

Metropolitan Washington Regional Climate Change Staff Roundtable

*Remarks by
Stuart A. Freudberg, Director
Department of Environmental Programs
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments*

January 29, 2007

Good morning! Welcome to COG's Climate Change Staff Roundtable. I'm Stuart Freudberg, COG's Director of Environmental Programs.

Nearly 27 years ago, my colleague George Nichols and I started our careers at COG as environmental professionals.

There were two million fewer people in our region.

There were no Personal Computers, no Internet, no e-mail, no cell phones, no Blackberries, no iPods, no flat screen TVs, no hybrid vehicles, no clean diesel engines, our air quality was poor, the METRO system was just beginning. There was no COG alternative fuels partnership, no MWAQC, we didn't worry about Peak Oil, there were no Green Buildings, no COG Strategic Energy Plan, and certainly there was no Climate Change program at COG or anywhere else - except perhaps in academia and in a few environmental organizations.

In 1980, I think it fair to say that neither George nor I had even a glimmer of an idea that COG would focus on climate change one day in our future.

Now fast forward to January 29, 2007. Today marks the formal beginning of COG's foray into the complex world of climate change.

We're here to begin a dialogue among our local government staffs and stakeholders to define where COG and its members should head on climate change. Quite remarkable given the global nature of this problem. But we can make a difference.

As you will learn, a number of COG's members, as well as local governments and state governments have begun to consider or set climate change policies.

We begin our discussion at a time of extraordinary focus on this issue.

The President included climate change in the State of the Union Address, the new Congress has identified climate change as a top priority, the issue is all over major newspapers and internet sites and radio and TV talk shows.

Enter "climate change" into Google and there are 72,600,000 entries listed!

Al Gore's movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*, has helped the average person understand why climate change is a critical issue of our time, and interestingly enough, this movie has galvanized the faith community to embrace addressing climate change as a moral imperative.

It is clear that the conversation in the past year has fundamentally shifted the debate. No longer is the debate

centered on whether climate change is real. The debate now is on what to do about it.

What are the appropriate policy responses to try to slow down the rate of change and perhaps mitigate against some of the most dramatic effects like melting of the polar ice caps and associated dramatic sea level rise?

Thus it is extremely timely that COG is hosting this meeting today.

Today's outcomes will be reported to the COG Board of Directors and COG's City and County Managers Committee. They will help formulate where COG will head on climate change.

I want to thank everyone for coming - including a number of outside experts that we will hear from shortly.

Recognition

Now I would like to recognize several members of the COG staff who helped organize today's event:

- George Nichols
- Leah Boggs
- Jeff King
- Joan Rohlf
- Naomi Friedman
- Wyetha Lipford
- Leslie Pugh
- Sherry Hill

I'd also like to recognize David Robertson, COG's Executive Director.

Introductions

So that everyone knows who's in attendance today, I'd like to go around the room and have everyone very briefly introduce themselves.

I'd like to start with the elected officials.

[Rest of Room.]

Agenda Preview and Format

We have a very packed agenda; beginning with an overview speaker, then a local and national roundtable.

We'll then open up a dialogue to consider where COG should go from here, including the potential for a major regional climate change conference later in the year.

After each panel, we'll have time for Q&A.

And we will feed you too!

Thanks again for your participation!

**INTRODUCE JIM YIENGER, DIRECTOR
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR LOCAL ENVIROIMENTAL ISSUES
(ICLEI), USA POLICY OFFICE**

- JIM YIENGER DIRECTS THE ICLEI USA POLICY INSTITUTE LOCATED IN WASHINGTON DC.
- IN ADDITION, HE IS IN CHARGE OF ICLEI'S EFFORTS TO INCORPORATE AIR POLLUTION INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS INTO THE INTERNATIONAL CCP FRAMEWORK.
- JIM IS ALSO IN CHARGE OF DEVELOPING THE HEAT SOFTWARE. WORKING AT PRINCETON AND UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, JIM DEVELOPED AN EXTENSIVE RESEARCH BACKGROUND IN AIR POLLUTION MODELING AT URBAN TO GLOBAL SCALES, AND HAS PUBLISHED AND PRESENTED EXTENSIVELY IN THIS AREA.
- HE TAUGHT PHYSICS AND MATH IN FIJI, AND SPENT TWO YEARS IN INDIA AS AN AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR INDIAN STUDIES SCHOLAR AND STANLEY FELLOW. HE IS FLUENT IN HINDI.
- JIM HOLDS A BACHELOR'S AND A MASTER'S DEGREE IN CIVIL ENGINEERING FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND AND THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, RESPECTIVELY.

**FOLLOW PROGRAM AGENDA AND CONTINUE TO SERVE AS
THE FACILITATOR/MC**