

Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee
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DRAFT MINUTES OF December 8, 2010 MEETING

Attendance:

Members and Alternates

Tad Aburn, Maryland Department of the Environment
Tom Ballou, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Cecily Beall, District Department of the Environment
Hon. John Britton, City of Rockville
Austina Casey, District Department of Transportation
Del. Adam Ebbin, Virginia House of Delegates
Hon. Jay Fisette, Arlington County
Deron Lovaas, ACPAC
Hon. Leta Mach, City of Greenbelt
Hon. Redella "Del" Pepper, City of Alexandria
Howard Simons, Maryland Department of Transportation
Kanti Srikanth, Virginia Department of Transportation
Hon. Karen Young, City of Frederick

Staff

Jeannine Altavilla, COG/DEP
Andrew Austin, COG/DTP
Maia Davis, COG/DEP
Jen Desimone, COG/DEP
Stuart Freudberg, COG/DEP
Jeff King, COG/DEP
Sunil Kumar, COG/DEP
Joan Rohlf, COG/DEP
Harriet West, Clean Air Partners

Others

Randy Carroll, Maryland Department of the Environment
Steven Hayward, American Enterprise Institute
Bob Owolabi, Fairfax County Department of Transportation

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

Chair Mach called the meeting to order at 10:15am. The minutes of the September 22, 2010 meeting were approved with no changes.

2. Committee Reports

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Ms. Beall reported on the TAC November 9 meeting. The committee discussed a comment letter on conformity for the 2010 Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) and 2011-1016 TIP, as well as a comment letter on EPA's proposed fuel efficiency labels for automobiles. Staff presented the EPA and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) proposed rule for increasing fuel efficiency in heavy duty trucks. The committee was briefed on the MOVES inputs and schedule. State air agency staff discussed issues related to growth assumptions for projected emissions inventories. Applications for stakeholder positions are due to COG staff by December 31, 2010. Maryland will chair the TAC and will appoint stakeholders in early 2011. Current stakeholders are encouraged to reapply.

Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC)

Mr. Lovaas reported on the ACPAC November 15 meeting. The committee heard a presentation on the siting and tracking of monitors, as well as an update on the 2010 CLRP. The committee has some concerns about the declining federal role in this process. The committee is currently recruiting new members for 2011, and is utilizing social media, such as Linked-In to help garner interest. The group believes that there will be greater interest in climate and energy issues.

Clean Air Partners (CAP)

Ms. West presented an update on CAP activities. CAP and the Maryland Department of the Environment are discussing preliminary plans for a lawn mower event in the spring of 2011, contingent on the availability of funding. A new widget to show real-time daily air quality forecasts and other tips is being developed to place on as many websites as possible. It should be ready to show at the January MWAQC meeting. Mirant Mid-Atlantic will not be able to continue their sponsorship support of \$50,000 annually due to a merger with RRI Energy. CAP is working with existing sponsors and potential new sponsors to bridge the funding gap. The 2011 Poster Contest has begun with the deadline for entries on March 18, and the winners announced April 22. CAP will be sponsoring awards at 10 science fairs. The next CAP Board meeting is scheduled for January 20, 2011.

Mr. Britton noted that notice for the event was late and that there were not enough exchange sites. Hopefully this would be fixed in any future events.

Mr. Fisette commented that the Northern Virginia Regional Commission is discussing a lawn mower exchange after hearing information about the successful CAP event. They are interested in doing something regional and are looking into funding. The key contact at NVRC is Mark Gibb, who can be reached at 703-642-4646.

MWAQC Budget Committee

Chair Mach presented a memo from the MWAQC Budget Committee, which met on December 1, 2010. There was a carryover from the FY 2010 MWAQC budget of \$83,020, including unexpended air quality attainment planning funds and COG membership dues for local measures. The Budget Committee recommended applying the additional air quality attainment funds to develop future year inventories for a possible fine particle redesignation request and reserving some funds for possible issues that could develop with MOVES inventories. The Committee unanimously recommended that the additional COG funds be applied to develop criteria for the procurement and siting of microgrids and Combined Heat and Power (CHP) projects in the region. MWAQC approval is requested for use of the carryover funds as recommended. The first call for the microgrid and CHP work will be tomorrow at 1pm with the goal of developing a model RFP for procurement and identifying sites within the region. There would be combined air quality and energy impacts.

The motion was unanimously approved.

The proposed MWAQC Work Program and Budget for FY2012 added some additional tasks. It will be reviewed again and submitted to the MWAQC TAC and MWAQC for review and approval next spring. The proposed core budget amount remains the same as the current budget year, \$473,616.

3. Trends in Air Quality, 1970, Today and Tomorrow

Steven Hayward presented on past and future trends in air quality and current policy choices. Comparing growth measures and emissions shows that economic growth, vehicle miles traveled, energy consumption, CO₂ emissions, and the global population have all increased since 1970, while aggregate emissions from six common pollutants have decreased. This proves that it is possible to have growth while decreasing the negative impacts on the environment.

The national average ambient levels and emissions for these six pollutants have seen dramatic improvements. VOC emissions from cars and trucks have been significantly reduced. Hydrocarbon emissions per mile have been falling at a net rate of 8% annually, partially due to vehicle turnover. Projected SO₂ emissions from coal fired power plants are expected to continue to decrease to 2035, and real results may be even greater if the switch to natural gas fired power plants continues. Even with an increase in coal use from 1970 there is a decrease in SO₂ emissions due to low sulfur coal and scrubbing technologies. Results will not be this dramatic for decreasing CO₂ emissions. In order to decrease CO₂ there must be a decrease in combustion levels, because carbon capture and sequestration is not currently financially viable. There has been a significant decrease in mercury emissions. Blood-mercury levels in women ages 16-49 at the 95th percentile have been below the reference dose since 2001, showing that there is no need to focus on continuing to decrease mercury levels. There is a decrease in hazardous air pollutants, though the most recent data available is from 2005 and should be updated. This data shows that the EPA Region 3 has low HAP emissions, partially because there is not a lot of industry in the region. Priorities for reducing pollutants should be readjusted based on the current problems in the region.

The committee asked about the importance of federal regulations and for a view on the future of CO₂ regulation. The shift towards automobile fuel efficiency was due to the development of fuel injected engines. This shift was market driven, because it greatly reduced the cost of operating a

vehicle. The regulation of lead and vapor controls was not market driven, but has been very successful. It is impossible to model confidently with CO₂ which makes projections very difficult. There is a separate risk evaluation for predicting decades out. Regulating CO₂ is an entirely different game from regulating traditional air pollutants. It is like the difference between stopping nuclear war and stopping gang war- the solutions are not the same. Regulation under the Clean Air Act (CAA) and a cap and trade program are unlikely to be successful. A non-carbon fuel is needed on a large scale to solve this problem.

If one thing could be changed in the CAA, what would you change? A suggested change is to have started to regulate NO_x and large regulatory sources, which would have been more effective on this coast, rather than choosing one effort across the nation. The CAA refused to regulate pollutants in the order of cost effectiveness.

4. Conformity for the 2010 CLRP and 2011-2015 TIP Performance Measures Applied to the 2010 CLRP

Mr. King presented exhibits from the 2010 CLRP and FY 2011-2016 TIP related to VOC, NO_x, and PM_{2.5}. The projections show a decrease through 2030, with a slight increase in 2040, which is a new end projection for the scenario. The reason for this slight increase is because control programs will have achieved all of their effectiveness, and the program does not model new federal actions.

Mr. Austin presented on the performance of the 2010 CLRP, which is available online at www.mwcog.org/clrp. There is a searchable database with all of the greater than 750 projects included. The plan is updated annually, developed by state, regional, and local transportation agencies, and approved by the Transportation Planning Board (TPB). The goals and objectives are from the TPB Vision, adopted in 1998. Federal regulations, including financial restraint, must be met, which means the model can only fund projects for which funding is “reasonably expected to be available.” The plan is shaped by land use forecasts, financial constraints, and transit fare predictions. Key goals from the TPB Vision, Region Forward, and the Climate Change report include: reduced vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita, reduced congestion on the region’s highway and transit systems, increased accessibility to jobs, meeting federal air quality standards, reduced mobile-source NO_x, VOC and PM emissions, reduced mobile-source greenhouse gas emissions, and increased rate of construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The plan shows a reduced VMT per capita of 4% in 2040, with trips and overall VMT increasing. An increase of morning rush hour traffic congestion and an increase in highly congested Metrorail passenger loads are also shown. The plan shows increased accessibility to jobs by auto and transit due to development focusing in Regional Activity Centers. The CLRP meets federal air quality standards for mobile-source emissions. Greenhouse gas emissions are reduced in the scenario in the plan, but do not meet COG’s goal. The plan shows a continued increase in funding for projects exclusively for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This measure does not show funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities that are part of other road and transit projects.

Toll lanes are incorporated into the modeling scenario. Austin will look into whether or not the displacement of HOV lanes is incorporated.

There are many assumptions in the CLRP that policy will not change because of federal rules. The What Would it Take scenario tried to relieve these pressures on the modeling system. The CLRP process is much like the SIP process, where there are things that can be done, but that cannot be part of the plan. What Would It Take looked at an 80% reduction in transportation emissions, with an increase in regulations and fleet turnover. The committee might be interested in hearing this scenario.

In showing the Regional Activity Centers, it would be interesting to compare the benchmark projected to the goals for concentration of households and jobs. More data should be available in the 2010 brochure.

5. EPA Proposed CAFE Standards for Heavy Duty Vehicles

This item was moved to the agenda for January.

6. Election of Officers for MWAQC FY 2011

The committee was presented with a proposed slate of officers for 2011 from the MWAQC Nominating Committee: Chair, Redella "Del" Pepper, City of Alexandria; Vice Chair Phil Mendelson, Council of the District of Columbia; Vice Chair John Britton, Rockville City Council; Vice Chair Jay Fissette, Arlington County Board. The slate was unanimously approved.

7. State and Local Air Reports

Mr. Ballou reported for Virginia. THE VDEQ is in the final approval process for a 500 MW natural gas plant in Warren County. The Air Pollution Control Board is holding a hearing next Friday. EPA will miss the ozone standard deadline.

Mr. Aburn presented for Maryland. The Maryland Secretary of the Environment is not returning in 2011, so there will be new leadership. EPA is about to propose approval of the Maryland opacity regulations.

Ms. Beall reported for the District. The Climate Action Plan went through a process of public forums, focus groups, and a public comment period. The Department is currently considering all input for revisions.

Mr. Simons noted that the committee should hear a presentation on the What Would It Take scenario.

8. Set Date for Next Meeting, Adjourn:

The next meeting date will be January 26, 2011. The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am.