

Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee

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The Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (AQPAC) is an advisory body to the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) and the Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC)

Draft Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 13, 2010
Room 1
5:30 P.M.-7:30 P.M.

ACPAC members: Deron Lovaas, Chair; Bill Butler; Sally Kane; Larry Zaragoza; Jen Peterson

Staff: Joan Rohlf, Jeff King, Jeannine Altavilla

1. Call to Order, Adoption of Agenda, Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 5:45 pm. See the end of Item 4 for approval of the June and July meeting minutes.

2. 2010 Ozone Season Update (Joan Rohlf, DEP Staff)

This year's ozone season, based on the 8-hr standard of 75 ppb, has had 3 Code Red days and 30 Code Orange Days. The last time there were so many Code Orange and Red days with in 2002, when the 1997 standard of 84 ppb was in place. The highest concentration measured was 100 ppb on July 7 at the McMillan Reservoir monitor. August 28th to September 3rd was a poor air quality event sparked by a week of high pressure and temperature. There were also limited clouds allowing intense sunlight, and re-circulating winds that kept bringing polluted air back into the region. The chart for August 30th shows the wind trajectory at 3pm.

In the past, the ratio of ninety degree days-to-Code Red days was one-to-one, but this year there were many more ninety degree days than Code Red days, demonstrating that air quality is improving. Mr. Lovaas asked why it is improving, and staff responded that emissions are down due to actions taken because of the NOx SIP and improving controls on power plants. Dr. Zaragoza asked that a graph showing ninety degree days and Code Red days be made available. Mr. Butler noted that there were a lot of days this year that exceeded the 1997 standard; he is discouraged by the number of days over 85 ppb.

Staff commented that the new standard is expected later this year. If the new standard is 65 ppb, as expected, the region may have difficulties being in attainment.

3. Regional Energy Outreach Pilot Project: Update (J Rohlf, DEP Staff)

The WE CAN residential energy efficiency program has started. The pilot program will run until March 2011 in Brookland, DC, Greenbelt, MD, and Cascades in Loudoun County, VA. It will be a web- and community-based program where participants can monitor their energy use and savings powered by a platform from Earth Aid. The goal is to have 50 households signed up in each community by mid-October.

The website, www.WeCanSaveEnergy.org, is currently an interim page, but allows participants to sign up and begin to track their energy use. The webpage with full capabilities will be up by the beginning of October. Participants' utility bill data is automatically loaded into their account every month, allowing them to compare to average homes in their area and their neighbors, and enabling them to earn points for energy that they saved

compared to previous years. These points can be converted into rewards from local and national retailers. The first 50 households in each community who bring proof of their registration will receive a free energy kit. Dominion has paid for the energy kits for Greenbelt and Cascades. Pepco serves the Greenbelt community, but they have been difficult to contact since the major storms in August. Mr. Lovaas asked what was included in the kits and staff responded that there are products for electricity, gas, and water conservation. Some of the contents are faucet aerators, low-flow showerheads, shrink wrap kits to seal windows, weather stripping, and a Kill-a-Watt monitor that shows how much power your devices actually consume.

Mr. Butler asked when the program will start and staff responded that recruitment in the communities began with new staff member Maia Davis participating in Greenbelt's Labor Day activities. Staff has developed fliers and handouts for community events. Ms. Peterson asked if anyone in the region could sign up. Staff commented that anyone can use the resources on the website and track their energy use, but that the community outreach efforts and prizes would be focused in the selected pilot communities through March. Mr. Butler commented that he purchased a new central air conditioner before the summer started; even with the record heat the bills were half of what they were last year.

4. EECBG Funding and Survey of Energy Contracts (Jeannine Altavilla, DEP Intern)

The Department of Energy's Energy Efficient Community Block Grants (EECBG) program allocated \$2.7 billion in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to projects across the country. A report released by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) determined that actual EECBG spending has not kept pace with anticipated expenditures. Spending rates have increased significantly since March, and so far the grant money has resulted in creating or saving about 2,265 jobs, about one per grant awarded. The OIG determined that the slow rate of spending was due to administrative and regulatory challenges associated with implementing a new program at multiple levels of government.

Federal issues included the lack of a designated staff for the program when they received funding in 2009. State and local entities had problems communicating with DOE, which further complicated their ability to adhere to regulations for the program. The dramatic funding increases for local governments also stretched their staffs, and were similarly unable to increase their staff capacity at such short notice. Additionally, there were numerous regulatory and review processes that held award funds.

The DOE now has an established team approach and monitoring plan that they believe will make the process much easier and effectively monitor all projects. They noted that the EECBG program is ranked in the top 20 percent of Recovery Act programs and further, that grantees receiving less than \$250,000 met their target of making twenty percent payments more than three months ahead of schedule. Currently President Obama has not included EECBG funding in his proposed 2012 budget, and the group Climate Communities is launching an advocacy campaign to get funding reinstated for the program. Without funding, the program will no longer exist. Members voiced that this presentation is very interesting, but questioned whether EECBG should continue with these issues.

Staff noted that Josh Silverman, who works at the DOE, is resigning from ACPAC due to another commitment that will require his attendance at Monday evening meetings.

Staff questioned how the committee thought this topic should be presented to the Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) at their meeting next week. Members believe that staff should be straight forward with CEEPC and present the facts for them. Staff noted that the oversight issues are necessary even though they are time consuming. Mr. Lovaas agreed that the findings of the report need to be publicized and that the public may not be surprised, but that they should hear about it.

Ms. Kane asked if congressional staff would be interested in the OIG report. Staff responded that they were most likely notified about the report. The Administration is not currently supporting the program. Mr. Butler suggested that maybe they are moving on to a different stimulus effort.

Locally, COG member jurisdictions were granted \$46 million in funds that were allocated to approximately ninety projects. The projects largely cover energy efficiency and renewable energy audits and upgrades in buildings, but also include outdoor lighting upgrades, transportation, and supporting activities such as staff development and community outreach. Program funding is expected to audit over 3,500 buildings in the region, with at least seventy buildings receiving substantial upgrades; this amounts to over 75% of the funds allocated for the region. At the time reported, jurisdictions acknowledged completed projects amounting to 2.4% of allocated funds. The OIG report shows that the District has spent only \$50,000 of its \$9.5 million in allocated funds; Maryland has spent \$1.5 million of its \$52.3 million in allocated funds; Virginia has spent \$3.5 million of its \$59.8 million in allocated funds. Fairfax County was one of the entities contacted by OIG for the audit, and they reported having spent \$241,000 of their \$9.6 million in allocated funds. ACPAC members thought it said something about the program structure that spending amounts were similar across the nation, and not concentrated in one state or region.

In addition to collecting information about local EECBG projects, COG staff has developed an inventory of contracts in the region with similar goals. The current database has fifty contracts that will be placed in an online database to allow for regional sharing and cooperative purchasing. Members were happy to hear of this initiative.

The June minutes have been edited as per Dr. Zaragoza's comments about the monitors. Ms. Peterson was present at the June meeting and was not listed in the minutes. Mr. Butler was not present at the July meeting, as listed. Ms. Kane suggested that the June minutes be amended to say that she and Ms. Fourier were going to brainstorm and focus concern on the air quality index and reports in the press and present to the committee before they commit to writing a letter. Mr. Butler noted that there has been a lot of reporting in the news on Code Orange days.

In response to questions about whether the monitor locations consider demographics, staff responded that they had contacted David Krask, Director of Monitors in Maryland, but had not heard back. They will continue to try to find someone to present on the issue to the committee. Members voiced concern that it is hard to look at all of the monitors online because you have to view each one separately. They also asked whether they should consider a single monitor closest to their location, or an average.

5. Committee Updates:

Because committees do not meet in August, discussion referenced upcoming agendas.

- **MWAQC:** The Technical Advisory Committee will meet on Tuesday, September 14 to finalize the agenda. They will look at an action letter to comment on the transition to the MOVES model. The committee will meet on September 22 and will also be briefed on: the ozone season, the utility data request to track climate progress, the WE CAN campaign, the new proposed vehicle labels from the EPA, NSR anti-backsliding, and COG's newly awarded EPA Smart Growth Technical Assistance Grant. There will also be an OTC meeting on Thursday at BWI discussing model rules.
- **CEEPC:** The committee will meet next Wednesday morning and hear about the WE CAN program, the HUD grant, and an update on the street lights group. There is also a placeholder that could discuss the status of vehicle electrification efforts in the region, green purchasing, or an exceptional EECBG project in the region. Mr. Lovaas noted that electrification was in the Reid's climate bill, but there is not much to report that has actually been done. Luke Tonachel could possibly come to talk about its climate benefit.

- **IGBG:** The committee will meet tomorrow morning and will receive training on the ICC Final Action Hearing coming in October to vote on a new 30% solution to make building standards 30% more efficient.
- **EAC:** The committee will meet this Thursday and discuss the WE CAN program; the new contracts database, climate and energy progress reporting, the utility data request, ICC final action hearing scholarship funds, and the DC Sustainable Energy Utility status.

6. New Business:

Ms. Kane asked if COG advertises to public advisory committee members about changes in parking. Due to street closures it took her over half an hour to find a parking spot, causing her to be late for tonight's meeting. Staff was unaware of such efforts but said that they would look into it.

Ms. Kane asked about the current state of legislation on climate change. Staff responded that nothing is expected to happen before elections. PACE funding is still held up. Legislation could address the issues, but talks between the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) and the Administration have been unsuccessful. There is a new committee looking into energy financing here at COG. There is a PACE program in Montgomery County that had legislation and EECBG funding that now cannot move forward. A DC PACE program established for commercial buildings can still move forward because they are not governed by the FHFA. Ms. Rohlfs attended the COG retreat in July that discussed green jobs as a potential new topic for COG to investigate. Right now the promised green jobs do not exist. Mr. King noted that Washington Gas has just launched a carbon offsets program with proceeds helping the Chesapeake Bay.

Next month's meeting will address the monitor locations, and Air Quality, Human Health, and the Communication System.

Members discussed the Technical Assistance Grant that COG received. Ms. Kane suggested that NOAA might be a valuable resource. Members noted that it would tie in nicely with the Action Plan.

Members discussed recent low attendance at ACPAC meetings and decided to discuss recruitment for new members at the October meeting.

7. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm.

Next meeting: October 18 – 5:30pm – Room 1
