

DRAFT

Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee

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September 24, 2008

Honorable Michael Knapp
Chair, Board of Directors
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol St NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Knapp:

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the COG Climate Change Steering Committee (CCSC) Climate Change Report. MWAQC believes that the higher temperatures, longer heat waves, and change in precipitation patterns could have significant negative consequences for air quality. Recent studies suggest a potential 2-8 ppb ozone penalty from climate change in the Mid Atlantic, with associated health impacts on sensitive individuals in the region. MWAQC therefore strongly supports the recommendations in the report and urges all stakeholders in the region to take early action to begin to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

Steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions may provide significant air quality benefits. To this end, MWAQC urges stakeholders in the region to leverage investments and adopt technologies and practices that provide multipollutant benefits. In particular, MWAQC supports and encourages many of the recommendations listed in the report, including enhancing alternative modes of transportation, purchasing low-emitting vehicles, developing low-carbon fueling infrastructure, developing Green Building policies, enhancing tree canopy, and investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

MWAQC believes that some of the more important short-term actions include implementing the recommendations in the statewide Climate Action Plans being developed by Maryland, Virginia, and District; working with the Public Service Commissions and utilities to strengthen and expand Renewable Portfolio Standards; developing a regional high efficiency street lighting project; and seeking commitment of local jurisdictions to purchase 20 percent of their electricity needs from renewable Green Power. Over the longer term, it may be critical to focus on land use planning to enhance access to transit, facilitate citizen access to jobs and green housing, and to strive for no net loss of the region's tree canopy.

To reduce emissions from transportation sector, MWAQC urges the CCSC to more closely collaborate with the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board to determine the most cost effective way to increase fuel efficiency of the region's fleets, increase available and use of alternative fuels, and to improve the efficiency of the transportation network. We understand many important programs are already providing significant cost-effective reductions, including telecommuting, carpooling, and transit incentive programs. These programs should be continued and strengthened, if possible.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on this historic report, and we look forward to working with you to solve these challenging problems facing our region, nation, and the world.

Sincerely,

Hon. David Snyder, Chair