

Policies for a **New Era**

2010 Legislative Priorities | Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

As a non-partisan, non-profit association of elected officials from 21 local governments, members of the Maryland and Virginia legislatures, and members of the U.S. Congress, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) helps develop solutions to issues of importance to localities in the National Capital Region. During these tough economic times, what is most important to localities is that funding is maintained for essential programs and are at the table during budget negotiations affecting those programs.

COG is placing a priority on policy integration, both in terms of policy areas and policy actors. COG's 2010 Legislative Priorities reflect this approach, and we believe this to be the most effective way to achieve our goals for the National Capital Region. This notion is the keystone to COG's Greater Washington 2050 initiative which integrates transportation, land-use, environmental, economic, and other goals into a comprehensive guide for future planning.

Understanding the budgetary constraints confronting governments, COG acknowledges the difficulty in pursuing additional funding from the General Assembly. At the same time, local governments are experiencing financial challenges as well. As you review possible cuts, we ask that you hold harmless core services; where cuts are necessary, we ask that you make them flexible and temporary, so as not to further burden already strained local budgets.

Top Priorities | *COG supports legislation that will:*

Transportation

Establish enhanced or new funding strategies to address regional transportation needs; temporary solutions are not enough. Provide adequate and sustainable or dedicated funding sources necessary to maintain the existing transportation network, support new initiatives, and meet any required federal construction match. Funding should support a comprehensive approach, including the incorporation of multi-modal and intermodal programs.

Climate and Energy

Manage energy demand and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through increased energy efficiency and conservation, and greater use of alternative fuels and renewable energy sources. Provide financial and other incentives that promote energy efficiency in the public and private sectors, encourage alternatives to fossil fuel use, and support implementation of green building standards. Support policies that achieve short, medium, and long-term greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Workforce Development

Enable an integrated system of learning and development by aligning the disconnected efforts and needs of educators, employers, and workers. Policies should expand access to quality education and training opportunities for all workers and provide pathways to economic self-sufficiency. Such policies will supply the skilled workforce employers need to become and remain economically competitive.

Stormwater Management

Provide funding to assist local governments with implementation of new stormwater management and watershed restoration requirements, especially for areas with existing development requiring stormwater retrofits. Support stormwater management standards and policies that provide incentives for redevelopment and infill rather than new greenfield development and sprawl. Retain authority for setting stormwater management standards at the state level and provide flexibility for local governments in implementation of new standards.

Region **Forward**

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments | 2010 Legislative Priorities
Adopted / November 2009

Additional Priorities

Air Quality

Incorporate regionally consistent pollution control strategies for state and local governments. The commitment to Transportation Emission Reduction Measures (TERMs), and other emission reductions efforts, must be maintained to move the region out of its ozone non-attainment status.

Chesapeake Bay

Ensure flexible regulatory approaches and adequate funding levels for waste water and stormwater management to meet the clean-up goals and targets for the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River – including programs to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution. COG also recommends adequate funding for agricultural conservation practices in rural areas, given the significant share of agricultural nutrient loads that flow into the Bay.

Sustainable Growth

Promote balanced, sustainable growth, and livable communities. Policies should link future state and federal investments to integrated regional long range plans and provide incentives for a collaborative approach to land-use, environmental, and transportation decisions at the metropolitan level.

Housing

Include creative strategies to increase the supply and equitable distribution of affordable housing units for persons of all ages and incomes in the region. Such policies should incentivize local governments to locate affordable and accessible housing near employment centers, transportation options, and other community amenities.

Public Health

Take a holistic approach to providing equitable access to quality healthcare and focus on wellness and prevention. The social determinants of health, including access to high-quality education, prominence of safe workplaces, absence of discrimination, and availability of transportation options, must be included in a comprehensive public health initiative.

Water and Sewer Infrastructure

Provide a long-term, sustainable commitment to support infrastructure investments through mechanisms such as the clean water and drinking water State Revolving Loan Funds, the Virginia Water Quality Improvement Fund, and the Maryland Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund. Policies should make repair and replacement of worn-out infrastructure and security improvements specifically eligible for funding, and provide for a longer repayment period for loans.

This document presents COG's 2010 Legislative Priorities which are consistent with its Strategic Plan and espoused by the COG Board of Directors, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), and the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC).

If you would like additional information on COG's 2010 Legislative Priorities or have general questions, please contact Nicole Hange, COG's Policy Coordinator at 202.962.3231 or nhange@mwkog.org