



AIR AND CLIMATE PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

July 19, 2021
5:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.

DRAFT TELECONFERENCE MEETING SUMMARY

ACPAC ATTENDEES: Tara Failey, Guillermo Ortiz, Natalie Pien, Neil Boyer, Kasparas Spokas, Clair August, Julie Kimmel, Elizabeth Spike, Deborah Shprentz, James Wang, Chloe Koseff, Audrey Nwaze, Jacqueline Norris

COG STAFF: Leah Boggs, Jeff King, Sunil Kumar

1. CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, MEETING SUMMARY APPROVAL AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Guillermo Ortiz, Chair

The meeting was called to order, introductions were made by members and COG staff. The May 2021 ACPAC meeting summary was approved with no amendments.

James Wang announced that Montgomery County is looking for applicants to the Climate Energy and Air Quality Committee. As a member of Montgomery County's committee, he explained that the committee focuses on similar issues as ACPAC; however only within the County's borders and meets once a month. The committee reviewed and commented on the County's new Climate Action Plan (CAP) and will be a part of implementation of the plan. The committee also provided input on the County's budget related to climate and air quality issues. Residents of the County are welcomed to apply.

Elizabeth Spike announced that University of Maryland's Environmental and Health Disparities Symposium is August 19-21 and is free.

2. OZONE SEASON SUMMARY

Sunil Kumar, COG Environmental Engineer

Sunil Kumar presented a summary of air quality data observed this summer and discussed the revised schedule for Reasonable Further Progress and Attainment SIPs the Washington region is currently working on.

- Between March and June 2021 there were only four code orange days (three in May and one in June) or unhealthy days for sensitive groups recorded. Sensitive groups are those with respiratory problems, children and the elderly. From March to June there were mostly code green days. Staff will continue to monitor the season until mid-September as one or two code orange days may occur.
- The current ozone standard of 70 ppb was set in 2015. Compared to the late 1990s, where the total number of days exceeding the ozone standard was as high as 82, the number of exceedance days has been decreasing. In 2020, there were only 2 exceedance days largely due to the pandemic.
- Prior to the pandemic, the number of exceedance days was between 8-10 days, indicating

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progress but still the need for control measures.

- The Design Value is a value set by EPA used to designate and classify nonattainment areas, as well as to assess progress towards meeting the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for a particular pollutant (ozone or PM_{2.5}) and is based on 3 years-worth of air quality data.
- 2018-2020 data shows the region was at 71 ppb, exceeding the NAAQS standard of 70 ppb by 1 ppb. This year's data will be monitored closely to see if it decreases to or below 70 ppb.
- Emission control programs have been implemented at the local, state, and federal levels (ex. federal acid rain program, state vehicle inspection and maintenance programs, local gas can replacement programs) that have led to improvements to ozone and PM levels.
- For fine particulate matter/PM_{2.5} there was one code red day (July 4 = 58.9 micrograms/m³) and one code orange day (July 5 = 42.7 micrograms/m³). Data from July 4 indicates that the levels increased due to fireworks.
- Compared to the late 1990s where the total number of days exceeding the PM_{2.5} standard was as high as 25 days; the number of exceedance days has decreased to two days in 2021. In 2020 and 2019, it only exceeded the standard by one day.
- PM_{2.5} has two design values – annual and 24-hour (or daily). The annual PM_{2.5} standard was set in 2006 and is 12 micrograms/m³. 2018-2020 data shows the region was at 8.7 micrograms/m³.
- The 24-hour (daily) PM_{2.5} standard was set in 2006 and is 35 micrograms/m³. 2018-2020 data shows the region was at 22 micrograms/m³.
- The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a composite of ozone and PM_{2.5} concentrations. 2021 data indicates the levels are below the 5-year average and 20-year average.
- Comparatively, 2021 ozone and PM_{2.5} levels are higher than 2020 levels. This year's weather is warmer and drier which builds up and increases ozone and PM_{2.5}.
- The Beltsville ozone monitor, one out of the 14 monitors, came in exceeding the ozone standard at 71 ppb for the 2018-2020 design value.

Discussion

- The PM standard is currently being reviewed. The current federal administration has a review panel and will develop a proposal for new PM and ozone standard by next year.
- Emissions are expected to increase when activity increases. Although progress has been made prior to the pandemic, higher emissions are a concern. The region is developing an air quality plan that will demonstrate attaining the standard.
- The region is currently designated at “marginal nonattainment”. The region will be bumped up to “moderate nonattainment”, higher nonattainment designation, if it does not attain the standard (70 ppb) again this year. The region will be required to submit a State Implementation Plan (SIP) to EPA by next year or early 2023. The region is currently working on a plan in anticipation of nonattainment.

3. CLIMATE AND ENERGY LEADERSHIP AWARDS JUDGING

All

ACPAC members judged the Climate and Energy Leadership Awards applications in the categories of government, non-governmental organization, and educational institution. Winners will be announced at the COG Board meeting in October.

4. CLIMATE AND ENERGY LEADERSHIP PROPOSED CHANGES DISCUSSION

Guillermo Ortiz, ACPAC Chair

ACPAC Members

The following suggestions were put forth:

- Include racial and social justice as a judging criterion.
- Provide an incentive for small organizations to apply, such as a cash prize or other tangible assets.
- Ask applicants to provide pictures and links to their projects to substantiate their paragraphs
- Ask applicants to provide quantitative data, reducing the ambiguity of word choices like “incredible”.
- Ask applicants to provide a story from the perspective of someone benefiting from their activity to mitigate or adapt to climate change OR a story from the organization about their experience with the project (if they cannot find a resident willing to share a testimony).
- Provide applicants support resources to learn about the award and submit a strong application, e.g. zoom meeting to show what we mean when we rate a 5 in each category.

COG Staff pointed out that any changes to the program will need committee agreement as well as CEEPC review and approval.

5. MEMBER TIME

There was no member time presentation or comments.

6. NEXT ACPAC MEETING AND ADJOURN

The next ACPAC is September 20, 2021. The meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.