

MWCOG Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee
Monthly COG staff update as of January 20, 2010

Contact: Jeff King, jking@mwkog.org | Anne Mariani, amariani@mwkog.org

Federal Regulatory Updates

✓ **EPA's Endangerment Finding**

On December 7, 2009, EPA released two distinct findings regarding greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act:

- The Endangerment Finding states that the current and projected concentrations of the six key greenhouse gases in the atmosphere threaten the public health and welfare.
 - the Cause or Contribute Finding states that the combined emissions of these greenhouse gases from new motor vehicles and new motor vehicle engines contribute to the greenhouse gas pollution.
- These findings are a prerequisite to finalizing the EPA's proposed greenhouse gas emission standards for light-duty vehicles, which were jointly proposed by EPA and the DOT's National Highway Safety Administration on September 15, 2009.

<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/endangerment.html>

Republican Lisa Murkowski of Alaska will present an amendment on the Senate floor on Jan. 20, aimed at limiting EPA's ability to regulate GHG emissions.

<http://www.nytimes.com/gwire/2010/01/08/08greenwire-both-sides-gird-for-bruising-senate-debate-ove-16842.html>

Federal Legislative Updates

✓ **Job for Main Street Act**

On December 16, 2009, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Jobs for Main Street Act, which creates funding opportunities for energy and climate-related projects (public transit, passenger rail, housing rehabilitation, energy innovation loans).

The U.S. Senate is expected to consider separate jobs legislation in January 2010.

<http://www.speaker.gov/newsroom/legislation?id=0351>

✓ **Cash for Caulkers**

In December 2009, President Obama proposed to create a new program to foster home energy retrofits, modeled after the "cash for clunkers" program. The "cash for caulkers" program would reimburse homeowners for energy-efficiency improvements. Rebates could be up to 50% of the cost and \$12,000 per home, according to ACEEE who is advising on the bill.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/18/business/economy/18leonhardt.html>

http://money.cnn.com/2009/12/08/news/economy/president_energy/index.htm?postversion=2009120909

Federal Budget Updates

✓ Sustainable Communities Initiative in HUD FY10 budget

The HUD FY 2010 budget sets aside \$150 million within the Community Development Block Grant program for a new Community Sustainability initiative to improve regional planning efforts that integrate housing and transportation decisions (Regional Integrated Planning Grants, Community Challenge Planning Grants).

This budget also includes \$50 million for an Energy Innovation Fund to create an Energy Efficient Mortgage Innovation pilot program and a Multifamily Energy Pilot program.

<http://www.massapa.org/index.php?page=blog-view-post&postID=212>

<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/F?c111:7:./temp/~c111DxbtIV:e128428>

✓ Climate Research programs in Omnibus Budget

On December 16, 2009 President Obama signed the omnibus appropriations bill that contains FY 2010 funding for a variety of federal programs and departments.

The omnibus bill includes \$2 billion for Global Climate Change Research (\$75 million above FY 2009) to study and respond to global climate change:

- **NASA:** \$1.32 billion, including nearly \$940 million to develop space-based climate measurements.
- **NOAA:** \$375 million to enhance climate change research and regional assessments and climate change educational programs, and for other purpose.
- **NSF:** \$310 million for climate change research, modeling and education.
- **Economic Development Administration:** \$25 million for green building initiatives.
- **NIST:** \$5 million for the development of greenhouse gas emission standards.

http://appropriations.house.gov/pdf/FY10_CJS_Conference_Summary.pdf

For a summary of energy and climate measures in the Obama administration FY10 budget proposal (May 2009) http://www.eesi.org/052009_fy09budget

✓ Transportation Projects Will Now Emphasize Environmental and Livability Benefits

During the Transportation Research Board annual meeting in Washington, DC, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced that the Obama Administration will change how transportation projects are selected to receive federal funding. Under the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) New Starts and Small Starts program, funding guidelines will be based on livability issues such as environmental benefits, economic development and congestion relief, in addition to cost and time saved, which are currently the primary criteria. The FTA will soon initiate a separate rulemaking process, inviting comments on ways to appropriately measure all the benefits that result from these types of investments. (Source: ASLA, 01/14/10)

http://www.fta.dot.gov/news/news_events_11036.html

✓ Smart Grid - ARRA Grants in DC, MD,VA

On October 28, 2009, President Obama announced \$3.4 billion in ARRA Awards for Smart Grid Projects. These funding will be matched by industry funding for a total public-private investment worth over \$8 billion. PEPCO was awarded \$149 million to install 850,000 smart meters and institute dynamic pricing programs in the DC and Maryland service area. BGE was awarded \$200 million for a similar project in

Baltimore. In Virginia, The Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative will receive \$5 million for grid improvements.

<http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/2252.html>

http://www.energy.gov/recovery/smartgrid_maps/SGIGSelections_State.pdf

State Government Updates

✓ **Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) – NorthEast and Mid-Atlantic MOU**

The governors of 11 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states have signed an agreement to work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation fuels. The goal is to lower the carbon content of fuels used by vehicles, which represent about 30 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in the region. The agreement signed Wednesday will help create a regional framework for a low-carbon fuel program by 2011. The governors of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont signed it.

Source: Associated Press, Wednesday, December 30, 2009

More about Low Carbon Fuel Standard: <http://www.nescaum.org>

✓ **Maryland Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act**

MDE has begun having stakeholder meetings for the GGRA of 2009; the first round should be completed after the end of the legislative session. MDE, on Behalf of the Maryland Climate Change Commission (MCCC), has submitted the 2009 update to the Governor and Legislature. MDE plans to begin hosting further MCCC meetings in the spring to update agencies on implementation status.

Local Government Updates

✓ **Greening of Building Codes: New Energy Efficiency Rules For D.C. Buildings Take Effect In 2010**

Source: IMT, December 22, 2009 - By Jonathan Wilson

On January 1st, owners of large commercial buildings in D.C. will be required to measure the energy efficiency of their properties. Under D.C.'s law, owners of buildings 200,000 sq. ft. or larger will begin measuring their energy efficiency next year, and by January of 2012, a public database of all such buildings will be available on the web.

<http://www.imt.org/rating-dc.html>

New York City has also recently adopted new green building codes and other green building strategies for existing buildings. <http://www.imt.org/rating-nyc.html>

In January 2010, California also adopted the first State 'Green' Building Code. <http://gov.ca.gov/press-release/14186/>

✓ **Arlington County Board Forms Energy Task Force**

The Arlington County Board has created a 28-member Community Energy and Sustainability (CES) Task Force. The CES Task Force will make recommendations in early 2011 to the County Board for specific long-term, mid-term and short-term goals and strategies for reducing Arlington's total greenhouse gas

emissions. This initiative will build on and expand the Arlington Initiative to Reduce Emissions (AIRE) program, which was initiated in 2007 and focused on reducing the county's emissions by 10 percent by 2012.

<http://www.co.arlington.va.us/departments/Communications/PressReleases/page73901.aspx>

✓ **Loudoun County Energy Strategy**

On December 8, 2009, the final draft of the Loudoun County Energy Strategy was completed. The report outlines a 30-year roadmap including goals for energy use, distribution, and supply. The report can be found at <http://www.loudoun.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=2363>

Regional Agency Updates

✓ **TPB "What Would It Take?" Scenario**

On January, 20 2009, draft results of the TPB "What Would It Take?" scenario was presented to the TPB. The scenario analyzes over 30 transportation strategies to determine their CO₂ reduction potential and combines them to see how close we can get to regional climate change mitigation goals. The presentation and background memo can be found at

http://www.mwco.org/transportation/committee/committee/archives.asp?COMMITTEE_ID=15

✓ **Comparative study of three Local Climate Action Plans**

Anne Mariani, who is now an environmental planner with MWCOG, recently conducted a research for the US German Marshall Fund on American local Climate Action Plans and how they compare with similar initiatives in France. The report, which focuses on the experiences of Pittsburgh, Denver and Seattle, can be accessed at:

<http://www.gmfus.org/doc/Mariani%20-%20GMF%20Report%20-%20Final%201.25.10.pdf>

International news

✓ **International Developments: Copenhagen Accord**

President Obama visited Copenhagen, Denmark, on December 18, 2009, and met with the heads of state from Brazil, China, India, and South Africa to reach a climate agreement called the "Copenhagen Accord." The non-binding agreement calls industrialized countries to determine their economy-wide emissions targets for 2020 and submit them to the United Nations by the end of January. A number of developing countries, including the major emerging economies, also agreed to list their voluntary pledges to reduce emissions by the end of January and to communicate their efforts to limit GHG emissions every two years. The accord commits developed countries to provide new and additional resources to help developing countries reduce their emissions, approaching \$30 billion for 2010-2012 for adaptation and mitigation. The accord also sets up a goal of mobilizing \$100 billion per year by 2020. The next Conference of the Parties will be held in Mexico, in December 2010. *Source: U.S. Department of Energy EERE Newsletter January 6, 2010.*

WRI President Jonathan Lash's op-ed in the Guardian, January 13 2010:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/cif-green/2010/jan/13/copenhagen-accord>

Upcoming Workshops and Events

Feb 4th: COG Workshop on GHG Inventory Activity Data

February 1st - 5th: National Clean Energy Week - A week of action on the part of NGOs, non-profits, associations, private corporations, and government agencies to encourage and support the passage of the clean energy and climate policy.

Inaugural press conference: Monday, February 1, 2010 - 9:30 am – National Press Club

For more information and a list of events: <http://www.cleanenergyweek.org>