

Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee
Suite 300, 777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002-4239
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DRAFT MINUTES OF May 22, 2013 MEETING

Attendance:

Members and Alternates

George "Tad" Aburn, Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)
Tom Ballou, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ)
Hon. Johanna Barry, City of Falls Church
Cecily Beall, District of Columbia, Dept. of Environment
Robert Catlin, College Park
Lyn Erickson, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
Hon. Jay Fisette, Arlington County
Jason Groth, Charles County
Hon. Mary Lehman, Prince George's County
Doris McLeod, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Hon. Leta Mach, Greenbelt
Sam Moki, Prince George's County
Hon. Redella "Del" Pepper, City of Alexandria
Hon. Hans Riemer, Montgomery County
Caroline Petti, Chair, Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee
Howard Simons, Maryland Department of Transportation
Kanti Srikanth, Virginia Department of Transportation

Other Attendees

Kambiz Agazi, Fairfax County (for Sharon Bulova)
Randy Carroll, Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)
Barbara Hardy, Fairfax County
Edward Nantamu, Fairfax County
James Banks, District of Columbia (for David Grosso)
Scott St. Onge, Clean Air Partners
David Molchany, Fairfax County
Mark Rawlings, District of Columbia Department of Transportation

Staff

Chuck Bean, COG Executive Director
Amanda Campbell, COG/DEP
Robert Griffiths, COG/DTP
Jeff King, COG/DEP
Ron Kirby, COG/DTP
Sunil Kumar, COG/DEP
Joan Rohlfs, COG/DEP
Stuart Freudberg, Director, COG/DEP

1. Public Comment Period, Approval of Minutes, Chair's Remarks

Chair Mach called the meeting to order at 12:06 pm. Approval of the minutes from the April 24, 2013 meeting was postponed due to a technical issue. The agenda was approved with no changes.

Chair Mach said that recently, EPA published the proposed Tier 3 low sulfur rule in the Federal Register. Chair Mach recommended that MWAQC send another letter of support to EPA to support this cost-effective rule during the comment period. All present agreed.

2. Committee Reports

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Cecily Beall, DDOE.

TAC met on May 4th. Committee members reviewed the ozone season outlook. Virginia representatives described the Ozone Transport Commission modeling results, which led to a discussion about the results and whether the region should take further action to reduce ozone.

Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC), Caroline Petti, Chair

ACPAC met on Monday, May 20th, 2013. ACPAC heard presentations on the science behind the health effects of air pollution, the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality projects in the COG Region, and sustainability efforts at INOVA facilities.

Clean Air Partners (CAP), Scott St. Onge, Managing Director

Mr. St. Onge presented the Clean Air Partners (CAP) Annual Report. CAP's major accomplishments include raising more than \$121,500 in cash sponsorships and in-kind support, achieved 35 million media impressions through radio, online and transit advertising, increasing AirAlerts subscribers, and increasing their number of social media fans and website views. CAP participated in a dozen local events and fairs, educated youth through the "On the Air" curriculum, and held a slogan contest, poster contest, science fair awards, and infographics challenges. CAP also completed bylaws updates, expanded the annual celebration, developed a mobile device application, and held a media roundtable.

3. Ozone Season Forecasting and Data, Sunil Kumar, COG/DEP

Mr. Kumar reported that since April 1, 2013 there have been twelve code yellow days and 37 code green days, based on ozone concentrations. A monitor is deemed 'in exceedance' when it measures ozone concentrations in excess of the current 75 parts per billion (ppb) standard. Overall the region has observed a downward trend in number of ozone exceedance days since 1997. Average emissions and temperature fluctuations year to year cause variations within the overall trend. For the most part, higher ambient temperatures lead to high ozone. For example, a day with a high temperature over 90°F routinely resulted in ozone exceedance from 1997 to 2006. However, since 2006, 90°F or higher temperatures result in ozone exceedances less often. This is due to federal, state, and local control measures that led to a lower emissions regime.

Mr. Kumar explained that the 8-hour Ozone Design Value is a technical parameter used for determining attainment status for the region. The region has exhibited a downward trend for this parameter since 1997. Cooler temperatures in 2007-2008 led to lower readings for the following two years since the parameter is calculated as a 3-year average. The region's ozone is still exceeding the 1997 and the 2008 standard. Although the region has made progress, more work is needed to meet the 75ppb design value by 2015.

Mr. Kumar presented the status for fine particles in the region. Since April 1, 2013, the region observed 18 code yellow days and 31 code green days for fine particles. The number of code yellow days for fine particles has risen slightly due to the fact that the standard became stricter in 2012. Still, so far in 2013, there have been no exceedances (code orange or code red) of the current fine particles standard. The region is below the more recent 12 micrograms/m³ standard and the older 15 micrograms/m³ standard.

Air Quality Forecasting is conducted from April 15th to September 30th and can be accessed through websites: <http://www.mwcog.org/environment/air/forecast/> and <http://www.cleanairpartners.net>, mobile apps, AirAlerts <http://www.cleanairpartners.net>, and the weatherline 202-589-1212.

Mr. Freudberg said in response to Mr. Aburn's comment that although the ozone exceedance data shows an uptick in recent years, if the cooler year 2009 is removed, the trend is basically flattening out -- not increasing.

Mr. Aburn said that recent summers have seen record high temperatures, and with climate change, that trend will continue. Mr. Aburn recommended involving local elected officials to move forward on regional initiatives and gather research on growing emissions source categories such as small generators.

4. PM_{2.5} Redesignation Request and Maintenance Plan, (ACTION) Joan Rohlfs, and Sunil Kumar, COG/DEP

Ms. Rohlfs explained that the Maintenance Plan under discussion addresses a 1997 standard for fine particles (PM). In 2005 the EPA designated the Washington DC-MD-VA region as in 'nonattainment' status for PM, and the region submitted a PM_{2.5} State Implementation Plan in 2007. Today this committee is considering a redesignation request to EPA for meeting the 1997 standard with attainment year 2007. The request shows how PM levels declined from 2002 to 2007. The maintenance plan shows how the region will keep levels low into future years. The PM_{2.5} Maintenance Plan contains air quality data, emissions inventories that demonstrate future emissions, mobile budgets, contingency measures, and an agreement between DDOE, MDE, and VDEQ to implement control measures and plans to improve air quality in the future.

Trends in ambient PM_{2.5} levels show that the region's emissions have fallen below both the 1997 and recently updated 2012 standards. Emissions inventories include emissions data from point sources, area sources, non-road sources, and onroad (mobile) sources projected to 2017 and 2025. The inventory shows that emissions will continue to decline.

Ms. Rohlfs explained that the maintenance plan sets emissions budgets for mobile sources for PM_{2.5} and NO_x. These mobile emissions ceilings were under discussion since July, 2012. This plan represents a compromise with its two-tiered approach. Future emissions are set at the 1st tier level which is in line with current projections. The 2nd tier is 20% above the 1st tier budget in order to create a buffer, in case there are any changes in models or fleet turnover that lead to increases in emissions. Several models that help predict emissions – the transportation model, population/land use model, and an emissions model -- may be updated over time. The lowest tier is applicable when the maintenance budget is approved. The 2nd tier will be used if model or fleet changes lead to levels over tier 1 only after interagency consultation.

If the region exceeds the PM_{2.5} standard in the future, several contingency measures in the plan will be implemented. The state agreement section of the plan contains several strategies to reduce emissions including new regulations in Maryland and the District of Columbia, and remote sensing for onroad vehicles in Virginia.

Mr. Kumar explained that the states held a public comment period in February and responded to comments. EPA, Sierra Club, and Dominion submitted comments. EPA submitted comments to the District of Columbia, Virginia, and Maryland. The Sierra Club submitted comments to Maryland, and Dominion sent comments to Virginia.

One of the EPA's comments was related to the recent ruling by the District of Columbia Court of Appeals on the 1997 particulate matter standard implementation rule, which EPA is still interpreting. The general response was that the region will revise its fine particle redesignation request and maintenance plan if EPA decides to revise the 1997 particulate matter standard implementation rule. The Sierra Club commented that the plan does not address ammonia and VOC compounds as PM_{2.5} precursors, which need to be incorporated in light of a recent Court ruling. The region responded that the plan conforms to all requirements for the 1997 annual fine particle standard implementation rule and that SO₂ controls adopted in the region are more cost-effective than the additional VOC controls for reducing PM_{2.5} levels. Dominion requested that a reference to the 2010 SO₂ standard be reworded or removed, and the response was to remove this language. See plan appendix or relevant slide presentation for more details.

Mr. Aburn said that Maryland representatives met with Sierra Club representatives and both parties are satisfied with the Response to Comments. MDE is setting up a meeting with Sierra Club to talk about the challenges of ozone and SO₂ pollution.

Action: Responses to Comments were unanimously approved.

Action: The PM_{2.5} Redesignation Request and Maintenance Plan was unanimously approved.

5. Proposed FY 2014 Work Program and Budget (ACTION), *Joan Rohlf's, COG/DEP*

Ms. Rohlf's thanked everyone involved for their hard work on the PM_{2.5} plan, which is a major accomplishment for the year. Additional accomplishments included commenting on the Conformity Analysis for 2012 Transportation Improvement Program and the Constrained Long Range Plan, expanding membership in the Air & Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC), and technical support to the Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee.

The Budget Committee held five calls to discuss the work program from March to May, 2013. The proposed budget represents a compromise agreement among the states.

The FY 2014 Core Program will include planning for ozone control measures to meet the 2008 federal ozone standard (75 ppb) and reviewing the transportation conformity analyses for ozone, fine particles, and carbon monoxide. The total proposed budget is \$523,616 split evenly between the Transportation Planning Board, the State Air Agencies and COG member jurisdictions. The proposed budget is approximately \$50,000 higher than FY2013—the first increase in six years—to cover the increased costs of doing business. The proposed budget contains an additional \$10,000 for a special project funded by MDE and DDOE for a special analysis on how to meet ozone and climate change goals.

The next step is to approve the Work Program and Budget so that funding is available for FY 14 which begins July 1st. MWAQC should review federal allocations in September-October and revise or amend the FY14 budget as needed in October.

Chair Mach said that she was pleased with the discussions and the compromises reached on the Budget and Work Program for FY14, and thanked those who worked on it.

Action: The FY 2014 MWAQC Work Program and Budget was approved unanimously.

6. Briefing on Changes in Regional Commuter Patterns since 2007, Robert Griffiths, MWCOG/TPB

Mr. Griffiths presented findings drawn from the 2000 Census, 2007 American Community Survey and the 2011 Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). PUMS data is based on a survey of a random sample of 17,000 residents in the region, and carries statistical errors ranging from +/- 0.5% at the regional level, 1.5% in counties, and 3% in smaller jurisdictions.

Net in-commuting dropped slightly from 8.4% to 7.9% from 2007 to 2011. This is good news since long distance commuters place a disproportionate burden on the transportation system. The number of workers who lived where they worked increased from 2000 to 2011 in nearly all jurisdictions. About 90% of the workers added to the District of Columbia's labor force between 2000 and 2011 lived (and worked) in the District of Columbia. An increase in housing added to the region close to job locations contributed to this trend.

From 2000 to 2011, commute mode share data reveals a slightly decreasing percentage of commuters who drive alone in the District of Columbia, Arlington County, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County. Across the region, 66% of workers drive alone to work. While commuters still rely heavily on HOV facilities, a decrease in carpooling offset a comparable increase in transit use. The increase in transit may be due to increased transit benefits and increased investment in regional and local transit services. In the District of Columbia, more commuters use transit (40.2%) than drive alone (33%). The percentage of commuters bicycling to work rose slightly from 0.3% to 0.7% over the period.

Ms. Lehman asked why carpooling is not subsidized. Mr. Griffiths responded that Commuter Connections offers a carpool rewards program, but it is not growing. In general carpooling is seen as its own reward since participants split cost savings. The larger issue has been the changing nature of work—workers want more flexibility.

Ms. Pepper asked about the sample size in Alexandria. Mr. Griffiths said that it was about 800 households, but that in future studies, staff could pool samples over a longer period of time to allow analysts to draw conclusions that apply to the smaller jurisdictions.

In response to Chair Mach's question, Mr. Griffiths said that when results were presented to the Transportation Planning Board, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) representatives expressed a number of comments regarding maintaining transit service in light of increasing ridership. COG staff also presented the data to Commuter Connections' committee and the National Capital Planning Commission (as it relates to the federal workforce).

7. State and Local Air Reports

District of Columbia

Ms. Beall reported that the District of Columbia began a series of AirAlerts outreach on Twitter. EPA awarded the District a grant to install NO_x near road monitoring sites; the District of Columbia is working with EPA to select sites by the end of 2013. The Annual Monitoring Network Plan is available on the District of Columbia Department of Environment (DDOE) website for review. DDOE staff is developing low sulfur home heating oil and non-road idling regulations.

Maryland

Mr. Aburn reported that Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is drafting new regulations regarding mercury emissions from power plants and waste-to-energy facilities. MDE is engaging stakeholders in discussions on reducing emissions from small generators on high electricity demand days. MDE is developing regulations on home heating oil, reformulated paints, and an idling measure for non-road engines. MDE is continuing to work on bringing carbon dioxide into the conformity process and considering lower NO_x emissions standards.

MDE began legal action on ozone transport with Delaware, Vermont, Connecticut, New Hampshire and other states. One proposal involves creating a voluntary large multi-state nonattainment area. MDE is reaching out to southern and Midwestern states to ask if they would like to join the ozone transport commission to work on transport or petition EPA if the voluntary effort does not succeed. Transported air pollutants will need to be addressed to reach the new ozone standards.

Virginia

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) is about to submit the 2010 NO_x State Implementation Plan. VDEQ recently issued a permit for a renewable energy generator in Loudoun—a 700 MW gas-powered power plant. Mr. Ballou said that hopefully the approval of the PM_{2.5} Maintenance plan will allow more renewable power plants to be developed which is a more effective means to reducing emissions than controlling distributed generators. VDEQ finalized an agreement with an electric generating unit in Richmond to install additional control equipment, which is expected to result in 5 - 6,000 tons of NO_x emissions reductions annually.

8. Set Date for Next Meeting, Adjourn

The next meeting date is TBD. The meeting was adjourned at 1:50pm.