



METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE (MWAQC)

December 6, 2023
12:00 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
- Sarah Bagley, City of Alexandria
- Tom Ballou, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
- Collin Burell, District of Columbia
- Virginia Burke, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Penny Gross, Fairfax County
- Joseph Jakuta, District Department of Energy and Environment
- Keith Levchenko, Montgomery County
- Kristin Mink, Montgomery County
- Jim Ponticello, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Jennifer from the Office of Laurie-Anne Sayles, Montgomery County
- Kari Snyder, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Roger Thunell, Maryland Department of the Environment

OTHERS

- Tad Aburn, Citizen

- Sophia Cortazzo, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Emma Cross, District Department of Transportation
- Richard Dooley, Arlington County
- Bill Eger, Arlington County
- Sarah Pierce, District of Columbia
- Bill Pugh, Coalition for Smarter Growth
- Catherine Salarano, Maryland Department of the Environment
- Noble Smith, Maryland Department of the Environment
- Jennifer St. Clair, Maryland Department of the Environment
- Chris Tandy, Loudoun Climate Project

COG STAFF

- Alissa Boggs, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Leah Boggs, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Robert Christopher, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Jen Desimone, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Jeff King, COG Climate, Energy, and Air Program Director
- Sunil Kumar, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Wyetha Lipford, COG Department of Environmental Programs

- Tim Masters, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Mark Moran, COG Department of Transportation Planning
- Wanda Owens, COG Department of Transportation Planning
- Jane Posey, COG Department of Transportation Planning

1. WELCOME, PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD, APPROVE MINUTES

Anita Bonds, MWAQC Chair

Chair Anita Bonds called the meeting to order, and the September MWAQC meeting summary was approved without any changes. Bill Pugh (Coalition for Smarter Growth) and Tad Aburn (private citizen/former Chair of MWAQC-TAC) provided public comment. Bill Pugh raised concerns about non-tailpipe air pollution from cars and trucks, emphasizing its impact on human and environmental health. Tad Aburn shared concerns over delays in addressing environmental issues in environmental justice (EJ) communities in the region and advocated for action-oriented planning initiatives, citing Maryland's efforts in Prince George's County as a model. Public comments can be found in the [meeting materials](#).

2. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

MWAQC-TAC held a call on November 14:

- EPA Region 3 staff briefed members on how EPA is incorporating environmental justice in air quality planning.
- Chris Hoagland, Air Director, MDE discussed various Environmental Justice efforts such as community air quality monitoring, targeted enforcement & inspection initiatives, targeted pollution reduction programs, etc. undertaken by Maryland.
- Joel Yu, Enchanted Rock, Inc discussed details of natural gas microgrids that can provide benefits for reduction in criteria pollutant and GHG emissions.
- Jeff King discussed details of EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG).
- State Air Agencies discussed the status of their respective Exceptional Events Exemption Requests to EPA. The District and Maryland are in the advanced stages of the development of their requests. Virginia is not required to submit the request.

Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC) – Leah Boggs (COG Staff on behalf of ACPAC leadership)

ACPAC held a webinar meeting on November 13:

- Last Friday, ACPAC launched its [2024 Membership Recruitment Campaign](#). The campaign runs through January 15, 2024. All the information is available on the [website](#). ACPAC is recruiting for 6 seats: 3 DC, 2 VA, 1 MD. This will be communicated through COG's standard networks – COG committees, public stakeholder groups and the like.
- Regarding EJ, ACPAC will be moving forward with developing a SOW for consultant support on the EJ toolkit update. ACPAC will also support and provide input on the EJ action plan which will be guided by MWAQC's EJ subcommittee.
- The committee is also in the middle of developing priorities for 2024. Obviously, the EJ toolkit update is a major task.

Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) – Jeff King (COG Climate, Energy, and Air Program Director on behalf of CEEPC leadership)

CEEPC held a webinar meeting on November 15:

- At the last CEEPC meeting, members received a briefing from an expert from the National

Climate Assessment on the current state of climate change.

- Local governments reported on their community energy and sustainability plans. Prince William County presented its recently adopted Community Energy and Sustainability Master Plan.
- Tim Masters (COG staff) shared insights from the long-standing data-sharing agreement with electric and gas utilities. Solar growth in the region is booming, with over 72,000 solar systems installed. Challenges were noted in the increase of commercial energy consumption, particularly from data centers. The prevalence of data centers poses a significant electricity consumption challenge for the region.
- The committee discussed EPA's CPRG Program and provided updates during the session.

3. LOCAL AND STATE UPDATES

Local Members and State Air Agencies

- Roger Thunell (Maryland Department of the Environment) said that MDE is continuing their efforts with EPA, the District of Columbia, and Virginia on their exceptional events. This is very time-consuming work.
- Tom Ballou (Virginia Department of Environmental Quality) said that VDEQ has been focused on EPA's CPRG program. They've been doing a lot of public outreach in the western part of Virginia this week, and will focus on the eastern side next week.
- Hannah Ashenafi (District Department of Energy and Environment) said that significant progress has been made in replacing older switcher engines at Amtrak's Ivy City rail yard. DOEE is actively seeking grants to electrify a fire truck, trash truck, and multiple transit buses. Efforts are underway to finalize advancing car regulations by year-end, with a dedicated push for implementation. Collaboration with Maryland on exceptional events is acknowledged, with thanks extended for their valuable assistance.

4. ELECTION OF 2024 OFFICERS

Anita Bonds, MWAQC Chair

The 2024 MWAQC slate of officers was presented to the committee for approval. The proposed officers are Kenny Boddye from Prince William County as Chair, Tom Dernoga from Prince George's County as Vice Chair, David Snyder from the City of Falls Church as Vice Chair, and current Chair Anita Bonds from the District of Columbia as Vice Chair.

Action: MWAQC members unanimously approved the appointment of the proposed officers.

5. HYPERLOCAL/COMMUNITY MONITORING PANEL

Chris Tandy, Loudoun Climate Project

Chris Tandy discussed the Loudoun Climate Project's grassroots air monitoring program focused on particulate pollution using [PurpleAir](#) monitors. The organization, emphasizing education and public awareness, operates with volunteer efforts and does this without grant funding. The aim of this initiative is to prioritize monitoring locations near known pollution sources and environmental justice (EJ) zones. PurpleAir monitors, affordable and easy to set up, are strategically placed in homes to collect localized data. The presentation emphasized the importance of having multiple monitors to capture regional trends and mitigate the impact of occasional spikes in individual locations. Chris also touched on the health impacts of particulate pollution, regulatory history, and the organization's strategy for data collection, sharing, and future expansion.

Joseph Jakuta, District Department of Energy and Environment

Joseph Jakuta discussed the DOEE's project involving mobile air quality mapping in several districts.

This project mapped air quality using mobile sensors in various neighborhoods. Background on the District's existing air quality monitoring network was provided, emphasizing its limitations in capturing individual neighborhood variations. [Aclima](#) uses mobile emissions monitoring vehicles to collect data on various pollutants, including particulate matter, black carbon, and organic compounds. They have assisted the District in their efforts to map the levels of these pollutants in different neighborhoods, highlighting areas with elevated concentrations and discussing potential sources such as traffic, construction, and other combustion-related activities. Joseph also mentioned ongoing and future projects to expand the air quality monitoring network, engage communities, and explore new monitoring technologies like PurpleAir sensors. The presentation provides insights into localized air quality challenges and the efforts made to address them in the District of Columbia.

Discussion:

- DOEE is working on integrating various data sources into their air quality planning, including PurpleAir monitoring. The aim is to use their current air quality maps to inform the placement of low-cost sensors. A contract is required for purchase of more air quality monitors.
- One of the Aclima vehicles used for the air collection in the District was a hybrid, and Aclima are transitioning to more electric vehicles. However, charging logistics pose challenges due to the vehicle's nearly continuous 24/7 operation.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN AIR QUALITY PLANNING

Jeff King, COG Climate, Energy, and Air Program Director

Jeff King provided a brief overview of MWAQC's mission, which involves collaborating with states and local jurisdictions to formulate air quality plans. He emphasized the importance of developing air quality maintenance plans and mentioned MWAQC's role in fulfilling obligations for regional air quality policies. The presentation highlights the recent adoption of an objective to advance environmental justice (EJ) and community engagement in the work plan, with a subcommittee established for this purpose.

Jen Desimone, COG Air Program Chief

Jen Desimone outlined COG staff's plan to develop an action plan focusing on equity in implementing air quality policies, projects, and programs. The Environmental Justice Subcommittee, composed of representatives from local jurisdictions, states, and the public, will lead the effort. The subcommittee's role includes formulating policies, collaborating with stakeholders, and delivering an action-oriented plan within a 12-month timeframe. The budget, approximately \$224,000, will cover staff and consulting costs. The subcommittee has a sunset date tied to the budget's duration. A proposed membership structure suggests a 10-member subcommittee, ensuring representation from the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, and the public, promoting inclusivity and collaboration. Robert Christopher will be the lead COG staff for this subcommittee work. Volunteers will be sought following the meeting.

Discussion:

- Chair Bonds suggested adding an extra public representative slot to ensure fairness in the subcommittee's membership. She emphasized the importance of public involvement and recommended discussing the adjustment with the leadership of Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC). COG staff agreed to make this change. Another MWAQC member suggested that the public members should be representatives who are currently active or have been active in the EJ space.
- MWAQC members discussed the differences between the EJ toolkit and resource guide, and the action plan outlined in this agenda item. Members expressed the need for more focus on community engagement and an action-oriented implementation plan for environmental justice. There's concern about future developments in State Implementation Plan (SIP) requirements, with suggestions to keep the subcommittee's scope flexible. One member emphasized the

importance of EPA guidance on this subject.

- Another member reemphasized the importance of involving individuals actively involved in environmental justice and inquired whether the three public members must be from the existing ACPAC committee or if activists and community members with a strong commitment to environmental justice could be considered. Chair Bonds expressed support for involving public appointees and suggested a screening process by ACPAC. COG staff noted the longstanding practice of filling positions from existing committees. The discussion explored the decision-making process for selecting the 11 members, considering input from MWAQC's Executive Committee. The idea of seeking volunteers from existing members was proposed, with the goal of ensuring regional representation and equity in the subcommittee.
- COG staff summarized the proposal: a 12-month project activity involving the finalization of the Environmental Justice Subcommittee's formation and support for the upcoming year. This initiative will include stakeholder engagement, discussions with members and external stakeholders, and the development of a final action plan delivered to MWAQC. The proposed membership structure consists of 11 members: 5 from local jurisdictions, 3 representing the states, and 3 representing the public. The aim is to have one public member each from the District, Maryland, and Virginia. The comprehensive plan aims to address EJ issues and involves collaboration between different stakeholders over the specified timeframe.

Action: MWAQC members unanimously approved the proposed structure and project activity of the Environmental Justice Subcommittee.

7. CLIMATE POLLUTION REDUCTION GRANT

Jeff King, Director, Climate Energy, and Air Programs

Jeff King discussed the EPA's new Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Program, providing an overview of its structure. The first phase involves formula funding for states and metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) to develop climate plans, with \$3 million allocated to each state and \$1 million to MSAs. The second phase is a competitive implementation grant, totaling approximately \$4.3 billion, available for states and localities to propose projects aimed at reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The presentation emphasized the unique aspect of focused planning, which leads to proposals for competitive implementation grants. Jeff mentioned the exclusion of the Washington DC MSA from the formula grant, requiring the development of an MSA plan through a state grant. The challenges include a compressed timeline, with a deadline of March 1, 2024, for the Priority Climate Action Plan (P-CAP) to be eligible for the implementation grant. The presentation highlighted the importance of identifying priority measures, strategies, and projects that are implementation-ready, cost-effective, and address gaps in federal funding. The focus areas include clean electricity, energy efficiency in the built environment, and transportation. Jeff discussed the current call for projects, with a deadline extension to gather diverse and innovative ideas for proposals. The presentation underscored the need for collaboration and coalition-building among states and localities to enhance competitiveness for the implementation grant, with evaluation criteria emphasizing fast and impactful GHG reduction. The presentation concluded with an example project involving solar co-ops and Solarize programs as a model for achievable and impactful initiatives.

Discussion:

- Chair Bonds suggested reaching out to public housing communities, seniors, and SNAP beneficiaries for input on project proposals. COG staff have relied on state and local governments for liaison work but acknowledge the importance of engaging with agencies like housing and energy offices.

8. ADJOURN

Anita Bonds, MWAQC Chair

Chair Anita Bonds adjourned the meeting. The next MWAQC meeting is scheduled for February 28, 2024.