

Built Environment and Energy Advisory Committee (BEEAC)

Meeting Summary: March 17, 2016

MEMBERS AND ATTENDEES:

Bill Eger, City of Alexandria (Vice Chair)
Michelle Vigen, Montgomery County (Chair) (by phone)
Lindsey Shaw, Montgomery County
Joan Kelsch, Arlington County
Jeannine Cooper, Arlington County
Kate Walker, City of Falls Church
Tim Stevens, City of Falls Church
Ingrid Schwingler, Grid Alternatives
Rachel Healy, WMATA
Najib Salehi, Loudoun County (by phone)
Noel Kaplan, Fairfax County
Bob Lazaro, NVRC (by phone)
Corey Ramsden, Community Power Network
Robin Snyder, GSA (by phone)
Lisa Orr, Frederick County (by phone)
Ben Foster, ICF (by phone)

COG STAFF:

Leah Boggs, COG DEP
Maia Davis, COG DEP
Sophie Earll, COG DEP
Jeff King, COG DEP
Isabel Ricker, COG DEP
Madison Wagner, COG DEP (by phone)
Steve Walz, COG DEP, Director
Aaron Waters, COG DEP

1. Call to Order and Introductions, *Bill Eger, City of Alexandria (Vice Chair)*

In Chair Vigen's absence, Bill Eger called the meeting to order and attendees introduced themselves in person and by phone. The meeting minutes from the February meeting were approved by the attendees.

2. Jurisdiction Updates, COG Program Updates, and Announcements

Falls Church: The City of Falls Church has launched its Solarize campaign and will be a part of NVRC's Virginia regional online interactive map, which allows residents to see solar projects in their localities, this spring. Falls Church is also looking at a unique, undeveloped area around its public middle and high school campus as a potential location to create district energy. Washington Gas has expressed interest and will share their feasibility study with the City. The city also has a new volunteer conducting a greenhouse gas inventory for Falls Church. She is interested in partnering with other jurisdictions to find a way to access utility data by sector and source for analysis.

Fairfax County: Fairfax County has revised the Energy landing page on its website to provide more comprehensive energy information and links than were previously available. This includes aggregated energy use data for overall county operations and several specific components of the county's operations, as well as a link to the county's Energy Action Fairfax site, through which interested parties can get information about energy savings for their homes.

Arlington County: Arlington County has started issuing rebates, which work in tandem with energy efficiency tax credits, for residential HVAC, water heater, and insulation upgrades. The county is also developing a PACE program that will be ready in a few months. Arlington has also created a mailing list to keep its residents informed on energy action and updates.

Montgomery County: Montgomery County is holding a commercial PACE open house to deploy key documents and provide information to businesses located within the jurisdiction. April 5th will be the official launch of the commercial PACE program, at Montgomery County's Clean Energy Summit. The first benchmarking compliance deadline for Montgomery County programs is June 1.

WMATA: WMATA is currently reviewing proposals for solar projects and has phase one analysis available with data. WMATA is also monitoring gross data and conducting energy audits to analyze its 2025 energy goals. To help with this process, WMATA is looking for opportunities for energy audit contracts.

COG Updates:

Legislative Update

In Virginia, COG has sent several letters commenting on and supporting climate and energy bills proposed by Virginia policymakers. The Virginia congressional body has created a clean energy development sub-committee that will oversee bills concerning the growth and development of renewables and energy efficiency. Virginia's Governor McAuliffe vetoed a bill that would have given the state power to stop implementation of the federal Clean Power Plan.

In Maryland, COG sent letters of support on state clean energy bills and regarding the efforts of Maryland's new Green Bank.

COG Corporate Sustainability Assessment

COG is currently creating a sustainability report to analyze the work of corporate sustainability frameworks in the region. COG has developed sustainability indicators for this analysis, which are mostly focused on environmental efforts and stakeholder involvement, and is open to feedback from member jurisdictions on these indicators. COG will be making a presentation at the next CEEPC meeting regarding this assessment, where there will also be a panel of corporate sustainability leaders. This sustainability assessment will be primarily for COG information and analysis.

MSWG Climate and Energy Survey

The Multi-Sector Work Group worked to create an updated report outlining region-wide reduction goals and 22 strategies to achieve these goals over time, which went before a sub-group of elected officials in the workgroup. This sub-group asked COG to create a distinction of locally versus regionally implementable goals, which COG carried out by creating a document asking what would be

needed to meet these goals in each member jurisdiction. This document was sent to the jurisdictions for input and will be returned in April to inform MSWG efforts going forward.

Upcoming Events and Announcements

Regional energy utilities will be combining resources and efforts in the future to provide more specific data, broken into greater detail for analysis purposes.

The Urban Land Institute is looking for specific, environmentally-focused sites in the region that have opportunities to increase their sustainability or resilience. The Urban Land Institute will evaluate and analyze site issues and make recommendations for redevelopment to maximize the use and economic value of the site. Applications are due April 1 and three sites will be chosen for evaluation. The evaluations and recommendations will be presented to the communities and elected officials within a calendar year.

At the last BEEAC meeting, the US DOE presented the benefits and opportunities of its outdoor lighting efficiency program. COG is following up on the outdoor lighting review and joining an EPA program to maximize the energy efficiency of outdoor lighting in the region.

3. COG Regional Environmental Programs Work Plan and Budget

Steve Walz, COG Department of Environmental Programs, Director

The 2017 MWCOG Regional Environmental work plan and budget will begin at the start of the new fiscal year in July. In the past year there were no rate changes, making the budget-creating process similar to that in the past year. In order to create the environmental programs budget, grants are measured each year and the total allocated to the current fiscal year depends on the ratio of grants to planned projects for past years. The current work plan and budget are in draft stages and COG is seeking the input of BEEAC members before the next CEEPC meeting, when members will also provide feedback.

Environmental programs include air, water, and climate; which must allocate the budget depending on planned projects for the upcoming year. Many factors influence the 2017 work plan and budget, including goals laid out in the 2008 climate report and resources available through regional water funds. Critical infrastructure aspects of the 2017 work plan and budget include emergency energy response, water supply and reuse, and clean technology. These are priorities that will impact planning for the region in 2017.

Moving forward, COG hopes to simplify the titles of work plan subject areas. In climate and energy development efforts, COG aims to focus on the goals and targets of the Climate and Energy Action Plan, utilize resources from its designation as a Climate Action Champion, and focus on projects with multiple co-benefits across sectors and environmental focus areas. Work on climate and energy development will also work to increase the emphasis on projects bridging the air-climate nexus, as these areas often overlap and complement one another. The greenhouse gas inventory also falls into this subject area, and will have its next inventory year analyzing 2015 data.

Legislative priorities for regional environmental programs include the expansion of clean energy finance, support for clean energy and state efforts toward meeting Clean Power Plan requirements,

the expansion of the region's economic competitiveness, and support of on the ground applications of renewable energy infrastructure like commercial solarization and microgrid development.

Sustainability and adaptation is also an important subject area within the environmental work plan. This subject area has been getting more attention in recent years, as understanding grows and the need for sustainable growth and adaptation is more fully recognized. In 2017, COG will aim to support the Climate Atlas work being conducted by the NVRC, increase the importance of citizen science in energy and air work, and intensify efforts toward fleet conversion and diesel retrofits, including joining cooperative purchasing efforts for alternative fuel vehicles.

Discussion

BEEAC attendees inquired about the priorities of the environmental programs work plan and were told that the most important topics and efforts would be the areas that COG's member jurisdictions show interest in. The infrastructure to provide emergency energy will also be a priority for this fiscal year.

Any feedback from BEEAC members on this draft of the work plan and budget should be submitted before the CEEPC meeting on March 23, but BEEAC will have opportunities to provide input again in the future.

4. Regional Renewable Energy Study

Ben Foster, ICF

The Multi-Sector Work Group created several goals to reduce emissions in the region, including a goal to reach "10% of regional electricity consumption from renewable sources." Based on this goal, ICF has been tasked with creating a better understanding of how to achieve this goal and of what it means for different sectors and localities. The scope of this study is to dive deeper into what this goal means for the region.

ICF will conduct work to refine the 10% number in terms of specific targets it relates to, determine the total MWh of renewable energy broken down by sector and jurisdiction, and estimate, based on the calculated MWh, what the equivalent would be in solar capacity, systems, and deployment. The study will also compare these measurements to the renewable capacity already existing in the region and what the necessary efforts will be going forward. ICF will evaluate the underlying issues and constraints that will be involved in meeting the 10% goal and will create connections between the assumptions and calculations to actions that can be taken in each jurisdiction and state-wide. This work will help COG members to understand where the 10% goal comes from and build confidence among stakeholders in the ability to meet the goal.

ICF's rationale and approach will look at regional macro and microeconomic factors, co-benefits of existing approaches, analysis conducted in the overall MSWG report, and review political, economic, and technological challenges and utility constraints. This study will look into existing efforts within jurisdictions to see how these goals, renewable energy potential studies, or green power purchases will impact the overall renewable energy goal and what the most effective group of actionable items

will be to reach this goal. The study will primarily focus on solar PV, but will also look at other approaches to renewable energy.

For this study, ICF will be using 2005 numbers as a baseline, similar to the overall MSWG study, and will use 2012 numbers as the analysis year for consistency with the regional greenhouse gas inventory. On-site and off-site renewables, as well as renewable energy credits, will be included in the total counted toward the 10% goal. Green power purchasing data may not be up to date or fully captured, and ICF is looking for ways to better understand and credit these efforts. Voluntary action on the part of residents may also not be fully captured in the analysis of this goal because it is not traditionally reported. ICF will update BEEAC at the next meeting about this study and deliver a report to CEEPC in May.

Discussion

BEEAC attendees asked what the data from this study will be used for and were told this work would be used to inform the CEEPC action plan and MSWG actions on renewable energy. Attendees also asked what the approach would be to contacting jurisdictions. COG will send information requests to BEEAC members for information on renewable energy potential studies and other renewable energy actions taken in each locality.

5. Maryland Community Solar Update

Corey Ramsden, Community Power Network

In Maryland, legislation was passed last year to promote and enable community solar and has been met with significant engagement and solar contracts and deployment. Community solar in Maryland has been particularly important due to the large portion of the population that cannot directly deploy solar. This program allows cheaper electricity and solar access for renters, low-income residents, and residents with unsuitable property for solar deployment.

The Maryland community solar pilot program was approved by the Maryland Public Service Commission on February 22 and will take place over three years, with projects becoming available this fall. The pilot aims to provide 1.5% of peak demand (or 218 MW) by the utilities serving the state from solar power over the course of three years. The pilot program will be divided into three main categories to encourage different project types and locations. 40% of the projects will be open, allowing for any type of project up to 2 MW. 30% will be geared toward low-to-moderate income projects, with at least 10% coming from low-income projects. The remaining 30% will come from projects less than 500 kW and brownfield projects, with a majority coming from low-income subscribers.

Subscribers to projects under the pilot program will earn full credit for their solar generation and will be able to subscribe to up to 200% of their annual electricity usage. However, subscribers must be located in the same service territory as the facility or array they are subscribed to receive credits from.

There are financial, logistical, and accessibility challenges to community solar. Low credit scores or an inability to qualify for the minimum purchasing requirement can bar participation for some residents. Some residents do not understand the logistics of the community solar process or the

benefits involved in participation, which can deter these people from engagement. Information deployment and low and moderate income subscription backers, who negate the need for credit from low-income subscribers, are solutions to these problems, and allow more extensive participation in Maryland's community solar efforts.

Discussion

BEEAC attendees asked if there was a cap on how much a subscriber can purchase of an array. 60% of an array of 200 kW is the subscription cap size for a single participant. Attendees also asked how subscriptions were managed and credited over time. The majority of larger subscriber will have methods in place to track and credit solar energy used, but some of the smaller subscribers may need the assistance of service subscribers.

6. Upcoming Meetings and BEEAC Adjournment

- CEEPC Meeting – May 25, 2016
- BEEAC Planning Call – April 7, 2016
- BEEAC Meeting – April 21, 2016

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