

MWAQC Technical Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
Oct 12, 2021, 11:00 AM to 11:25 AM

Present:

Kelly Crawford, District Department of Energy & Environment
Alexander Paulos, District Department of Energy & Environment
Dan Goldberg, George Washington University
Doris McLeod, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Jim Ponticello, Virginia Department of Transportation
John Kinsman, Edison Electric Institute
Joseph Jakuta, District Department of Energy & Environment
Kary Snyder, Virginia Department of Transportation
Marcia Ways, Maryland Department of the Environment
Mathew Gaskin, District Department of Transportation
Norman Whitaker, Virginia Department of Transportation
Regina Moore, Virginia Department of Transportation
Samuel Gaber, Fairfax County
Scott Fincham, Loudoun County
Sonya Lewis-Cheatham, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Tad Aburn, Maryland Department of the Environment
Thomas Foster, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Tom Ballou, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Virginia Burke, Maryland Department of Transportation

Staff:

Sunil Kumar, COG/DEP
Dusan Vuksan, COG/DTP
Erin Morrow, COG/DTP
Jane Posey, COG/DTP
Jeff King, COG/DEP
Jinchul Park, COG/DTP
Mark Moran, COG/DTP
Tim Masters, COGDEP
Wanda Owens, COG/DTP

1. Call to Order and Review of Meeting Summary

Kelly Crawford chaired and called the meeting to order at 10 am. The September 21st meeting summary was approved without any changes.

2. American Rescue Plan Monitoring Grant Opportunity

Air quality monitoring staff from state air agencies discussed the American Rescue Plan Monitoring Grant opportunity. Tad said that MDE's two big focus areas are monitoring and environmental justice. MDE is currently two monitoring grant opportunities. One is related to states, and another is competitive to be pursued with others. Grants will be used for improving network and for acquiring new monitoring equipment and sensors for inspection. Sensors are planned be employed in environmental justice appropriate areas. MDE is working with Prince George's County for comparing purple air sensors with FRM monitors

for PM2.5 monitoring in environmental justice appropriate areas.

Tom Ballou said that Virginia would not be able to provide information on this issue for now. Kelly provided said that DOEE is employing PM2.5 FRM monitors in Wards 7 and 8. The focus of the grant is on hyper local monitoring. DOEE is partnering with community groups on this effort. A pilot program will be undertaken in early 2022. The total amount of grant for equipment is \$260k-\$270k.

3. 2021 Ozone Season Summary

Sunil briefed members on the current ozone season air quality data. There were eight exceedances (all code orange) of the 2015 ozone standard and two exceedances (1 code red, 1 code orange) of the 24-hour PM2.5 standard observed as of that date. Ozone and PM2.5 levels were overall higher in 2021 compared to 2020, but still did not reach “normal” levels yet. Warmer and drier than normal weather and increased emissions from different sources this year might have played a role in this.

4. District’s Request to Designate 2020 Ozone Data as Exceptional

Joseph Jakuta briefed members on the District’s request to EPA to designate the District’s 2020 ozone data as exceptional based the “Exceptional Events” rule. He described in detail the methodology used to conduct the analysis for this purpose. Tom Ballou asked about EPA’s response to this submittal. Kelly said that the request was submitted last week, and the decision will be taken by the EPA headquarter. Therefore, she wasn't sure of the timeline for the decision. Other areas have rebounded and even with the low 2020 data they are still in nonattainment. Therefore, they did not submit similar requests to EPA. Tom asked Joseph if he looked at the 2021 data and see if the 2020 data in general was clean as has been the case in recent years. He further said that it is hard to treat the entire year 2020 data as exceptional. Joseph said that he didn't look at the 2021 data but did look at at other years. Tom said that EPA seems to have doubts about this analysis. He also asked how this request fits into what we're doing next. Tad said that it will be a national issue not just the District of Columbia issue. EPA will bump us up to the moderate nonattainment area. Kary asked if EPA thought that this request was a valid use of the rule. Kelly said that the District's attorney supported this request and EPA didn't object to the submittal. He said that the District is looking at this request from the point of equity and to protect the vulnerable population. The level and the form of the standard do not help the vulnerable population. Health effects data for the current standard is old and does not represent the vulnerable population. Tad said that he agrees with Kelly on the form of the standard not being able to completely protect public health. For example, the regional design value is decided by just one monitor for evaluating attainment status instead of averaging across all monitors in the region. Jim asked if the statistical analysis considered the declining inventory of ozone precursors and mobile source emissions due to the fleet turnover, cleaner vehicle emissions, and fuel standards. Joseph said that he used “year” as one of the variables to account for the fleet turnover.

5. 2020 Vehicle Registration Data Analysis

Dusan discussed results from TPB’s 2020 vehicle registration data analysis. In recent years, growth in the number of total vehicles in the region has slowed down. Share of light-duty trucks increased while that of cars decreased. Average age of the vehicle fleet has slightly increased, which could lead to negative impacts on emissions. Hybrid vehicles account for 3.9% of the vehicle fleet. Electric vehicles account for 0.6% of the vehicle fleet, but the size of EV fleet has increased at a fast rate over time.

6. Update On EPA & NHTSA Proposals & Joint MWAQC/TPB/CEEPC Comment Letters – GHG Emission & Fuel Economy Standards for Passenger Cars and Light Trucks Through Model Year 2026

Tim updated members on recent EPA proposal to establish new GHG standards and the NHTSA proposal for new fuel economy standards for cars and light-duty truck through MY2026. He also talked about the joint MWAQC/CEEPC/TPB comment letter already submitted developed on the GHG proposal. He also mentioned the joint MWAQC/CEEPC/TPB comment letter currently being developed on the NHTSA proposal.

7. State & Local Updates

The District and Virginia didn't have any updates. Tad said that Maryland is in the final stages of adopting the enhanced anti-tempering rule. He also mentioned a draft building energy transition plan. A meeting of Maryland Climate Commission's Mitigation Workgroup is planned on October 13th. MDE just submitted comments on Pennsylvania's case-by-case RACT/Permit for the Keystone facility. MDE would appreciate MWAQC commenting on Pennsylvania power plants. MDE would like to make sure that those power plants are subject to requirements that are as consistent as those in Virginia, Maryland, and the District.

The conference call ended at 11:25 am.