



METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE (MWAQC)

September 25, 2024
12:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M.
Virtual Meeting

Chair: Kenny Boddye, Prince William County

MEETING SUMMARY

MWAQC MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES

- Kenny Boddye, Prince William County (Chair)
- Tom Dernoga, Prince George’s County (Vice Chair)
- Dave Snyder, City of Falls Church (Vice Chair)
- Tom Ballou, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
- Anita Bonds, District of Columbia
- Collin Burell, District of Columbia
- Virginia Burke, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Sophia Cortazzo, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Shana Fulcher, City of Takoma Park
- Jason Groth, Charles County
- Alan Hew, City of College Park
- Richard Jackson, District of Columbia
- Joseph Jakuta, District Department of Energy and Environment
- Julie Kimmel, Air and Climate Policy Advisory Committee Chair
- Meagan Landis, Prince William County
- Keith Levchenko, Montgomery County
- Dashel Lewis (Office of Laurie-Anne Sayles), Montgomery County
- Kristin Mink, Montgomery County
- John Morrill, Fairfax County
- Jim Ponticello, Virginia Department of Transportation

- Evandro Santos, Prince William County
- Dan Storck, Fairfax County
- Roger Thunell, Maryland Department of the Environment
- Sonia Vasquez Luna, City of Manassas
- Kristen Weaver, City of Greenbelt

OTHERS

- Tauhirah Abdul-Matin, AECOM
- Tad Aburn, Citizen
- Ryan Auvil, Maryland Department of the Environment
- Charles Brown, Equitable Cities
- Maryann Carroll, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Naomi Cohen-Shields, District Department of Transportation
- Allyson Frantz, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
- Kathleen Lockwood, Calvert County
- Christi Maple, Loudoun County
- Demetra McBride, Arlington County
- Gwendolin McCrea, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
- Regina Moore, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Cynthia Stahl, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Sydney Stern, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Ram Tangirala, District Department of

- Energy and Environment
- Emma Tarquinio, Frederick County
- Chuck Turner, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

- Transportation Planning
- Jen Desimone, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Jeff King, COG Climate, Energy, and Air Program Director
- Sunil Kumar, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Wyetha Lipford, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Tim Masters, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Jane Posey, COG Department of Transportation Planning
- Dusan Vuksan, COG Department of Transportation Planning

COG STAFF

- Alissa Boggs, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Leah Boggs, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Heidi Bonnaffon, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Robert Christopher, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Robert d'Abadie, COG Department of

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

Kenny Boddye, MWAQC Chair

Chair Kenny Boddye called the meeting to order. Tad Aburn provided public comment that was focused on air quality concerns in relation to environmental justice (EJ). Mr Aburn specifically spoke to high diesel emissions in EJ areas, which are illegal but insufficiently enforced, fugitive dust from trucks and construction sites, a major complaint in EJ communities that also requires better enforcement, as well as cumulative emissions from stationary sources, which are often overlooked due to limited resources in local enforcement agencies. Public comments can be found in the [meeting materials](#). The May MWAQC meeting summary was approved without any changes.

2. COMMITTEE REPORTS

MWAQC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) – Roger Thunell (MDE)

MWAQC-TAC held a call on September 10:

- At the last MWAQC-TAC meeting, members received an update on the ongoing ozone season, which ends on October 31. The region's data shows compliance with the 2015 ozone standard. TAC members discussed the process for submitting a redesignation request to change the Washington area's status to "attainment" for the 2015 ozone standard. This also requires developing a maintenance plan to ensure continued compliance. Members had several questions for the EPA regarding the redesignation and plan, which were compiled and sent for a response.
- The meeting also included a briefing on the Environmental Justice (EJ) Subcommittee's recent listening sessions.

Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC) – Julie Kimmel (ACPAC Chair)

ACPAC held a webinar meeting on September 16:

- ACPAC submitted a recommendation memo to MWAQC in May. As of now, four months have passed and ACPAC remains eager to see how the concerns raised in the memo will be addressed. A draft response to this memo, which will be discussed later on the agenda, was not available for ACPAC's September 16 meeting. Both the recommendations memo, as well as MWAQC's draft response are included in the [meeting materials](#).
- The next ACPAC meeting is November 18.

Clean Air Partners – Jen Desimone (COG Staff)

Clean Air Partners have been involved in the following:

- Clean Air Partners kicked-off their summer campaign during Air Quality Awareness Week (the first week of May), with the announcement of a gas-powered lawn equipment exchange. Residents registered to bring in gas-powered equipment into participating Ace Hardware stores in exchange for new electric lawn mowers, leaf blowers, and weed trimmers. 150 pieces of equipment were exchanged and taken to a recycling partner to be properly disposed of.
- The month of August was designated as Ozone Action Month. To heighten awareness during the hottest time of the summer, Clean Air Partners traveled to Arlington and Charles County with their Eco-Driving exhibit (car bubble) and pop-up display to educate residents on how to reduce vehicle emissions.
- Clean Air Partners also partnered with Commuter Connections to drive pledges for Car Free Day. In October, Clean Air Partners and Casey Trees will be planting trees in two communities in the region – one in Ward 7, District of Columbia, and one in Hyattsville, Maryland. Forty trees will be planted at each location.
- This fall, we will be surveying Baltimore-Washington residents on their perceptions and attitudes on regional air quality. The Public Awareness survey is conducted every three years. The results are used to inform the development of future work programs and program initiatives.

Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) – Jeff King (COG Climate, Energy, and Air Program Director on behalf of CEEPC leadership)

CEEPC held a webinar meeting on September 25:

- The last CEEPC meeting centered on climate actions in the transportation sector. Updates included Maryland's recent successes in securing Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) grants for electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, including a \$4 million grant for EV charging under the CFI program.
- An overview of the REVI (Regional Electric Vehicle Infrastructure) tool was provided to CEEPC members. This tool, funded by the Transportation Planning Board (TPB), helps prioritize EV charging station locations at the census tract level and estimates the number of chargers needed based on projected electric vehicle adoption in the light-duty fleet.
- Beyond light-duty vehicles, the committee discussed opportunities for electrifying buses and medium/heavy-duty fleets, as well as expanding non-motorized transportation. There was a focus on transitioning to biodiesel and exploring other sustainable transportation solutions.
- Members expressed concerns over the rapid growth of energy-intensive data centers, which could hinder regional efforts to meet greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction goals. The need to reconsider more aggressive climate targets to address this growth was emphasized.
- The committee highlighted the importance of climate adaptation and resilience efforts, such as using green infrastructure and addressing urban heat islands. These strategies could have significant EJ and air quality benefits.

3. LOCAL AND STATE UPDATES

Local Members and State Air Agencies

- John Morrill (Fairfax County) said that this past summer Fairfax County mobilized several departments to provide cooling assistance to a local mobile home community affected by extreme heat in June and July. Many homes, including those with children, experienced indoor temperatures exceeding 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Although cooling assistance isn't traditionally viewed as an air quality issue, it is closely related, especially during extreme weather events. With minimal government expense and collaboration with county agencies, nonprofits, and donations, room air conditioners were safely installed in over 30 households. While federal and

state cooling assistance programs exist, they have restrictive eligibility criteria. The county is now exploring ways to secure funding to institutionalize this type of assistance, as extreme heat is the leading weather-related cause of death, surpassing extreme cold.

- Kenny Boddye (Prince William County) said that efforts are underway to align the zoning ordinance with Prince William County’s comprehensive plan, which includes updates reflecting modern development practices. Additionally, the county is integrating its Community and Energy Sustainability Master Plan, adopted last year, into the comprehensive plan. Discussions have also begun about improving transit options, not only for residents but also for the county and school workforces, who are often overlooked in transit planning. The goal is to identify gaps and opportunities for transitioning workers to public transit rather than relying on personal vehicles.
- Joseph Jakuta (District Department of Energy and Environment) said that the EPA concurred with an exceptional event demonstration for the 2023 ozone season, which is important for moving forward with 2015 ozone standard considerations. This event was influenced by wildfires. Also, the District proposed and is finalizing a rule to remove affirmative defense provisions from Title V regulations.

4. MWAQC NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR 2025 OFFICERS

Kenny Boddye, MWAQC Chair

A nominating committee was formed to develop the slate of officers for 2025. Volunteers for the committee include Kirk McPike (City of Alexandria), Shannon Moore (Frederick County), and Collin Burrell (District of Columbia). COG staff will follow up with the committee to schedule a meeting to discuss nominations.

Action: Members for the MWAQC Nominating Committee were appointed.

5. MWAQC RESPONSE LETTER – ACPAC’S RECOMMENDATIONS ON AIR QUALITY ACTIONS

Kenny Boddye, MWAQC Chair

Jen Desimone, COG Air Program Chief

COG staff provided an overview of MWAQC’s draft response to ACPAC’s recommendations on air quality and climate change (both response and recommendations can be found in the [meeting materials](#)). The draft response had been approved by MWAQC-TAC. MWAQC acknowledged the impact of wildfires and heatwaves on air quality but emphasized that local actions can’t fully offset such extreme pollution. MWAQC pledges to advocate for federal policies and adjust future emission reduction plans if standards change. The Environmental Justice (EJ) Subcommittee is developing an action plan to address air pollution in EJ communities. While MWAQC doesn’t directly monitor air quality, they will share best practices and support individual jurisdictions in improving air quality monitoring. MWAQC recognized that local governments control land use planning and zoning, but they will consider related recommendations from the EJ Subcommittee. Finally, MWAQC committed to monitoring wildfire impacts and enhancing public awareness through established warning systems.

Discussion:

- Councilmember Anita Bonds suggested strengthening the language in the response, particularly in the section about addressing air pollution hotspots in EJ communities. This would emphasize the ongoing community-level conversations led by the EJ subcommittee.
- Chair Kenny Boddye suggested including a note in the land use section, specifically for Virginia, to reflect local restrictions due to the Dillon Rule, which limits local zoning authority.

Action: MWAQC voted unanimously to approve the letter with proposed amendments.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SUBCOMMITTEE AND ACTION PLAN

David Snyder, Environmental Justice Subcommittee Co-Chair

Chair Snyder emphasized the significant progress made in air quality and environmental justice (EJ) efforts, driven by the active involvement of elected officials, staff, consultants, and the public. He highlighted that public engagement has been a key focus of the EJ Subcommittee, with successful listening sessions and new communication strategies. The process has been a learning experience, shifting from a top-down approach to one led by the needs of the community. Chair Snyder acknowledged progress in defining the problem, particularly around health concerns in EJ communities, and the need for government partnership in addressing these issues. Moving forward, the focus of the subcommittee will be on identifying strategies and actions, especially related to addressing diesel emissions. While some tools are available, additional advocacy at the federal level may be needed. Public engagement remains crucial, and the subcommittee plans to develop actionable recommendations, including potential legislative changes to improve air quality and support EJ goals.

Tauhirah Abdul-Matin, AECOM Project Manager

Tauhirah highlighted the upcoming listening session on Saturday. This is not the final session, but the last in the current series before moving to the next phase—drafting the action plan. A final region-wide listening session will occur at a future date. Afterward, recommendations will be combined with Jeff King's action list, prioritizing common themes for the draft action plan, which is expected by November. A second round of public engagement will follow to ensure feedback is accurately reflected before finalizing the plan in spring.

Charles T. Brown, Equitable Cities

Charles T. Brown presented key themes from public feedback gathered during four regional listening sessions. Participants emphasized the need for improved access to comprehensive air quality data, increased monitoring, and funding for localized efforts to address pollution hotspots. There is a call for greater public awareness and educational outreach on air quality and health impacts, as current knowledge is limited. The public seeks stronger accountability for industries contributing to pollution and better enforcement of air quality regulations, especially in marginalized areas. Disadvantaged communities feel their concerns are not being heard and urge that the action plan prioritize projects addressing their needs. Participants advocated for reducing traffic congestion, electrifying bus fleets, and addressing issues like inadequate tree canopy and impervious surfaces, which worsen pollution and heat island effects. Notable quotes highlighted concerns about ineffective government accountability and the need for stricter building codes.

Discussion:

- Tauhirah highlighted two key trends from committee discussions: the focus on outdoor air quality versus indoor air, and the intersection of greenhouse gas mitigation with air quality efforts. She noted that these topics were addressed in the MWAQC discussions and looks forward to incorporating these insights into the action plan.

7. AIR QUALITY MONITORING IN THE WASHINGTON REGION

Sunil Kumar, COG Environmental Engineer

Sunil introduced the topic of air monitoring efforts in the Washington region, involving staff from Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The presentations on this topic are intended to respond to questions from a previous meeting regarding monitoring site selection, pollutants measured, and the process for adding new monitors. A detailed memo addressing these topics was discussed in July and is available in the [meeting materials](#).

Ryan Auvil, Maryland Department of the Environment

Ryan Auvil discussed the state's air monitoring program, which operates within the Air and Radiation Administration. The program, established by the Clean Air Act of 1970, focuses on tracking six primary

air pollutants (criteria pollutants) that impact human and environmental health, including carbon monoxide, ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10). MDE's air monitoring network adheres to federal regulations to ensure data accuracy and consistency across the U.S. Monitoring sites are selected based on criteria such as population density, source proximity, and atmospheric conditions, and can cost \$150,000–\$250,000 to set up. Each site requires a climate-controlled shelter, calibration systems, communication tools, and data management software. MDE operates 25 regulatory air monitoring sites across Maryland, measuring over 30 parameters with 110 instruments. The data from these sites supports quality assurance, trend analysis, and regulatory compliance, including air quality forecasts and public warnings. Over the past 20 years, Maryland has seen significant declines in pollutant levels, as demonstrated by long-term trend data. The network also monitored critical events like the Canada wildfires in 2023, which led to high PM2.5 levels.

Joseph Jakuta, District Department of Energy and Environment

Joseph Jakuta presented DOEE's low-cost air sensor program aimed at supplementing the existing high-cost, stationary regulatory air monitoring network. While the District has robust air quality monitoring, these stations are expensive and limited in coverage. The low-cost sensors—such as Clarity Nodes and Purple Air—are less expensive, portable, and easier to deploy but offer lower accuracy. The program is deploying around 100 sensors, including near schools, to fill monitoring gaps and better capture particulate matter and diesel emissions data. Although low-cost sensors like Purple Air are not used for regulatory decisions due to accuracy issues, they provide valuable trends and community-level insights. Data from these sensors will be integrated into a public mapping tool, developed with input from a community air advisory board. The DOEE is also expanding its Aclima study, increasing air quality data collection from 2.26 to 30.33 square miles, particularly in underserved communities. The goal is to enhance air quality data coverage, identify pollution hotspots, and empower communities through citizen science and better health protection.

Discussion:

- Kristen Weaver (City of Greenbelt) asked if Maryland's air monitoring program incorporates remote sensing data. Ryan Auvil responded that while his presentation focused on ground monitoring, they also use remote sensing tools such as satellite data and LiDAR. This data helps air quality forecasters predict events and conduct post-event analysis, especially for ozone exceedances.
- Councilmember Anita Bonds (District of Columbia) asked about security measures for air monitoring locations. Ryan Auvil confirmed that most sites are fenced, locked, and secured, though vandalism still occasionally occurs. While precautions like locked gates and bolted equipment are in place, Auvil noted that determined individuals can sometimes bypass these measures. Despite this, the monitoring sites have largely remained secure.
- Kristen Weaver (City of Greenbelt) asked about the accessibility of Purple Air data, noting that it has become more difficult to access without payment. Joseph Jakuta acknowledged the issue but mentioned that DOEE has developed a code to ensure they retain historical data from the sensors. This solution aims to make the data more accessible over time, benefiting both the public and their monitoring efforts.

8. OZONE SEASON UPDATE

Sunil Kumar, COG Environmental Engineer

Sunil presented air quality data for the 2023 ozone season, highlighting key trends in ozone and PM2.5 levels. From March to August, there were several code orange air quality exceedances, with the highest recorded in August. Despite this, long-term trends show a reduction in ozone and PM2.5 exceedances since the late 1990s. Ozone levels are now less influenced by temperature alone, with factors like wind and cloud cover also playing significant roles. Regarding PM2.5, the EPA tightened the standard from 12.0 to 9.0 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, resulting in more days classified as "moderate" air quality. However, there were no

exceedances, even during high pollution events like July 4. The region has remained in compliance with air quality standards, but Sunil noted that four key monitors will be closely watched next year to avoid potential non-attainment. Due to continued compliance, the Washington region is preparing a redesignation request, along with a maintenance plan to ensure future compliance.

Discussion:

- David Snyder highlighted the positive air quality trends, particularly the reduction in ozone exceedance days despite increasing high-temperature days. He suggested that COG share this success with the public, emphasizing the region's solid work on air quality improvement. Snyder recommended communicating the data clearly and involving the committee co-chairs to help the public understand the significant progress made in the region. Other MWAQC members agreed with the call to share this success story with the public.

9. ADJOURN

Kenny Boddye, MWAQC Chair

Chair Kenny Boddye adjourned the meeting. The next MWAQC meeting is scheduled for December 4, 2024.