



AIR AND CLIMATE PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ACPAC)

May 20, 2024
5:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.

Webinar information provided to members via email.

Chair: Julie Kimmel

DRAFT TELECONFERENCE MEETING SUMMARY

ACPAC ATTENDEES: Julie Kimmel, William Marsh, James Wang, Peter Mecca, Herb Simmens, Deborah Shprentz, Ian Marcus, Chris Tandy, Greg Farley, Jack Lyman, Matt Gravatt, Deeohn Ferris, Stacey Garfinkle

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES: Tad Aburn

COG STAFF: Leah Boggs, Maia Davis, Jeff King, Sunil Kumar

5:35 P.M. 1. CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, MEETING SUMMARY APPROVAL AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
Julie Kimmel, Chair

The meeting was called to order by Chair Julie Kimmel. The meeting had a quorum with 12 members and the March 2024 meeting summary was approved. There were no amendments to the agenda.

Chair Kimmel announced the 2024 Climate and Energy Leadership Awards Program and that ACPAC members should help to promote the program.

COG Staff Leah Boggs announced that a consultant responded to the EJ Toolkit Task Order. COG Staff expects to approve the Statement of Work and the kickoff to occur within the next month.

5:40 P.M. 2. MEMBERSHIP (RE-) ORIENTATION
Leah Boggs, COG Staff
Sunil Kumar, COG Staff

The item focused on orientation of new members, the review of COG committee structures, air quality planning in the Washington region, and progress made in reducing air pollution levels,

ACPAC Orientation Presentation Overview:

- COG is a regional body established in 1957 by local cities and counties to deal with regional concerns including growth, housing, environment, public health and safety.
- COG has 30 or 40 active committees on issues from homelessness to health, smart growth planning, to water security and drought alerts.
- ACPAC advises the Climate Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) and the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC).

- MWAQC and the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) are independent policy boards and do not report to the COG Board. They are housed within COG and staffed by COG personnel.
- COG does not get directly involved in local projects. Local and state governments within the COG footprint may request recommendations, tools or resources from COG on for how to address certain issues.
- MWAQC's organizational structure includes:
 - Executive Committee – approves the MWAQC agendas, approves ACPAC appoints to the committee.
 - Budget Committee – approves the budget.
 - MWAQC Technical Advisory Committee – meets monthly and advises and assists MWAQC in planning for and maintaining the region's air quality.
 - EJ Subcommittee – is new subcommittee responsible for developing an air-related EJ action plan.
 - MWAQC focuses on coordinating on regional planning tasks and is primarily responsible for developing regional carbon monoxide (CO), ozone, and fine particulate (PM2.5) National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) plans for meeting the federal health standards for the criteria pollutants the region.
- CEEPC is under the COG Board structure and reports directly to the COG Board.
 - It has 6 committees under its structure including the Built Environment and Energy Advisory Committee (BEEAC).
 - CEEPC was created by the COG board in 2009 by resolution as its principal policy adviser on climate and energy issues, as well as alt fuels, solid waste and recycling.
 - Its mission is to guide the implementation of the 2008 climate change report.
 - The regional goals set in 2008 are:
 - 10% GHG reductions below 2005 levels by 2012 (met)
 - 20% reductions by 2020 (met)
 - 80% reduction by 2050
 - The interim goal of 50% reduction by 2030 was approved by the COG board in 2020 and is outlined in the 2030 Climate and Energy Climate Action.
- ACPAC was first established in 1993 as the Air Quality Public Advisory Committee (AQPAC), before CEEPC was established in 2009.
 - Its purpose is to facilitate dialogue among diverse interest groups, the community and MWAQC, advise MWAQC and CEEPC.
 - Membership is 18 members – 6 each across MD/VA/DC with the COG footprint.
- EJ Subcommittee
 - In May 2023 MWAQC adopted its FY24 work program and included an objective to advance environmental justice, community engagement, and equitable regional policies.
 - The goal is to develop an Action Plan to address EJ in air quality planning.
- Public Comment Periods
 - ACPAC does not have a public comment period. The ACPAC Chair can opt to have public comment at meetings. All ACPAC chairs are made aware of the ability to make the determination.
 - CEEPC does not have a public comment period.
 - MWAQC has an official public comment period at MWAQC meetings. The public can submit comments in writing and 3 days in advance of an MWAQC meeting to make verbal comments for 3 minutes.
 - TPB has an official public comment period.

ACPAC Air Quality Planning Presentation Overview:

- Staff reviewed the fundamentals of air quality issues in the region, reviewed how ozone is formed, ozone concentrations in the region, the region's ozone plan, ozone data and standards. She also discussed similar information for PM2.5, introduced transportation conformity and what's coming up for regional air quality planning for the coming year.

6:30 PM **3. OZONE SEASON UPDATE**
Sunil Kumar, COG Environmental Engineer

Staff provided the Ozone Season Summary and an update on the status of ozone planning for the DC/MD/VA ozone nonattainment area.

- The ozone zone season is March to October.
- A new tougher annual PM2.5 standard (9.0 ug/m3) became effective May 6, 2024. This may lead to an increase in code yellow (moderate), code red (unhealthy), and worse (very unhealthy and hazardous) PM2.5 days.
- Status of 2015 Ozone NAAQS Attainment
 - Washington region was designated as a Marginal Nonattainment Area for the 2015 Ozone NAAQS effective August 3, 2018.
 - It was reclassified to Moderate Nonattainment Area on November 7, 2022, following its failure to attain by the deadline.
 - Current draft 2023 data shows nonattainment largely due to smoke originating from wildfires in Canada. States requested EPA to grant waiver for smoke influenced high ozone days.
 - If EPA grants a waiver, then the region will need to submit a request to redesignate it to attainment along with a maintenance plan to demonstrate that it will keep attaining the NAAQS in the future.
 - The region intends to start laying the groundwork for the above plan in June 2024

6:45 P.M. **4. EJ SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE**
Julie Kimmel, Chair
William Washburn, Chair

Chair Kimmel gave an update on MWAQC's EJ Subcommittee.

- The first EJ Subcommittee meeting was on May 2. Last year Bill Washburn, Rev. Jacqueline Norris and Julie Kimmel were appointed to represent ACPAC on the subcommittee.
- The EJ Subcommittee was established to support MWAQC's commitment to incorporating environmental justice and equity in its work program.
- Subcommittee's mission to develop regional policies and initiatives to support its members environmental justice/equity programs.
- The subcommittee will work collaboratively with stakeholders to develop an Action Plan to provide implementation strategies to integrate

6:55 PM **5. CEEPC AND MWAQC MEMOS VOTE**
ACPAC Members

- Members discussed final versions of the CEEPC and MWAQC memos detailing climate and air-related recommendations.
- There was discussion about the protocols for greenhouse gas emissions accounting and the desire to see emissions come down as close to zero as possible.
- COG staff offered to make a presentation on the emissions inventory methodology.
- Concerns were raised about the offset market and its difficulties in measuring and verifying emissions reductions, as well as potential negative impacts on receiving communities.
- The group discusses the wording of the memo, specifically around the recommendation to avoid adopting net zero emissions or carbon neutral targets, with suggestions for alternative language.
- A friendly amendment was made to the CEEPC's memo, suggesting caution in adopting net zero emissions or carbon neutral targets alone.

- Both the memos were approved by the committee with the amendment to the CEEPC memo as follows:
 - “Furthermore, COG (and jurisdictions) should be **cautious about adopting "net-zero emissions" or "carbon neutral" targets** alone, though they are commonly used in the policy arena, since the world actually needs to bring human-produced CO₂ emissions down to *net-negative* before the end of the century in order to avoid dangerous warming and that means our region needs to bring its gross emissions down as close to zero as possible.”
- COG Staff will send the final version to the committee the next day.
- The memos will be included in the policy committee meeting packets, uploaded to both committee pages, and the chair will include points in her committee updates on May 22.
 - [CEEPC May 22](#) meeting page.
 - [MWAQC May 22](#) meeting page.

7:30 P.M. 5. NEXT ACPAC MEETING AND ADJOURN

Chair Julie Kimmel adjourns the meeting.

- **2024 Meeting schedule** (*Virtual meeting only):
 - July 15, 2024*
 - September 16, 2024 (Potential hybrid meeting)
 - November 18, 2024*

Meeting Documents:

<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2024/5/20/air-and-climate-policy-advisory-committee/>