

## **CEEPC / CBPC July 24, 2013 Joint Meeting: Shared Issues for Collaboration and Potential Future Alliance**

### **Meeting Overview**

The inaugural joint meeting of the Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) and the Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee (CBPC) was successful, due to a framing of issues in common and an enthusiastic exchange of ideas. Overall it was agreed by CEEPC and CBPC members that there are significant areas of shared interest and that we should regularly meet, share information and resources that cut across our committees, and mutually support one another's initiatives where appropriate.

This first meeting broadly reviewed areas in common, and then focused specifically on two topics for which we had presentations:

1. Regional Tree Canopy – an overview of the draft report, and
2. Water-Energy Nexus - DC Water's energy efficiency and renewable energy generation at Blue Plains.

### **Regional Tree Canopy**

Mike Knapp, Director of the Urban Forest Management Division for Fairfax County, and Brian LeCouteur, COG staff, presented the Tree Canopy Workgroup's draft report. A robust tree canopy has multiple regional benefits including reducing the heat island effect, improving air quality, reducing stormwater runoff, and preventing soil erosion. Given these significant benefits the presentation focused on the need to increase and maintain a healthy regional urban canopy, and to ensure recognition of and crediting for jurisdictional investments in tree canopies. For example, as tree canopies age and mature, funding is required to maintain their condition, and it should also be recognized that urban tree trimming/maintenance can present a renewable source of wood waste. Likewise, while an urban tree canopy is an effective water quality strategy, it does not currently get credit in Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) and stormwater permits.

***Ongoing efforts/tracking:** Tree canopy cover is being tracked by the Tree Canopy Workgroup (per their draft report), and is also included under the "Sustainability and resiliency" category of the [Climate Action Plan](#) (measure 41, 42, 43) for tracking progress.*

### **Suggested Areas of Collaboration:**

- Explore the potential for urban trees to be credited in the WIPs and stormwater permits as Best Management Practices.
- Advocate for funding to support the tracking of the quantity, quality, maintenance, and benefits of our regional urban tree canopy.

### **Energy-Water Nexus**

Chris Peot, Biosolids Manager for DC Water, presented DC Water's ongoing efforts at Blue Plains to enhance nutrient removal, while at the same time ratcheting down their carbon footprint via new technologies. His presentation is an illustrative example of our region's water and wastewater utilities' achievements of Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR), being on track for Chesapeake Bay Water Quality implementation goals sets in [Region Forward](#), and efforts to achieve greater energy efficiency and reduce their carbon footprints at the same time. Mr. Peot pointed out there is sometimes a tradeoff between water quality goals and energy goals because the most stringent nutrient removal technologies are also energy intensive.

***Ongoing efforts/tracking:*** Energy and Water Conservation are part of COG's 2013 Legislative Priorities. Drinking water and wastewater energy efficiency, reuse and biogas digesters are included in the [Climate Action Plan](#) (measure 19). COG is tracking greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories and alternative/renewable energy projects via the Climate Action Plan.

#### ***Suggested Areas of Collaboration:***

- CEEPC could support CBPC's ongoing advocacy for a holistic environmental approach (consideration of net environmental impacts) when setting regulatory requirements, as well as regulatory flexibility and adaptive management, all of which encourages innovation.

In addition to the two presentations, through opening comments and subsequent discussions, two other areas of shared interest were highlighted as areas for future collaboration and joint support.

### **Infrastructure Resilience and Disaster Preparedness**

Since water and power infrastructure are the basis of a thriving economy, and necessary to support the health of our communities and environment, water and power issues are central to moving our region forward. Our infrastructure is at risk due to natural disasters, and has cost challenges due to the need to replace these aging assets, including the utility grid, as well as the need to upgrade and maintain our plants, pipes, pumps and other water infrastructure needs.

***Ongoing efforts/tracking:*** COG's Climate Action Plan contains a goal for utilities to assess their vulnerability to climate change in the (measure 39). COG has held workshops on emergency preparedness and adaptive management related to climate change for both the water and energy sectors, and will be holding a Regional Water Resources Infrastructure Forum this December in partnership with Water Environment Foundation. COG is researching the possibility of pilot microgrid projects as a means to bolster the electric utility grid.

#### ***Suggested Areas of Collaboration:***

- Our committees, and climate, energy and water sectors, ought to continue to collaborate and mutually support one another in boosting resilience in the region, including the power grid and all sectors of water infrastructure.

## **Outreach**

As a region we seek to better highlight the multiple benefits of the interrelated CEEPC-CBPC issues, and engage with our citizens to increase their awareness of energy and water vulnerabilities, new technologies/opportunities, and ongoing regional efforts to enhance our water and energy facilities.

***Ongoing efforts/tracking:*** Water infrastructure needs will be emphasized at the COG Economy Forward Meeting on September 27 and in the winter Water Resources Infrastructure Forum that COG is organizing with the Water Environment Federation (WEF). The Community Engagement Campaign will also assist with messaging related to water infrastructure needs and challenges.

### ***Suggested Areas of Collaboration:***

- Enhance outreach and public engagement strategies to raise the profile of energy and water issues and the multiple benefits of regional actions underway to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase the size and health of our tree canopy, protect and improve water quality, and address infrastructure funding needs.
- Consider identifying lists of various resources relevant to CEEPC/CPBC Goals, to engage the public in discussions about these shared issues.

If additional ideas or suggestions please contact:

COG staff contact: Heidi Bonnaffon     [hbonnaffon@mwkog.org](mailto:hbonnaffon@mwkog.org) / (202) 962-3216