

Draft Meeting Summary
COG Climate Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEP)
September 27, 2012

Members and Alternates Present

Hon. Jay Fiset, Arlington County
Hon. Roger Berliner, Montgomery County
Hon. Jonathan Way, Manassas
Hon. Ryan Spiegel, Gaithersburg
Hon. Fred Schultz, Takoma Park
Hon. Al Carr, MD House of Delegates

Kambiz Agazi, Fairfax County
Keith Anderson, District Department of the Environment
Mark Busciano, Casey Trees
Chris Berendt, Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP/Cooper Cary Inc
Laine Cidlowski, DC Office of Planning
Sarah Cosby, Dominion Virginia Power
Lyn Erickson, Maryland Department of Transportation
Robert Grow, Greater Washington Board of Trade
Rachel Healy, WMATA
John Lord, Loudoun County Public Schools
Denise Mitchell, College Park
Samuel Moki, Prince George's County
Erica Shingara, Rockville
Dr. Lise Van Susteren, Chesapeake Climate Initiative
Luke Wisniewski, District Department of Transportation
Steve Walz, Northern Virginia Regional Commission

Others Present

Erica Bannerman, City of Alexandria
Alan Brewer, Loudoun County
Alicia Culver, Responsible Purchasing Network
Gwen Kennedy, Loudoun County
Maurice Keys, District Department of Transportation
Mike Lake, Fairfax County
Elizabeth Lawton, ECotality
Bryan Moorhouse, Pepco Holdings
Chris O'Brien, American University
Tim Stevens, Falls Church
David Wiley, Independent Consultant

Staff Present

Julia Allman, COG DEP
Leah Boggs, COG DEP
Amanda Campbell, COG DEP
Maia Davis, COG DEP
Jen Desimone, COG DEP
Stuart Freudberg, COG DEP
Jeff King, COG DEP
Joan Rohlfs, COG DEP

1. Call to Order/Introductions/Chair Remarks

Chair Fisetto called the meeting of the Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) to order at 9:35 a.m.

Mr. Fisetto noted that the agenda includes a discussion of the process for formulating the climate energy action plan for the next four years and receiving feedback. Additionally, a number of reports are being worked on by staff, which will be presented. Hon. Mary Cheh will facilitate a discussion on green purchasing.

Following the CEEPC meeting, a Sustainable Purchasing Workshop was held at 12:30 pm.

2. Approval of Meeting Summary for July 25, 2012 and Amendments to the Agenda

The meeting summary for the July 25, 2012 meeting was approved with no changes. The Agenda was approved with no changes.

3. Electric Vehicle Readiness Strategy: Washington DC Region

(Kambiz Agazi, Environmental Coordinator, Fairfax County and Joan Rohlfs, Environmental Resources Program Director, COG Department of Environmental Programs)

Mr. Agazi introduced the Electric Vehicle (EV) report and provided background on its development. In early 2011, the first EVs were available at Washington area dealerships. In September 2011, a stakeholder Task Force of over 50 members began meeting with the Greater Washington Clean Cities Coalition (GWCCC) to facilitate EV deployment in the Greater Washington area. The Task Force continued their work through June 2012, developing 30 recommendations and 5 priority recommendations for the EV Readiness Report.

Ms. Rohlfs provided a summary of comments received and revisions made to the EV report. EV adoption provides environmental, economic, and energy security benefits. The report provides

recommendations for a regional strategy to address obstacles to infrastructure planning and facilitate adoption.

The comment period on the draft report ended September 14. The draft report was presented to CEEPC in July, and the Chief Administrative Officers Committee, Transportation Planning Board (TPB) Technical Committee, and CEEPC members have provided comments. The report will be presented to TPB in October. Comments received showed reluctance among local governments to promote EV technology over others. The appropriate local government role is seen as removing barriers in permitting and zoning processes to facilitate deployment. Additionally, given that most of the stimulus funds dedicated to charging station installation have been spent, questions were raised about who would take the lead in future EV infrastructure investments. There is a general acceptance that market forces will lead EV efforts going forward.

In addition to addressing these comments, the report now contains projections on the Outlook for the EV market. A study conducted by DNV/KEMA in 2010 projects that between 1 million and just over 2 million EVs will be on US roads by 2019. There have been several signs that interest in EVs is growing in the Washington region. Arlington County received an application for the nation's first all-EV taxicab fleet, and there is interest in installing DC Fast chargers in the area. Also driving demand for EVs are recent policy changes. Updated CAFE standards for 2017-2025 will increase demand for zero-emission vehicles, and MAP-21, the transportation funding bill, expands CMAQ funding to include EV charging infrastructure and CNG fueling investments.

The Task Force recommends creating the Washington Regional EV Partnership to implement the recommendations contained in the report. The Partnership should be market-driven, led by stakeholders from the EV industry, and focused on developing a business case for EVs. CEEPC was asked to recommend the COG Board of Directors to adopt the EV report in November and have COG participate in the Washington Regional EV Partnership.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Fisetto asked who will be involved in the EV Partnership. The Partnership will be conducted in cooperation with GWCCC, which is part of a mid-Atlantic partnership funded by DOE.

Mr. Berendt asked, will the Partnership be an independent entity, or housed within COG? The group will be facilitated by COG, but going forward it may pursue a more independent status.

Mr. Way asked for clarification on the barriers to EV deployment at the local government level. The key barriers are lack of information in the electrical permitting process to allow local governments to track EV installations and share this information with utilities for infrastructure planning purposes, restrictions in parking ratio requirements that count EV charging stations against the total parking space count, and lack of comprehensive planning that promotes cross-department collaboration.

Mr. Fisetto requested that the report provide more clarity on the purpose and “charge” of the working group. The Task Force will meet in October to discuss the goals, purpose, and structure of the group going forward. It will focus on the five priority recommendations in the report, particularly developing a business case for EV deployment.

Action taken: Motion to recommend the EV report to the COG Board of Directors was accepted.

4. Climate & Energy Action Plan, 2013 – 2016: Process

(Maia Davis, Environmental Planner, COG Department of Environmental Programs)

Ms. Davis gave an overview of the process for formulating CEEPC’s next Climate and Energy Action Plan.

The COG Board adopted the Regional Climate Change Report in 2008 to set regional goals for greenhouse gas reduction and offer a variety of mitigation strategies. Following this, the Board created CEEPC to provide leadership on these climate goals and create an action plan for the region’s jurisdictions to pursue. The 2010 to 2012 goal period is now coming to a close. During this time, Region Forward was created as an overarching regional plan to increase prosperity, sustainability, and liveability. Its sustainability goals drew heavily from the CEEPC workplan.

The goals contained in the 2012 plan have been reviewed, and a study of national best practices in climate action planning was conducted to bring new goals into the 2016 plan. An internal review was conducted among technical committees, and draft goals are now being submitted to CEEPC.

Going forward, CEEPC members will volunteer to a workgroup to review and finalize the action plan. The workgroup will meet in October and November, and will provide their recommendations to CEEPC in November 2012. In January through March 2013, the CEEPC Annual Survey will be distributed, collected, and presented.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Fisetto noted one category to be added is energy finance, building on takeaways from the recent workshop held at COG.

Mr. Berliner asked, how close are we to reaching the 2012 greenhouse gas reduction goal? Staff responded that the data has a two-year lag, so we will not have a definitive answer until 2014. In the mean time, COG staff is looking for a way to estimate emissions.

Mr. Berliner added that there needs to be an emphasis on energy efficiency, and on local government efforts to reduce their own energy use. Only a third of jurisdictions in the region have done so, and COG must provide leadership.

Mr. Agazi noted that the first few goals (pertaining to local governments formulating GHG inventories and reduction plans) should be at 100%. There is no way to know where we are if we're not tracking reductions. Community-wide inventories should be conducted as well. The region could benefit from a single process for inventories and calculation, which COG could facilitate.

Mr. Lord noted that it would be beneficial to see whether local governments in the region have been successful in tracking GHGs, and what their processes are.

Mr. Berendt added that many inventories use emission factors that are not actionable for energy audits.

Action taken: Mr. Fissette identified appointees to the workplan group and solicited volunteers for additional participants. The working group members are: Kambiz Agazi, Roger Berliner, Brendan Shane, Chris Berendt, Mary Cheh, Larisa Dobrianski, Stan Edwards, Jay Fissette, Rachel Healy, John Lord, and Sam Moki.

5. Plastic Bag Report Update

(John Snarr, Principal Planner/Technical Manager, COG Department of Environmental Programs)

Mr. Snarr provided an overview of the findings of the Plastic Bag Report 2012 Update, which examines recent efforts to control the impact of single-use bags. Bag pollution is a high-profile issue that is gaining attention in the region, the nation, and across the world. DC has a unique approach to regulation that has been an example for the region.

Key issues are that plastic bags create aesthetic problem, negatively impact coastal communities and marine habitats, and are non-renewable and non-biodegradable. To combat plastic bag pollution, communities in the U.S. have promoted recycling at the point of sale, curbside collection, bans, and fees. Legislative components can require a percentage of recycled content in bags, or impose a fee on each bag distributed.

In the region, DC, Montgomery County, and Chestertown, Maryland have passed plastic bag controls. Prince George's County pursued a fee program, but the required state legislation did not pass. In Virginia, localities require state permission to pass plastic bag laws. COG is currently conducting a study on the impacts of fee laws.

The first bag program was implemented in 2007 in San Francisco, as a ban. The city is currently expanding the ban beyond large businesses to all retailers, and has implemented a recyclable

paper bag fee of 10 cents. Seattle implemented a 20 cent fee on plastic and 5 cents on paper in 2009. Los Angeles implemented a hybrid ban/fee, and has seen a 95% reduction in plastic bag use. More recently, Carpinteria, California was the first to adopt a ban on both plastic and paper at only large retailers.

DC is a national test bed for “dual fee” programs, and has increased attention to the issue nationally. There are tradeoffs to various mechanisms, both politically and environmentally. More program data is needed on the impact of ban and fee laws – particularly on if, and how much, they reduce pollution.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Fiset commented that this report highlights the word “Environment” in CEEPC’s name. This work was handed down from the COG board. Climate and Energy have been the focus as defined by Climate Change report, but Environment component was added later. We have to be cautious about what we take on and how we take it on, but nothing should be off the table in terms of suggestions for the agenda.

Ms. Van Susteren suggested that the committee institute an opt-in policy for paper copies being provided to meeting attendees. Mr. Fiset suggested that COG staff revisit the issue.

Mr. Schultz asked, an outright ban is probably easier to enforce than fee; how do we address the enforcement issue? It depends on which group is targeted, whether just food establishments, or all retailers. The District’s policy is customer-complaint driven.

Mr. Grow offered compliments to COG staff on the report.

Mr. Spiegel commented that anecdotally, we’re seeing a spike in reusable bag law. Consumer education is as important as enforcement.

Mr. Berliner commented that we don’t want plastic regulation to promote paper. Any program needs to include a component that increases the use of reusable bags. For ease of administration, it should include all retailers.

Ms. Cidlowski added that DDOE deals with customer based complaints. If a customer is not charged, they can send in their receipt. Those who take care of river cleaning have seen reduction in bags, but are now noticing the plastic bottle waste. It indicates the need to take a more comprehensive look at the waste system.

Ms. Van Susteren added that Styrofoam is also a concern. That there are not currently any affordable substitutes is a problem in addressing it.

Mr. Carr noted that he was the author of Maryland statewide bag fee law. The Toronto bag fee instituted a 5 cent fee that didn’t go back to government, but stayed with retailer. In Maryland,

not all jurisdictions have the authority to implement a DC style law (as a tax), but the Toronto model may work.

Mr. Agazi noted that if a ban is not implemented, a hefty incentive is more appropriate; he would like to see a comprehensive look at waste that is impacting rivers and streams.

6. Projects and Subcommittee Updates (COG Staff)

Solar Collaborative: The collaborative purchase is progressing, and will be releasing an RFQ soon. The project is going forward in Maryland and the District, but the projects in Virginia do not pencil out economically. We are exploring options with Optony, NVRC, and Dominion to potentially allow some of the Virginia projects to go forward.

DoD Clean Energy Collaborative Workshop: In June, COG hosted a workshop to pursue the potential for collaboration between communities and military bases on clean energy projects. Representatives of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, the Defense Department, Navy, Air Force, Army, and Sandia National Labs shared policies and projects they are pursuing on efficiency, renewable energy, and net zero energy goals.

Energy Finance Workshop: In July, COG hosted another workshop on innovative tools for energy finance. The key takeaway is that Wall Street is ready to fund large-scale efficiency retrofit projects, and the region is looking at how to design and pursue investment-grade programs.

Climate Leadership Academy: COG is sending a team to the Climate Leadership Academy on Climate Adaptation and Resilience. The team includes Rachel Healy, Erica Bannerman, Dan Barry DDOE, Moson Sadiq from DC Water and Maia Davis from COG.

Outreach Campaign Update: Any jurisdictions that do not have a sustainability outreach program can talk to Ms. Davis about how to receive COG assistance through the sustainability outreach program that is in development.

7. Panel Discussion – Green Purchasing Policies and Practices

(Moderator: Hon. Mary Cheh, DC Councilmember; Panel: Alicia Culver, Executive Director, Responsible Purchasing Network; Chris O'Brien, Sustainability Director, American University; Lizbeth Fried, UMD Environmental Finance)

NOTE: All COG jurisdictions have free membership for the Responsible Purchasing Network, at www.responsiblepurchasing.org. Contact Alicia Culver (alicia@responsiblepurchasing.org) or Maia Davis (mdavis@mwkog.org) for log-in info.

Ms. Cheh - Discuss your green purchasing programs, what products are local governments purchasing?

- Ms. Culver – Purchasing, climate protection, and environmental issues fit together. Assessing your own operations and what you are buying is a good starting place for assessing climate impacts. The policies on green purchasing vary widely throughout the U.S. The first policies were adopted in the 1980s, around purchasing a certain percentage of recycled and energy efficient products. Things have moved into “environmentally preferable purchasing,” which look at energy, toxics, and production processes.
Drivers for businesses and organizations to pursue green purchasing include wanting to be sustainable, have more credibility in community to promote sustainable actions, getting businesses LEED certified, reducing toxic exposure among workers, and saving money. However there are challenges as municipalities are trying to create policies on their own. Staff cuts, the lack of a purchasing department, higher up-front costs for some products, and confusion about what’s really green stand in the way of robust green purchasing programs.
- Mr. O’Brien - AU instituted a sustainable purchasing policy several years ago. We experienced challenges in prioritizing purchases and determining which labels and standards to trust. One must consider lifecycle impacts and lifecycle costs. Products with low environmental costs are often those with lower financial costs in the long run. We are now forming the Sustainable Purchasing Council, which hopes to become the “LEED” certification of green purchasing.
- Ms. Fried – UMD offers the Sustainable Maryland certification program for municipalities. We developed 170 actions to help frame sustainable initiatives. One section is green purchasing, which contains 6 actions. We try to help municipalities that have capacity issues and limited sources of collecting data. We provide case studies that other municipalities can utilize

Ms. Cheh - What recommendations do you have for someone launching into this? Beginning at the bottom, how do you get started?

- Ms. Fried - Set the priorities for your organization. UMD students created a survey that helps organizations to prioritize purchases, and directs them to use RPN as a resource. Representatives from each purchasing area should be assigned, as well as a centralized sustainable purchasing person or group to collaborate across departments. This helps avoid duplication of efforts and achieve economies of scale.
- Mr. O’Brien - One person has to be designated as their core job being coordinating various departments.
- Ms. Culver – The good news is that you can save money to offset program costs. The first step is to set up an infrastructure and framework. Use an information portal so you’re not recreating the wheel in each area.

Ms. Cheh - How do we define a green product?

- Ms. Culver – Use the certifications that are out there. Follow ENERGY STAR, EPEAT for computer equipment and copiers, Green Seal for cleaning products and paint. Those will ensure that a 3rd party has looked at them, and they are eligible for LEED credits.
- Mr. O'Brien – There are tradeoffs with each certification system. For example, materials in a certified product may not emit indoor emissions above a certain level; but, may not indicate whether the source is sustainable. The LEED for purchasing helps point out the tradeoffs that really matter from lifecycle impact and cost standpoints. Of all the thousands of products you purchase, just 10% make the majority of the environmental impact. The system will help you address those high-impact products and prevent the sustainable purchasing manager from becoming an environmental scientist for every single product.
- Ms. Fried – Having a single resource helps alleviate the capacity issue.

Ms. Cheh - The most recent DC statute defines an environmentally preferable product or service as "having less environmental impact than other products..." and directs to the GSA Environmental Specialty category. Do you think this is a sensible strategy, to define a general standard, provide references (3rd party and government), then develop over time? Are there model statutes available?

- Mr. O'Brien – This is spot on.
- Ms. Culver – RPN has model statutes available. You can choose multi-attribute standards or string together single-attribute standards. It is good to have a general policy because standards and certifications will change. Have a policy that stands the test of time, and review periodically. Have tools that purchases can review and revise, so policy doesn't need to change as the standards do.

Ms. Cheh - Purchasing is the focus here, but there are also practices that can improve sustainability. For example, DC mixes beet juice with road salt to melt ice, and reduce salt use. What examples do you have with using products?

- Ms. Culver – RPN's guides address practices. For example, set computers to print duplex by default. Educate staff on proper dilution of disinfectant, and to clean first.
- Ms. Fried – Vendors will come and demonstrate appropriate use of their products. The best case is use minimal amount to get job done.
- Mr. O'Brien – "Don't buy what you don't need, and use what you buy," is generally a good purchasing practice.

Ms. Cheh - What do you monitor and audit over time? How do you set up systematic procedures? DC orders an annual report, in which each agency quantifies sustainable purchasing activities.

- Ms. Fried – It would be great to have something like EPA Portfolio manager for green products. After you've done analysis, and selected products, each year the manager could plug in actual purchases. A centralized process is helpful. Only one municipality in MD has a centralized green purchase policy.

- Ms. Culver – Set goals and prioritize. Focus on a few key items. GreenSpend reports break down to which products and which department ordered. Target education to agencies who need it, reward those doing well. Use a few key indicators. Reporting and accountability is very important.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Fiset highlighted the CEEPC action plan goals that are relevant to this issue: 60% of jurisdictions adopt green purchasing policy; 50% participate in a sub-regional cooperative green purchase.

Ms. Culver followed up that the Town Creek Foundation offers a grant to help jurisdictions develop sustainable purchasing policies. The regional solar purchase is a great project to start talking about this issue and working together. COG could focus on another area of joint purchasing – something like LED lighting that everyone can participate on.

Ms. Cheh commented that cooperative purchase can drive the market, push down prices and share best practices.

Ms. Davis noted that COG has a coop purchasing program – putting COG rider clause on the contract helps other jurisdictions to participate if desired.

Ms. Healy noted that riding a contract reduces the administrative cost of group purchasing.

Ms. Van Susteren noted that we should also focus on food services. What we eat has a huge impact on greenhouse gas emissions and sustainable impact. The Healthy Schools Act is an example of a good policy.

6. Adjourn

The next meeting is scheduled for November 28, 2012 from 9:30 am to 11:45am. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 am.