenge participation to date is noted:

Local Government Agencies/Offices

District of Columbia Department of Environment  
District of Columbia Office of Planning  
Montgomery County Dept. of Environmental Protection (partner but not yet official member)  
Arlington County (membership under active consideration)  
Fairfax County (membership under active consideration)

Federal, Business and Non-profit participation

EPA ENERGY STAR  
Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment  
Washington Parks & People  
Cool Cities DC  
Coalition for Smarter Growth  
Politics and Prose Climate Action Group  
Greater Washington Interfaith Power & Light  
Resources for the Future  
WWF  
Washington Area Bicyclists Association  
Downtown DC Business Improvement District  
Long and Foster  
Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs, DC Council  
Politics & Prose Climate Action Group  
Institute for Market Transformation (chair)  
Sustainable Community Initiatives  
Global Environmental Systems  
Sierra Club Montgomery County  
Keep Washington DC Beautiful  
Downtown DC Business Improvement District  
Capitol Riverfront Business Improvement District  
Energy Action Coalition  
DC Environmental Network

**What are the steps to become a Cool Partner?**

The steps involved to become a Cool Partner are flexible and could take several forms (resolution or formal letter of support). However, regardless of the actual form of action, the following steps are recommended:

1. Accept recognition as a “Cool Partner” on the Cool Capital Challenge’s website ([www.coolcapitalchallenge.com](http://www.coolcapitalchallenge.com)) and in other communications;
2. Reach out to constituents and citizens promoting greenhouse gas reduction and the goals of the Cool Capital Challenge;
3. Commit to making an achievable CO2 reductions pledge by Earth Day (April 22) 2008 and begin on-the-ground implementation no later than October 2008;

4. Work with the Challenge and COG to estimate the annual CO2 savings from these actions;
5. Optional: Calculate (or use existing information inventory) for agency/department/government Carbon Footprint as baseline;
6. Execute plans and improve and adapt.

Partners are free to take the steps in whatever order works best for their organization.