



**Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee**  
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## **DRAFT MINUTES OF September 29, 2015 MEETING**

### **Attendance:**

#### **Members and Alternates**

David Snyder, City of Falls Church, Chair  
Brienne Nadeau, District of Columbia Council Member, Vice Chair  
Michael DeMarco, City of Fairfax, Vice Chair (via phone)  
Leta Mach, City of Greenbelt  
Kambiz Agazi, Fairfax County  
Jessica Daniels, District Department of the Environment  
Lyn Erickson, Maryland Department of Transportation  
Lisa Feldt, Montgomery County (via phone)  
Dawn Hawkins-Nixon, Prince George's County (via phone)  
Doris McLeod, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (via phone)  
Tom Ballou, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (via phone)  
Gretchen Goldman, Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee

#### **Other Attendees**

Molly Berger, Maryland Department of the Environment (via phone)  
Mike Lake, Fairfax County  
Kari Snyder, Maryland Department of Transportation

#### **Staff**

Amanda Campbell, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)/ Department of Environmental Programs (DEP)  
Jennifer Desimone, COG/DEP  
Stuart Freudberg, Deputy Executive Director, COG  
Eulalie Gower-Lucas, COG/Department of Transportation Planning (DTP)  
Bob Griffiths, COG/DTP  
Jeff King, COG/DEP  
Sunil Kumar, COG/DEP  
Jane Posey, COG/DTP  
Kanti Srikanth, Director, COG/DTP  
Dusan Vuksan, COG/DTP  
Steve Walz, Director, COG/DEP

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

Chair Snyder called the meeting to order at 12:09pm. Members approved the minutes from the July 29, 2015 meeting, and the current meeting agenda.

### **2. Committee Reports**

**Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Sunil Kumar, COG/DEP on behalf of Tad Aburn, MDE**  
At TAC's last call on September 8, 2015, members heard presentations on the ozone season, the proposed 2008 ozone standard, a briefing on the final Clean Power Plan, and emissions analysis results for the 2015 transportation conformity analysis. Staff provided an update on the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)'s efforts to develop new mobile budgets for the fine particle maintenance plan.

**Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC), Gretchen Goldman, Vice Chair**  
ACPAC announced the 2015 Climate & Energy Leadership Award winners: Takoma Park's Sustainable Energy Action Plan, Frederick County's Green Homes Challenge, Community Power Network's grassroots solar co-op initiatives, and Nextility's commercial solar electric and hot water implementation program. At its last meeting, ACPAC heard from an environmental justice panel that included speakers from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, National Resources Defense Council, and WEACTION on issues in the region.

**Clean Air Partners (CAP), Jennifer Desimone, Managing Director**  
CAP is attending several local events this fall as part of its Community and Business Outreach. CAP will participate in the 2016 USA Science and Engineering Festival at the Washington Convention Center which is expected to draw 350,000 attendees. CAP's summer Media Campaign this included online ads, social media, and transit ads to raise awareness of CAP and actions people can take to improve air quality. Facebook ads featured the popular Larry and Lola Lung mini-video series. This year CAP launched a new contest that asked residents to post/share a 'Clean Air Deed' for a chance to win concert tickets.

Clean Air Partners' initiatives were funded by \$45,000 cash raised by sponsors and in-kind contributions from transit and online advertising worth \$276,000. CAP's summer campaign created 208 million media impressions, valued at \$1.2 million – an increase in 47 percent from last year. Webpage views and mobile app downloads doubled, and CAP grew its social media network by 22 percent. CAP distributed 4,000 pieces of material. CAP won the Communicator Award from the Academy of Interactive & Visual Arts for a new infographic developed this year. CAP created and launched a video promoting alternative forms of transportation as part of Car Free Day on September 22. Recently, CAP conducted a program survey with residents in the Metropolitan Baltimore - Washington region. Results will be available in November and will be used to evaluate and improve program effectiveness.

### **3. Nominating Committee for 2016 Officers, Dave Snyder, Chair**

The committee unanimously approved members Phil Mendelson, Leta Mach, and Del Pepper to serve on the nominating committee.

### **4. Comment Letter – 2015 Constrained Long Range Plan, Sunil Kumar, COG/DEP**

The draft comment letter from MWAQC to the TPB affirms that the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) meet the approved motor vehicle emissions budgets for the National Ambient Air Quality Standards including ozone, fine particles, and carbon monoxide. The region is likely to meet the current (2008) ozone standard. However, more actions may be needed to meet the proposed ozone standard, due to be published on October 1, 2015. MWAQC appreciates COG's Multi-Sector Working Group's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ozone precursors. Acknowledging that per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT) has been decreasing even as the region increases employment, the letter asks TPB to continue to implement VMT reduction measures.

Mr. Agazi suggested strengthening the 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence in the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph. Chair Snyder proposed

striking the phrase “toward meeting” and ending the sentence with “...and is likely to meet the current ozone NAAQS.” The letter was approved unanimously with this change.

#### **5. Ozone Season Summary, Sunil Kumar, COG/DEP**

Mr. Kumar reported that this season the region experienced 61 code yellow days and five code orange days. On June 11 and September 2, the region experienced code orange exceedances largely due to light westerly winds that transported ozone to the region, along with high temperatures, clear skies, and some recirculated local emissions. The code orange days on September 16, 17, and 18 were largely due to recirculation of local emissions, high temperatures, clear skies, and ozone build-up on previous days.

Still, annual ozone exceedances have shown a strong downward trend since 1997. The region has not seen a code red air quality day since 2012, and the number of annual code orange days has been trending down. Before 2006, days with high temperatures over 90 degrees Fahrenheit always resulted in an ozone exceedance. Since 2006, the air is cleaner, and days over 90 no longer necessarily result in an ozone exceedance. Many federal, state, and local emissions control programs have led to the improvement in air quality.

Ozone design values for the region have been declining as well. The 2012-2014 average was 76ppb, which is just above the current (2008) standard of 75ppb. The recently estimated design value for 2013-2015 is 70ppb. The proposed ozone standard slated to be released this week is expected to be in the range of 65 to 70ppb – which could necessitate further reductions in emissions. [Note: On October 1, 2015, EPA released the new ozone standard: 70ppb].

In response to Chair Snyder’s inquiry, Ms. Erickson said that TPB is examining the change in emissions during the Pope’s visit in September.

Mr. Walz shared COG’s press release regarding the high likelihood that the region will meet the 2008 ozone standard. Chair Snyder proposed striking ‘EPA’ in the title and replacing it with ‘Clean Air Act’. With that change the press release was approved unanimously.

#### **6. Clean Power Plan, Jeff King, COG/DEP**

Mr. King explained that the Clean Power Plan is an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rule that targets greenhouse gas emissions from existing power plants. The EPA has authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions under the Clean Air Act which was re-affirmed by a 2007 Supreme Court decision. Responsibility for implementing the rule rests with states and not attainment area as with other air pollutants. Each state may choose to meet either a rate-based greenhouse gas reduction goal or a mass-based goal over the performance period 2022-2032. Initial state plans to meet the goals are due in September 2016 with the option to extend the deadline to 2018. A few states, including the District of Columbia, that do not have power plants located within their borders are exempt from the rule.

Several modifications were made since the first version of the rule. EPA simplified the calculation of the goals, establishing one uniform national greenhouse gas emission performance rate for coal and oil powered units, and another uniform national rate for natural gas combined cycle units. These rates were set by applying the three Best System of Emission Reduction building blocks – (1) Power plant efficiency, (2) Shifting generation from higher emitting coal to lower-emitting natural gas power plants, (3) Shifting generation to zero-emitting renewables – to fossil fuel powered plants within each of the country’s three main regional electricity interconnects, averaging the achieved emissions rates for each plant type, and applying the most achievable regional rates to all units of that type nationally.

State plans must contain various elements similar to other air quality state implementation plans,

such as identifying plan approach and scope, monitoring methods, milestones and “backstop” measures. The new version also requires community engagement with diverse stakeholders and requires that the plan consider reliability. The rule allows for a safety valve to exempt reliability-critical plants from CO<sub>2</sub> emissions constraints in the case of extraordinary circumstances. The new version also creates a credit for early action on energy efficiency and renewable energy projects implemented in 2020-2021, called the Clean Energy Incentive Program. The Clean Power Plan allows state plans to employ emissions trading systems such as the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

The Clean Power Plan is projected to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> from power plants by 32% by 2030, and create public health and climate benefits worth over \$34 billion annually as compared to estimated costs of \$8.4 billion. Several industry groups and many states are challenging the rule in court. Many states are beginning to work on their plans in the meantime, including Virginia, which held several hearings in recent weeks.

## **7. Greenhouse Gas Multi-Sector Workgroup – Interim Report, Steve Walz, COG/DEP**

Mr. Walz explained that the region is concerned about greenhouse gases and climate change due to the significant risks to people, communities, the economy, and the environment. Additional heat waves exacerbate health risks from air quality and might increase ozone action days. One example of our changing weather is the unusual weather patterns that led to the rare September code orange days this year. The region is experiencing water-related impacts as well: heavier storms and higher tides cause more pollution to enter waterways. The Potomac has experienced drought conditions, necessitating expansion of water storage capacity. Climate change is also impacting agriculture and trees. Actions to prevent climate change such as energy efficiency, and renewable energy create many co-benefits, including criteria pollutant reduction.

COG’s Greenhouse Gas Multi-Sector Working Group has been charged with identifying and analyzing implementable actions to reduce emissions in the Energy, Built Environment, Land Use and Transportation sectors. A consultant, ICFI, found that current policies reduced regional greenhouse gas emissions by about one-third by 2050 compared to the 2005 baseline projections. State, local, and regional strategies analyzed could reduce emissions by another 40 percent. The strategies analyzed and associated greenhouse gas reductions are described in detail in the presentation and the Interim Summary Report available on COG’s website:

[http://www.mwcog.org/committee/committee/archives.asp?COMMITTEE\\_ID=250](http://www.mwcog.org/committee/committee/archives.asp?COMMITTEE_ID=250)

The remaining 27 percent or so needed to reach COG’s 80 percent by 2050 goal could be achieved through federal actions, by ramping up actions in energy, transportation, and land use sectors, by addressing sectors not included in the first analysis such as aviation and HFCs, and through pricing mechanisms.

Regarding Key Land Use Strategies, Mr. Agazi recommended focusing on concentrating growth in Activity Centers generally and not shifting growth from one jurisdiction to another, since the latter raises too many concerns. Transit investments needed for this strategy should be clarified. Pricing strategies could also be controversial. Mr. Agazi asked why expanding tree canopy by 5 percent in the region is considered a stretch strategy.

Chair Snyder said that the recommendations need to be bound by reality, practical, and identify how each could be implemented. Chair Snyder asked what mode share would be needed.

Mr. Freudberg said that the feedback received will be summarized for the COG Board as part of their briefing on October 14.

## **8. State and Local Air Reports**

### ***Virginia***

Mr. Ballou reported that Virginia is holding listening sessions on the Clean Power Plan. Staff is working on incorporating input received into the state plan.

### ***District of Columbia***

No report.

### ***Maryland***

No report.

Mr. Walz added that COG conducted an analysis to determine the impact of the Volkswagen diesel emissions scandal on the region. Since only 0.25 percent of the registered vehicles in the region are of that brand, any air quality impacts are negligible.

## **9. Set Date for Next Meeting, Adjourn**

The next meeting on the schedule is a joint meeting with the Climate, Energy & Environment Policy Committee on December 16. The meeting adjourned at 1:44pm.