



## Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee

### DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY: MARCH 27, 2024

#### CEEPC MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

- Hon. Jolene Ivey, Prince George's County (Chair)
- Hon. Cindy Dyballa, City of Takoma Park
- Hon. Alan Hew, City of College Park
- Hon. Tom Osina, City of Manassas
- Hon. Wanda Rogers, City of Bowie
- Melissa Adams, Washington Gas
- Stuart Adams, City of College Park
- Sarah Bagley, City of Alexandria
- Mike Barancewicz, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)
- Michele Blair, City of Laurel
- Chris Beck, Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)
- Randy Freed, Citizens' Climate Lobby
- Danielle Freedman, Pepco
- Beth Groth, Charles County
- Stephen Gyor, District of Columbia
- Jenn Hatch, District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE)
- Barry Jackson, City of Rockville
- Takisha James, Town of Bladensburg
- M.C. Keegan-Ayer, Frederick County
- Julie Kimmel, Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC)
- John Lord, FCPS
- Giulia Manno, Prince William County
- Tim Miller, City of Laurel
- Shannon Moore, Frederick County
- Jon Monger, Montgomery County
- Missy Neff, Dominion Virginia Power
- Jim Ponticello, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
- Julie Rosenberg, Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions
- Dr. Dann Sklarew, George Mason University
- Meredith Soniat, District Department of Transportation (DDOT)
- Antoine Thompson, Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition (GWRCCC)
- Bob Weir, Prince William County

- Brittany Whited, DOEE

#### ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES:

- Hon. Amy Fry, Town of Cheverly
- Gary Allen, Maryland Forestry Foundation
- Valerie Amor, City of Alexandria
- Tom Ballou, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Mati Bazarro, City of Bowie
- Brian Booher, Montgomery County
- Mark Buscaino, Casey Trees
- Al Carr, DOEE
- Emily Cassometus, Councilmember Lewis George's Legislative Assistant
- Bill Eger, Arlington County
- Dory Estrada, City of Takoma Park
- Penny Gross, Former Fairfax County Supervisor
- Allison Homer, Fairfax County
- Kelly Hunt, Councilmember Lewis George's Legislative Assistant
- Emily Judson, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
- Michael Knapp, CEEPC Regional Tree Canopy Subcommittee
- David Lorenzo, Councilmember Glass' Legislative Assistant
- Christi Maple, Supervisor Saines' Legislative Assistant
- Logan McSherry, Frederick County
- Matt Meyers, Fairfax County
- Kristin Mielcarek, Frederick County
- Regina Moore, VDOT
- John Morrill, Fairfax County
- Jenna Peabody, Arlington County
- Kate Roetzer, WMATA
- Lindsey Shaw, Montgomery County
- John Sheridan, Prince George's County

#### COG STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

- Kelsey Boatwright, COG Environmental Programs

- Alissa Boggs, COG Environmental Programs
- Leah Boggs, COG Environmental Programs
- Robert Christopher, COG Environmental Programs
- Maia Davis, COG Environmental Programs
- Paul DesJardin, COG Community Planning Services
- Katie Dyer, COG Environmental Programs
- Jeff King, COG Director Climate, Energy and Air Programs
- Amanda Lau, COG Office of Communications
- Brian LeCouteur, COG Environmental Programs
- Tim Masters, COG Environmental Programs
- Mark Moran, COG Transportation Planning
- John Snarr, COG Environmental Programs
- Kanti Srikanth, COG Deputy Executive Director

## **1. WELCOME AND MEETING SUMMARY**

*Jolene Ivey, CEEPC Chair, Prince George's County Council*

Climate, Energy, and Environmental Policy Committee (CEEPC) Chair Jolene Ivey called the March CEEPC meeting to order. The January CEEPC Meeting Summary was approved.

## **2. COMMITTEE AND MEMBER UPDATES**

### **A. Built Environment Energy Advisory Committee (BEEAC)**

*Mati Bazurto, BEEAC Co-Vice Chair*

- The committee had their first meeting in February, where the discussion was focused on how state and local governments can address embodied carbon in the built environment.
- The committee priorities for the year are implementation and education:
  - Implementation topics will include large and small municipal scale solar, climate investment, planning, clean energy financing, and building energy tracking and reporting.
  - Education topics include electrification and reliability, as well as February's topic of embodied carbon.

### **B. Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC)**

*Julie Kimmel, ACPAC Chair*

- Six new members were approved at the February MWAQC Executive Committee meeting (three from the District, two from Virginia, one from Maryland), for a full committee of 18 members.
- Three ACPAC members will be on the MWAQC led Environmental Justice (EJ) subcommittee, including Chair Julie Kimmel, Vice Chair Bill Washburn, and Dr. Jacqueline Norris.
- COG staff issued a task order that included a request for a consultant for the EJ toolkit update, however the toolkit update project did not receive any proposals. COG staff will look at the feasibility of including the toolkit as a task under the new EJ subcommittee.
- The committee's March 18 meeting focused on what recommendations the committee wants to advance to CEEPC and MWAQC. A three-member subcommittee will draft ideas for full committee review to potentially advance to CEEPC and MWAQC.
- The Climate and Energy Leadership Awards program kicks off on Earth Day (April 22). Any climate stewardship projects and programs implemented by governments, NGOs, or

educational institutions are encouraged to apply.

#### C. Regional Electric Vehicle Deployment (REVD) Working Group

*Robert Christopher, COG Environmental Programs*

- REVD held its first meeting of the year at the DC Auto Show on January 18. ICF presented the draft regional electric vehicle infrastructure implementation (REVII) strategy.

#### D. Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition (GWRCCC)

*Antoine Thompson, GWRCCC*

- GWRCCC encourages everyone to sign the Empower Workplace Pledge, a federally funded program to promote EV charging at the workplace.
- GWRCCC will be hosting an in-person Earth Day panel and happy hour, location is to be determined.
- There are many open federal and state funding opportunities, GWRCCC can provide letters of support and is interested in partnering on transportation or workforce development grants.

#### E. Recycling Committee

*John Snarr, COG Environmental Programs*

- The committee appointed John Johnson as the new chair.
- The committee's March meeting topic was battery management with a focus on fire prevention.
- In November, the District started the nation's first fully inclusive battery take back program (includes alkaline batteries).
- COG's second public battery management campaign will be starting in the spring, using radio, social media, and other platforms.
- The annual Go Recycle campaign plans to kick off in June.

#### F. Member Roundtable Updates

*Randy Freed, Prince William County*

- Counties with data centers should monitor the accuracy of the impact of the data centers in the upcoming 2030 GHG forecasts. COG's methodology may underestimate the future GHG emissions of data centers as they are projected with other commercial buildings due to a lack of data needed to produce accurate growth projections.

*John Morrill, Fairfax County*

- There are new challenges for large-scale solar deployment from a new requirement by Dominion Energy: Customers with systems over 250 kilowatts must pay for a fiber optic line from the solar system to the nearest substation, potentially adding hundreds of thousands of dollars to the installation cost. Over 300 comment letters have been submitted to the SCC on this matter.

*Brian Booher, Montgomery County*

- Montgomery County submitted a concept paper for the DOE Technology Integration grant program to serve as a Mid-Atlantic regional training hub for first responders on battery fires and safety. The County will be finding out soon if they are invited to apply, if invited the County welcomes partners in the region to collaborate on the opportunity.

*Jolene Ivey, Prince George's County*

- A study is being conducted in Prince George's County by the Maryland Institute for Applied Environmental Health to monitor the oxygen levels of people living close to concrete batching plants. The study outcome could potentially be used to inform zoning decisions.

*Shannon Moore, Frederick County*

- Homeland Security appropriations were passed, Frederick County will be receiving \$.275 million for the Prospect Center microgrid and resilience hub. Design and construction will begin once the feasibility assessment is complete.
- A community-wide Climate and Energy Action Plan will be launched soon, as well as a solar siting study.

- An application was submitted in partnership with the Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC), Maryland Tech Council, and American Microgrid Solutions to evaluate backup energy generation for data centers and cleaner alternatives.

*Beth Groth, Charles County*

- Through the Government Operations Climate Action Planning process, Charles County has identified positive actions already being done and an overall willingness from county staff to investigate and implement new strategies.

*Dory Estrada, City of Takoma Park*

- The City of Takoma Park is a partner for the Healthy Homes Fair on April 6 at the DC Armory. It is an opportunity for residents around the region to see home electrification technology in person.
- The City hosted a solar information session that proved to be very helpful for residents to understand their options.

**Discussion:**

- Prince William County takes an opposing view on the Dominion Energy requirement, stating that if the solar system owner does not pay for the line, it will cause an increase of costs for other ratepayers.
- The City of Alexandria agrees with Fairfax County’s remarks, and added that it puts system owners in a difficult position and acts as a deterrent to installing higher capacity systems.
- Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) agrees that the system owner should pay for the line, however it should not be an unnecessarily high cost.

**G. Staff Updates**

- ICLEI’s Climate Aligned Budgeting Cohort will kick off late spring/early summer. The cohort will consist of 8-10 local government teams, with 3-5 people per team, ideally consisting of Climate and Energy staff as well as Budgeting and Finance staff. Through 8 virtual training sessions teams will work together to incorporate actions from their climate plans into the next fiscal year’s budget. The sign-up form will be released soon, teams are first come, first served.
- The Climate and Energy Leadership awards, which recognizes climate stewardship projects and programs run by NGO’s, government, and educational institutions, will be open for applications April 22 – June 30.
- The first deliverable of the formula planning grant from EPA’s Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) Program, the Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) was submitted by the March 1 due date. COG will be submitting two proposals for the CPRG implementation grants competition, which are due April 1. The first proposal will include only the COG region and be focused on residential energy efficiency, residential solar, and electric vehicle fleets. The second proposal will be focused on commercial building energy efficiency and include the Northern Virginia counties from the DC-VA-MD-WV MSA, as well as the counties from the Richmond MSA and Hampton Roads MSA.
- The Environmental Justice (EJ) Subcommittee, which is a subcommittee of MWAQC, will have its kickoff meeting soon.

**3. CEEPC NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION**

*Maia Davis, COG Environmental Programs*

COG is an independent, nonprofit association that brings area leaders together to address regional issues and plan for the future. CEEPC was created by the COG Board of Directors in 2009, and therefore reports to and advises the COG Board of Directors. CEEPC’s purpose is to provide

leadership on climate change, energy, green building, alternative fuels, solid waste and recycling issues. The six committees that advise CEEPC and support the implementation of its goals are: Recycling Committee/Solid Waste Managers, CEEPC Legislative Committee, Built Environment and Energy Advisory Committee (BEEAC), Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC), Regional Tree Canopy Sub-Committee (RTCS), and Regional Electric Vehicle Deployment Working Group (REVD). Per the bylaws, CEEPC membership is comprised of elected officials from each COG local government, representatives from state government, and stakeholders such as utilities, environmental groups, schools, and federal/regional agencies. To vote on anything there must be a quorum, which means 1/3 of voting members or alternates are present.

#### **4. LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE**

*Robert Christopher, COG Environmental Programs*

CEEPC's Legislative Committee is a small group of CEEPC members who meet periodically to review legislative initiatives. COG staff track various bills during the legislative session that fall within the Climate Resiliency and Air Quality Protection legislative priorities determined by the COG Board of Directors. The committee holds ad hoc calls to determine specific bills to send comment letters on.

Recent comment letters sent in support for Virginia Legislation:

- HB 338: Site assessments for water usage, carbon emissions, and agricultural impacts, continued to 2025.
- SB 729: Creation of Virginia Climate Innovation Authority, passed House and Senate, awaiting Governor's decision.
- HB 199: Removal of prohibition on allocating funds to Virginia Brownfield and Coal Mine Renewable Energy Grant Fund, passed House and Senate and approved by Governor.

Recent comment letters sent in support for Maryland Legislation:

- SB 1023: Maryland Building Performance Standards did not pass Senate.
- HB 864: Energy Efficiency and Conservation Plans, passed House, awaiting Senate hearing.
- SB 960 MCEC Climate Technology Founder's Fund, passed Senate, awaiting House hearing.
- SB 169 Establishing the Green and Renewable Energy for Nonprofit Organizations Loan Program, passed Senate, awaiting House hearing.
- HB 397 Working for Accessible Renewable Maryland Thermal Heat (WARMTH) Act, passed House, awaiting Senate hearing.

Bills being tracked District Legislation:

- B250106: Electric Vehicle Infrastructure, no movement has been made.
- B250564: Environmental Justice/Equity, public hearing was held March 18.

#### **5. REGIONAL TREE CANOPY GOALS**

*Jeff King, Director, COG Climate, Energy, and Air Programs*

*Michael Knapp, Chair, CEEPC Regional Tree Canopy Subcommittee*

*Brian LeCouteur, COG Urban Forester*

*Gary Allen, Maryland Forestry Foundation*

*Mark Buscaino, Casey Trees*

The Regional Tree Canopy Subcommittee (RTCS) was established under CEEPC in 2019 by the COG Board to develop a regional urban forest action plan and canopy goals. The purpose of the presentation is to inform CEEPC on the proposed goals created by the RTCS and the subsequent resolution that will be put forward to the COG Board in April.

The current tree canopy coverage for the COG membership area is estimated at 49.6 percent. Between 2014 and 2018 the COG region had a tree canopy loss of 17,133 acres. Using this trendline for a business-as-usual scenario (Scenario A), there would be a 44.4 percent canopy level in 2050. Scenario B, plots the impact of planting 109,300 trees each year, resulting in 46.3 percent tree canopy level in 2050. Scenario C plots the impact of planting 206,000 trees each year, resulting in 48.1 percent tree canopy level in 2050.

Based on their findings the RTCS recommends a three-tiered goal:

1. An overarching goal of 50 percent. This identifies the minimum percentage of tree canopy coverage recommended for the entire COG membership area. The time covered - present day until 2050.
2. Intermediate Goals based on Population Density and Urbanization. These goals are provided to help communities identify tree canopy goals for watersheds, planning districts, census tracts, and towns and smaller cities.
3. Smaller Scale Target Goals for General Land Use Categories: These target goals identify mature canopy coverage levels that are associated with 18 general classes of land use categories encountered in the COG region.

The canopy goal recommendations are intended to be used as best management practices and aspiration, they are not intended to be applied in a prescriptive fashion or to be interpreted as universally applicable to every scenario. There are many uncertainties involved in forecasting regional canopy levels, that being so the RTCS recommends that the regional goal and supporting target goals be viewed as fluid and reevaluated once every five years to allow reaction to changing conditions and unforeseeable events.

**Discussion:** The term “no net loss” was intentionally not used although the goal of 50 percent tree canopy while the current canopy is at 49.6 percent essentially means the same thing. The phrase was not used due to negative reactions from key stakeholders. The committee expressed support for the proposed goals and recommended adding language regarding equity to the resolution text.

## 6. ADJOURN

*Jolene Ivey, CEEPC Chair*

Chair Ivey adjourned the meeting. Upcoming CEEPC meeting dates for 2024 include:

- Wednesday, May 22, 2024
- Wednesday, July 24, 2024
- Wednesday, September 25, 2024
- Wednesday, November 20, 2024

*All meeting materials including speaker presentations can be found on the COG website or by clicking the link below –*

<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2024/3/27/climate-energy-and-environment-policy-committee/>