



METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE (MWAQC)

May 24, 2023
12:30 P.M. – 2:00 P.M.
Hybrid Meeting

Chair: Anita Bonds, District of Columbia

MEETING SUMMARY

MWAQC MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES

- Anita Bonds, District of Columbia (Chair)
- Kenny Boddye, Prince William County (Vice Chair)
- Tom Dernoga, Prince George’s County (Vice Chair)
- Stuart Adams, City of College Park
- Hannah Ashenafi, District Department of Energy and Environment
- Tom Ballou, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
- Michele Blair, City of Laurel
- Tanisha Briley, City of Gaithersburg
- Collin Burell, District of Columbia
- Virginia Burke, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Sophia Cortazzo, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Kate Doyle Feingold, City of Fairfax
- Shauna Fulcher, City of Takoma Park
- Sylvia Glass, Loudoun County
- Jason Groth, Charles County
- Joseph Jakuta, District Department of Energy and Environment
- Takis Karantonis, Arlington County
- Keith Levenchenko, Montgomery County
- Sonia Vasquez Luna, City of Manassas
- Steve Martin, Montgomery County
- Kirk McPike, City of Alexandria
- Kristin Mink, Montgomery County

- Shannon Moore, Frederick County
- Era Pandya, ACPAC
- Amalia Pleake-Tamm, Calvert County
- Jim Ponticello, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Laurie Anne Sayles, Montgomery County
- Dave Snyder, City of Falls Church
- Kari Snyder, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Roger Thunnel, Maryland Department of the Environment
- Kristen Weaver, City of Greenbelt

OTHERS

- Tad Aburn, Citizen
- Emily Bull, Maryland Department of the Environment
- Richard Dooley, Arlington County
- Catherine Salarano, Maryland Department of the Environment

COG STAFF

- Leah Boggs, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Jen Desimone, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Lyn Erickson, COG Department of Transportation Planning
- 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
- Kanti Srikanth, Deputy Executive Director for Metropolitan Planning
- Dusan Vuksan, COG Department of Transportation Planning

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

Anita Bonds, MWAQC Chair

Chair Anita Bonds called the meeting to order, and the February MWAQC meeting summary was approved without any changes.

Members of the public registered for comments were invited to speak. Mr. Tad Aburn provided public comment on the draft State Implementation Plan (SIP). Mr. Aburn stated that the SIP, as currently drafted, is missing a critical element and will be deemed “incomplete” by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The SIP includes no section discussing how the SIP will ensure that environmental justice problems are not created by the implementation of the measures in the SIP. A copy of Mr. Aburn’s comments are available [here](#).

2. COMMITTEE REPORTS

MWAQC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) – Tom Ballou (VDEQ)

MWAQC-TAC held a call on May 9:

- TAC discussed the ozone planning process for developing the 2008 Ozone Maintenance Plan Update (see Agenda Item 5 for more information) and the updated Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets (MVEBs).
- TAC also discussed the beginning of the 2023 ozone season.
- COG staff briefed the committee on EPA’s proposed rules concerning strengthening greenhouse gas emissions standards for light- and medium-duty vehicles, as well as heavy-duty vehicles for 2027-2032 (see Agenda Item 6 for more information).

Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC) – Era Pandya (ACPAC Chair)

ACPAC held a webinar meeting on May 15:

- The committee’s main update is the 2023 Climate and Energy Leadership Awards Campaign, which was launched on Earth Day and runs until June 30. The awards program highlights organizations that have implemented innovative climate stewardship projects and programs, particularly those that engage and serve the region’s underserved communities. For more information or to nominate a project or program, see the [Climate Awards page](#).
- ACPAC’s next meeting is July 17, 2023.

Clean Air Partners – Jen Desimone (COG Staff)

Clean Air Partners have been involved in the following:

- Clean Air Partners launched their summer campaign in conjunction with Earth Day and Air Quality Awareness Week (May 2-6) with a campaign all about tips residents can do to improve the air in their own backyard. The campaign featured the traveling Backyard Bubble exhibit at local ACE Hardware stores in Baltimore, DC, and Alexandria. Thanks to VDEQ, DOEE, DCSEU, and MDE, four in-person events were held during the campaign period. It also included a contest through social media and digital ambassadors. Giveaways included battery powered

mowers, combo weed trimmers/leaf blowers, electric weed trimmers, propane grills.

- The next campaign will be held in August, during Ozone Action Month and focus on tips to reduce emissions from vehicles. The campaign will include in-person at events where the community is already engaged throughout the region; expand the message with media outreach and social media engagement. Clean Air Partners will also be partnering with Commuter Connections to spread the Car Free Day messaging and encourage residents to go car free.

Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) – Tim Masters (COG Staff)

CEEPC held a hybrid meeting earlier today (May 24):

- The REVD Working Group met last Thursday, May 18, where members reviewed and discussed the DRAFT Local Jurisdiction Electric Vehicle (EV) Ready Checklist. This checklist provides a comprehensive overview of steps local jurisdictions can work on to prepare their community and government fleet for transportation electrification. The checklist provides actions, examples and resources with steps that governments can take towards community vehicle electrification efforts. It also includes model policies, plans, programs, partnerships, incentive programs, and more. Staff heard a lot of great feedback on the draft checklist thus far and the final checklist will be made available on COG's [EV Clearinghouse](#) this summer.
- EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) program provides grants to local governments to develop and implement plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air pollution. This two-staged grant program is funded by the Inflation Reduction Act and provides funding of \$250 million for noncompetitive planning grants (Phase I), and \$4.6 billion for competitive implementation grants (Phase II). Because DC is eligible to receive the state level allocation of up to \$3 million, the DC metropolitan area will not receive a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) based allocation. DC's Department of Energy & Environment (DOEE) is applying for a total of \$3 million. EPA encouraged DOEE to work with regional jurisdictions to be eligible for the maximum funding. The DC government put out a Request for Partners with \$1 million available to the selected partner. COG has been selected to partner with DOEE on this grant. The CPRG program has an air quality benefit component, as it is focused on GHG emission reductions, as well as criteria pollutant reductions. This program also aims to accelerate environmental justice efforts in communities overburdened by pollution and will help localities tackle these challenges.

3. LOCAL AND STATE UPDATES

Local Members and State Air Agencies

- Takis Karantonis (Arlington County) said that Arlington County has hired Bill Eger as Climate Policy Officer. The county is working on implementing their list of emission reduction actions. Arlington County has also revised its zoning code to allow for more "middle" density housing, which should promote greater transit use and walking/cycling.

4. OZONE SEASON UPDATE

Sunil Kumar, COG Environmental Engineer

The 2023 ozone season kicked off in April. Sunil Kumar provided an update on the ozone season. So far, there have been three code orange days and 23 code yellow days this season according to draft data as of May 16, 2023. The region has made dramatic improvements with regard to the ozone design value trend over the past two decades. In order to comply with the 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS), the fourth Highest Ozone Level Needed in 2023 would have to reach 73 parts per billion (ppb) and 74 ppb at the McMillan and Beltsville monitors respectively. Currently, the fourth highest levels seen this year have been 65 and 62 respectively. This is a metric that COG staff will be paying close attention to until the end of the ozone season (September). With regard to particulate matter, specifically PM2.5, the region is in compliance with NAAQS. There may be a revision

to the annual PM2.5 design value trend, which may impact the region's ability to meet the standard. The Air Quality Index (AQI) for the region also shows immense progress in air quality improvement.

Discussion:

- The reason there has been a plateau in ozone and PM2.5 design values over the past decade, after a period of steep decline in criteria pollutants is likely the result of the impacts of federal, state and local programs, which had dramatic impacts on air quality when first implemented, but since there have been few measures implemented in the past decade, the design value trends have stayed relatively flat. Additionally, there are fewer and fewer viable control measures that states have implemented in the past years, and this is especially true for mobile emissions from vehicles.

5. 2008 OZONE STANDARD MAINTENANCE PLAN

Sunil Kumar, COG Environmental Engineer

In May 2008, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) introduced a new 8-hour ozone standard of 75 ppb, replacing the previous standard published in 1997. The Washington, DC-MD-VA area was designated as a "Marginal Nonattainment Area" for the 2008 standard in July 2012. However, the region achieved compliance with the standard in 2015 and has remained in compliance since then. In 2017, the Washington region submitted a request to the EPA to redesignate the area as an attainment/maintenance area, along with a maintenance plan. The EPA granted the redesignation request in 2019. Presently, the region is in the process of updating the maintenance plan that was originally submitted in 2017.

The need to update the maintenance plan arises from the fact that the initial plan established maximum allowable vehicle emissions, known as Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets (MVEBs), using the EPA's MOVES2014a on-road emission estimation model. The Transportation Planning Board (TPB) must ensure that the regional transportation plan does not result in emissions surpassing these established levels. To demonstrate transportation conformity with the 2008 (and also 2015) ozone standard, the TPB relies on these MVEBs. However, the EPA recently published a new model called MOVES3, which the TPB is now required to use for transportation conformity demonstrations. Initial analysis by the TPB indicates that MOVES3 produces higher levels of nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions compared to MOVES2014a. This discrepancy could potentially hinder conformity demonstrations since higher NOx emissions in the Washington region would likely exceed the established MVEBs. Consequently, it is necessary for the Washington region to update the maintenance plan, incorporating revised MVEBs based on the MOVES3 model. Furthermore, since MOVES3 also generates emissions data for nonroad sources that differ from MOVES2014a, the Washington region has decided to update the nonroad inventories as well.

The updated maintenance plan sets revised mobile emissions ceilings ("budgets") for 2025 & 2030 for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and NOx. Mobile budgets have also been updated with a 20 percent Safety Margin added to onroad VOC and NOx emissions in 2025 and 2030 to develop mobile budgets. COG staff are seeking approval of the updated Maintenance Plan for public hearing and comment purposes. This is with the understanding that in case substantial comments are received from EPA, the plan will be brought back to the committee for discussion on those comments and proposed response. EPA previously reviewed parts of the plan and is currently reviewing the complete draft copy. Plan documents can be found [here](#).

Discussion:

- There was a question about EPA's requirements for an environmental justice/equity component in the SIP. State Air Agency staff and COG staff stated that for this plan document there is no EPA requirement for inclusion of these items. For the 2015 Ozone Standard SIP

documents, which will include control measures, there will be language on these issues. Staff have been in multiple discussions on this plan with EPA staff who have not raised any concerns on these items. Staff have included what is required in this Maintenance Plan.

- The development on the 2015 ozone NAAQS Maintenance Plan will include contingency measures and may include an EJ/equity component if the EPA provides new guidance on this issue. Work on this maintenance plan will begin next year (2024).
- An MWAQC member suggested that perhaps in future developing a SIP that is dedicated to EJ versus having EJ be a component within a SIP is something worth considering, so that any control or contingency measure is evaluated through an EJ lens, as well as the other considerations that are required for those measures. Especially as EJ is a top priority of EPA's Administrator Regan.
- MWAQC members also stated that the SIP is a technical compliance document. EJ should be on MWAQC's agenda and a focus area moving forward, but the priority for the SIP is submission of a compliance document, as it relates to the NAAQS. If an appropriate SIP document is not submitted, it will have very negative outcomes.

Action: MWAQC voted to approve the Maintenance Plan update for public comment period, as well as the development of a separate document on EJ concerns (unanimously).

6. JOINT COMMENT LETTERS ON GREENHOUSE GAS VEHICLE STANDARDS

Tim Masters, COG Environmental Planner

On April 12, 2023, EPA announced two proposed rules. The first rule, "Multi-Pollutant Emissions Standards for Model Years 2027 and Later Light-Duty and Medium-Duty Vehicles," builds upon the existing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions standards for passenger cars and light trucks for model years (MY) 2023 through 2026. The proposed standards would be phased in over MY 2027 through 2032. The second rule, "Greenhouse Gas Emissions Standards for Heavy-Duty Vehicles - Phase 3," proposes stronger carbon dioxide (CO₂) standards for MY 2027 heavy-duty vehicles (HDVs), surpassing the current standards under the HD Phase 2 Greenhouse Gas program. Additionally, a new set of CO₂ standards for HD vehicles is proposed, with progressively lower standards each year starting from MY 2028 through 2032.

The proposed multi-pollutant emissions standards for light-duty vehicles (LDVs) and medium-duty vehicles (MDVs) aim to significantly reduce emissions of air pollutants contributing to climate change and unhealthy air. Between 2027 and 2055, these standards would cumulatively avoid 7.3 billion metric tons of CO₂ and reduce harmful air pollutants such as PM_{2.5}, NO_x, and hydrocarbons by substantial amounts compared to projected levels without the proposal. The EPA held a virtual public hearing on May 9 and 10, 2023, and comments on the proposed rule are due by July 5, 2023. Similarly, the proposed phase 3 standards for HDVs are expected to avoid approximately 1.8 billion metric tons of GHG emissions from 2027 to 2055. These standards would promote the use of zero-emission HDVs, resulting in significant reductions of particulate matter, NO_x, and VOCs by 2055 compared to projected levels without the proposal. The EPA held a virtual public hearing on May 2 and 3, 2023, and comments on this proposed rule are due by June 16, 2023.

COG staff recommend approving comment letters in support of these proposed EPA rules and briefed MWAQC members on draft comment letters. These rules present significant opportunities for combating climate change and improving air quality. The proposed standards for LDVs and MDVs would have substantial long-term benefits, avoiding billions of metric tons of CO₂ emissions and reducing harmful air pollutants by notable amounts by 2055. Similarly, the proposed standards for HDVs aim to achieve substantial reductions in GHG emissions and emissions of smog and soot-forming pollutants by promoting the use of zero-emission vehicles. CEEPC approved these letters at their meeting, and the letters will go to TPB's Steering Committee on June 2, if approved by MWAQC.

Action: MWAQC voted to approve both comment letters (unanimously).

7. FY 2024 WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET

Jen Desimone, COG Air Program Chief

The main priorities for the upcoming fiscal year (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024) revolve around the plans for the ozone standards. The first priority is to finalize and submit the updated plan for the 2008 ozone standard, which is expected to be completed by the end of calendar year 2023. Currently, the metropolitan Washington region is designated as a moderate nonattainment area for the 2015 ozone NAAQS. The work plan for the region has been preparing for two potential scenarios: developing an attainment plan or a maintenance plan/reasonable further progress plan, depending on data and actions by the EPA. EPA has proposed a Clean Data Determination based on finalized 2019-2021 data and preliminary 2020-2022 data, which, when approved, will suspend the requirement for an attainment State Implementation Plan (SIP) and allow the region to request redesignation to attainment. This allows the development of a maintenance plan and redesignation request for the 2015 ozone standard, which will begin in FY2024. The work plan and budget are flexible and can accommodate a change back to an attainment plan if need be. Other tasks include supporting conformity for ozone, coordinating with the TPB, and engaging in outreach efforts to inform stakeholders about air quality issues and promote MWAQC and member initiatives.

The MWAQC work program is funded by local members, transportation agencies (through TPB), and state air agencies, with each contributing one-third of the total budget. The funding requests for state air agencies and local member contributions are expected to remain at FY 2023 levels, with any remaining difference covered by unexpended funds. The increase in transportation funding is also anticipated to be approved, but reserve funds are available as a backup. The core work areas for FY 2024 include emissions inventory development for the 2015 ozone NAAQS maintenance plan and participating in research meetings and trainings. The development of necessary control measures, assistance to local members in reducing emissions, outreach programs for truck and motorcoach drivers, and tracking federal regulatory actions are also part of the work plan. Furthermore, there will be coordination with TPB for transportation conformity and mobile emissions analysis, as well as public participation support through ACPAC and updating the Environmental Justice Toolkit. MWAQC support, program management, ongoing reporting and financial management are additional components of the work program. MWAQC-TAC approved the work program and budget at their April meeting.

Discussion:

- ACPAC will be leading the Environmental Justice Toolkit update. The work program does include language on weaving EJ into SIP planning processes. Specifically, there is language around including equity concerns when considering control/contingency measures.
- There was discussion on methane leaks and their contribution to both air quality, as well as GHG emissions. Equity also plays an important role in this area. CEEPC has generally taken the lead with regard to methane emissions from a GHG emissions perspective (CEEPC has not been involved in actual methane leak measurements). There is potential for crossover with MWAQC on this topic.
- Members expressed that MWAQC needs to prioritize making the connection to negative health outcomes and EJ/equity concerns, as they relate to NAAQS and SIP planning processes.

Action: MWAQC voted to approve the FY 2024 Work Program and Budget (unanimously). An amendment to add a bullet point (incorporate a racial equity lens throughout the core work areas) to the main objectives of the FY 2024 Work Program was also voted on and approved (unanimously).

8. ADJOURN

Anita Bonds, MWAQC Chair

Chair Anita Bonds adjourned the meeting. The next MWAQC meeting is scheduled for September 27, 2023.