



METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE (MWAQC)

May 26, 2021
12:30 P.M. – 2:00 P.M.
Webinar

Chair: Robert Day, City of College Park

MEETING SUMMARY

MWAQC MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES

- Anita Bonds, District of Columbia (Vice Chair)
- Takis Karantonis, Arlington County (Vice Chair)
- Peter Kovar, City of Takoma Park (Vice Chair)
- Tad Aburn, Maryland Department of the Environment
- Charles Allen, Transportation Planning Board
- Tom Ballou, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
- Tanisha Briley, City of Gaithersburg
- Alexandra Brun, Maryland Department of the Environment
- Collin Burell, District of Columbia
- Virginia Burke, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Kelly Crawford, District Department of Energy and Environment
- Helen Cuervo, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Tom Dernoga, Prince George's County
- Penny Gross, Fairfax County
- Jason Groth, Charles County
- Dawn Hawkins-Nixon, Prince George's County
- Denise Mitchell, City of College Park
- Guillermo Ortiz, ACPAC Chair
- Del Pepper, City of Alexandria

- Jim Ponticello, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Michelle Russell, Prince George's County
- Dave Snyder, City of Falls Church
- Kari Snyder, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Ram Tangirala, District Department of Energy and Environment

OTHERS

- Hannah Ashenafi, District Department of Energy and Environment
- Grace Barnhill, Arlington County
- Stan Edwards, Montgomery County
- Michele Blair, City of Laurel
- Matthew Gaskin, District Department of Transportation
- Joseph Jakuta, District Department of Energy and Environment
- Demetra McBride, Arlington County
- Regina Moore, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Will Perkins, District of Columbia
- Sam Stephens, District of Columbia
- Steve Walz
- Norman Whitaker, Virginia Department of Transportation

COG STAFF

- Chuck Bean, COG Executive Office
- Leah Boggs, COG Department of

- Environmental Programs
- Jen Desimone, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Lyn Erickson, COG Department of Transportation Planning
- Megan Goodman, COG Office of Communications
- Jeff King, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Sunil Kumar, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Tim Masters, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Mark Moran, COG Department of Transportation Planning
- Erin Morrow, COG Department of Transportation Planning
- Wanda Owens, COG Department of Transportation Planning
- JC Park, COG Department of Transportation Planning
- Kanti Srikanth, COG Executive Office
- Patricia Warren, COG Executive Office
- Dusan Vuksan, COG Department of Transportation Planning

1. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD, APPROVE MINUTES, CHAIR'S REMARKS

Takis Karantonis, MWAQC Vice Chair

Vice Chair Takis Karantonis called the meeting to order. Jeff King has been selected to be the Director of COG's Climate, Energy and Air Program. There were no public comments. The February meeting summary was approved without any changes.

2. COMMITTEE REPORTS

MWAQC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) – Kelly Crawford

MWAQC-TAC held a call on May 11:

- Members have been preparing for the current ozone season and the forecasting protocols. Members also discussed different planning options for ozone standard attainment status, which will be discussed later in this meeting.
- Electrify America presented some of their projects under consideration to MWAQC-TAC members.
- Members also heard from MDE regarding the potential expansion of the Peak Ozone Day Partnership program to reduce electricity demand on high ozone days.

Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC) – Guillermo Ortiz

ACPAC held a webinar meeting on May 17:

- ACPAC now has a full committee of 18 members. In February, ACPAC moved forward with a quorum of 12 members, approved by MWAQC Executive Committee. The first recruitment round was November to December 18, with over 20 applications. Most of the expertise was in climate and energy. ACPAC conducted a second round of recruitment to focus on getting more applicants with expertise in air quality. The second round ended on March 19. At the April 14 meeting, the MWAQC Executive Committee approved the final 6 committee members. ACPAC now has representation across air, climate, and energy.
- On Earth Day, the 2021 Climate and Energy Leadership Awards Program was launched. This program was first launched 7 years ago on Earth Day. ACPAC launched the program as a way to highlight projects and programs that address climate issues in the region. ACPAC did not conduct the awards program last year due to COVID-19 but are picking it back up this year. There will be two award categories (government agencies and NGOs) instead of three. The committee decided not to include educational institutions as the school year was truncated due to COVID-19. The deadline for applications is June 30. Contact Leah Boggs of COG Staff

for more information.

- At ACPAC's May meeting, Sunil Kumar briefed the committee on the Ozone SIP (Statement Implementation Plan) process and timeframe to reach containment. The committee also heard from Electrify America and the City of Alexandria's Electric Vehicle Strategy Plan and how they address equity in infrastructure deployment.
- ACPAC's next meeting is July 19.

Clean Air Partners – Jen Desimone

Clean Air Partners have been involved in the following:

Air Quality Awareness Week, May 3 – May 7

- Clean Air Partners launched their summer campaign during Air Quality Awareness Week. Each day during the week featured a different theme with associated social media challenges. Daily themes included:
 - Plants and Trees
 - Health
 - The Air Quality Index
 - Active Transportation – Hiking and Biking
 - Food and its impact on air and climate
- Campaign activities included:
 - Media Relations and Meteorologists – Clean Air Partners engaged reporters and meteorologists to share Clean Air Partners activities and tips.
 - Organic and Paid Social Media – Organic and promoted posts through Clean Air Partners Facebook and Twitter pages. Boosted content targeted parents of children under 15 years of age.
 - Digital Influencers (“Social Media Street Teams”) - Clean Air Partners contracted with DC and Baltimore area digital influencers to promote messaging and tips during Air Quality Awareness Week.
- Upcoming Campaign Activities include:
 - Ozone Action Month - August
 - Car Free Day - September

Student Poster Contest

- Clean Air Partners held their 13th annual poster contest for students in grades 4 through 8 residing in the Baltimore-Washington region. The winners are:
 - Category 1 (grades 4-6): Severna Park Middle School, Anne Arundel County
 - Category 2 (grades 7-8): Middletown Middle School, Frederick County

Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) – Jeff King

CEEPC held a webinar meeting on May 26:

- In coordination with members working on local climate action plans, COG has been working on a website that is launching today. COG and local government partners have teamed up to educate area leaders, stakeholders and residents about this challenge and connect them with opportunities for action through this new platform – [DMV Climate Partners](#).
- CEEPC adopted their Work Program and Budget today.
- CEEPC heard from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) about their Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (GGRA) Plan.
- Moving forward, CEEPC will be focusing on climate challenges through an integrated, multi-sector approach. CEEPC will be working on these challenges with the Transportation Planning

Board (TPB), as the transportation sector is a key sector for potential emission reductions.

3. LOCAL AND STATE UPDATES

Local Members and State Air Agencies

- Kelly Crawford (DOEE) said that DOEE is actively working on ozone season monitoring. They have a new member participating in the forecasting group, Dr. Courtney Grimes, who recently joined the department from University of Maryland. There have already been two exceedances for ozone this year. DOEE continues to work with partners in Maryland and Virginia regarding the voluntary bump up decision. DOEE recently proposed their NO_x RACT and SIP amendment. DOEE is finalizing their SIP submission.
- Tom Ballou (VDEQ) said that VDEQ is also working on ozone issues. There were also ozone exceedances in Virginia on May 20. Not only Northern Virginia, but in other parts of the state too, which is less common.

4. OZONE SEASON UPDATE

Sunil Kumar, COG Environmental Engineer

The ozone season started on March 1 and will end on October 31. There are three months of data for this season. Most of the days in March and April were green air quality days with regard to peak 8-hour average ozone levels, with some yellow days. There were three code orange days on May 19, 20, and 21. Ozone exceedance days are still in a downward trend. Last year, was the lowest number of code orange days (two) for over the past few decades. This was likely due to the impacts of COVID-19 on travel. Ozone and temperature are highly correlated. However, since 2009, there have been lower ozone emission levels, which has meant that even when the temperatures exceed 90 degrees Fahrenheit, there are still fewer exceedance days than there were prior to 2009. Ozone design value is a parameter that the EPA uses to evaluate an area's attainment status. Since 1999, the region has gone from 106 part per billion (ppb) of ozone down to 71 ppb in the most recent measure. The 2015 8-hour ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) is 70 ppb. The deadline for attaining the standard is August 3, 2021. Based on the data, the metropolitan Washington region has not attained the standard. With regard to 24-hour average particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) levels, there have been no code orange days so far this season. There have mostly been code green days, with some code yellow days. The PM_{2.5} exceedance trend shows a big decrease in this pollution over the past two decades. In the past decade, there have been a handful of exceedance days. Since the late 2000s, the region has comfortably attained the 1997 Annual PM_{2.5} Standard, as well as the 2006 24-Hour PM_{2.5} Standard. The overall Air Quality Index (AQI) value for the region, which includes values for ozone, PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀, CO, SO₂, and NO₂, has shown a dramatic improvement in air quality over the past 10 years. Ozone levels for 2021 are higher compared to the 2020 data. One of the reasons for this is warmer- and drier-than-normal weather this year. Additionally, as there has been an uptick in economic activity in the region, there has also been greater emissions, especially from mobile sources. The same trend is also seen in PM_{2.5} levels; however, there is not a dramatic increase.

Discussion:

- MWAQC members suggested including additional notes in the conclusion of any document about ozone nonattainment that explains where the region is, why the region is not in attainment and what the region is doing about it.
- In addition to what the District of Columbia is doing locally to address ozone nonattainment, it should also be noted that a large contribution to the District's ozone is dependent on control measures in nearby states. Much of the region's emissions profile is coming from sources that are outside of the region's direct control. Working in partnership with the region's neighbors is an important part of this.

5. 2015 OZONE STANDARD ATTAINMENT STATUS

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

Jeff King provided an update on the status of the 2015 ozone standard and schedule of planned activities for a state implementation plan (SIP). A multi-sectoral approach is going to be very important in achieving the region's climate and air quality goals. New efforts will be needed to move the ozone design value trend into attainment of the ozone NAAQS. Since the region is facing a real possibility of being bumped up into moderate nonattainment, MWAQC and the region's states will be required to prepare an attainment SIP and submit it by January 2023. Development of a control measures strategy for the attainment plan, including state and local programs and federal actions to control emissions from upwind states, will be an integral part of the work program activities.

6. FY 2022 WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET

Jen Desimone, COG Air Program Chief

In coordination with the Budget and Technical Advisory committees, the MWAQC work program and budget has been developed for FY 2022. Jen Desimone presented the work program to the committee for approval. This work program and budget supports development of the SIP for the 2015 ozone NAAQS, tracking designation and data for the 2015 ozone NAAQS, assistance in development of a redesignation request and a maintenance plan for the 1-hour ozone NAAQS, identification and implementation of initiatives to reduce air pollution, work related to transportation conformity, and communication to regional and local leaders and the public on the need for actions to reduce emissions and improve air quality. For FY 2022, MWAQC is requesting a 3.7 percent increase in funding compared to FY 2021; approximately \$20,000 in additional funding, just over \$540,000. Staff is requesting that the increase for the state air agencies (\$6,600) to be paid out of MWAQC's reserve fund. The FY 2022 core work areas will focus on emissions inventory development, regional control measures, transportation conformity/mobile emissions analysis, public participation, MWAQC support, and program management.

Discussion:

- COG staff are having discussions with the Office of Communications regarding the best methods and approaches for more inclusive public outreach and engagement around air quality issues. MWAQC members are in support of ensuring more inclusive public engagement.

Action: The FY 2022 Work Program and Budget were unanimously approved.

7. ADJOURN

Takis Karantonis, MWAQC Vice Chair

Vice Chair Takis Karantonis adjourned the meeting. The next MWAQC meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2021.