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September 23, 2024

Jolene Ivey, Chair, Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC)
Takis Karantonis, Immediate Past-Chair, CEEPC
CEEPC Committee Members
777 North Capitol St. N.E.
Suite 300,
Washington, DC 20002

Re: The Climate Change Crisis - Need for CEEPC to Act on 9/25

Chair Ivey, Past-Chair Karantonis and CEEPC members:

I am writing to urge you to immediately forward strong advice to both the MWCOG Board and the TPB on the need for a significant increase in the level of effort at MWCOG and TPB to address the climate crisis and to immediately update the region's old and now inadequate climate change goals.

MWCOG staff has explained to me that CEEPC is not really an MWCOG policy committee as only the Board, MWAQC and TPB have policy making authority. CEEPC is however expected to provide critical policy advice to the three policy making bodies. There has never been a more important issue for CEEPC to provide advice on than the climate crisis issues spelled out very well in the May 20, 2024 ACPAC recommendation to CEEPC.

MWCOG staff has also explained to me that CEEPC does not routinely allow for public comment, like MWAQC and TPB do, as again, CEEPC is not a committee with policy making authority. The CEEPC Chair however can allow public comment. If you would have allowed public comment on the climate crisis issue during your September 25, 2024 meeting, and advertised that opportunity, I believe you would have received thousands of comments pushing CEEPC to act and to act quickly.

I find it discouraging that your agenda does not include an action to forward any kind of recommendation or advice to the MWCOG policy bodies after having had the ACPAC recommendations for over 4 months. The agenda only includes a short 15 minute item to, once again, discuss the ACPAC recommendation. CEEPC does not meet again until the end of November.

At your last meeting you had a very, very scary briefing from Sunny Wescott, the Chief Meteorologist at the Department of Homeland Security on the potentially devastating climate change impacts in the MWCOG region. This presentation was from a national expert, very scary and highlighted the “urgency” issue in the ACPAC recommendation. Chair Ivey commented on how scary and alarming this presentation was.

I urge you to amend your agenda for Wednesday at the beginning of the meeting. Most of the meeting, if not the full meeting, should be dedicated to defining a process that will get a formal recommendation from CEEPC to the MWCOG Board and TPB as quickly as possible. The Chair has the authority to do this. You can also set up a process to have special sessions with CEEPC to finalize the CEEPC recommendations over the next few weeks. See my July 24, 2024 email that is appended below.

It is critical for CEEPC to provide advice to both the COG Board and to TPB. The need for CEEPC to provide advice to TPB is urgent. TPB is updating the region's greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction plan for the transportation sector right now. They are using the older, now outdated and inadequate MWCOG climate change goals to guide their work. The MWCOG TPB GHG emission reduction effort is mediocre at best. This is unusual as TPB is recognized nationally as a progressive, innovative transportation planning group.

Because the TPB GHG plan is based upon weak goals, difficult but critical emission reduction approaches are not being included. The TPB plan is appropriately heavy on electrification and other technology based emission reduction approaches but noticeably weak on strategies to address reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), other Travel Demand Management (TDM) concepts and transportation driven sequestration initiatives.

The goals recommended by ACPAC (something similar to the Montgomery County goals of 100% reduction by 2025 with an 80% reduction by 2027) would clearly drive consideration of more VMT and TDM strategies and increased attention to sequestration as part of the TPB GHG emission reduction plan. The State of Maryland has similar, if not tougher, goals to those in Montgomery County. Why is CEEPC not asking its own members to brief the committee on why they have established climate

change goals that are much, much more aggressive than the goals currently adopted regionally by MWCOG?

MWAQC also received a recommendation from ACPAC on May 20th. They plan to finalize a response to that recommendation during their meeting just after the CEEPC meeting on the 25th. A group of strong leaders at MWAQC has, over the past 2 months, pushed very hard for action on a similarly critical issue ... environmental justice. Because of the efforts of the MWAQC leadership and the three Co-Chairs of the MWAQC Environmental Justice Subcommittee the MWAQC process to adopt a strong, action oriented EJ Action Plan, that builds from very significant public input, is moving forward at a remarkable pace to allow MWAQC to adopt this plan within the next six months. The leadership at MWAQC should be commended.

I do acknowledge that you already have arranged for several very interesting briefings on the 25th, but there is nothing on the agenda that is anywhere near as important as the need for CEEPC to forward a strong, science-based recommendation on the climate crisis to the three MWCOG policy committees. I'm certain the proposed speakers would defer their presentations to a future CEEPC meeting to allow for this critical policy discussion.

In closing, I have great respect for the commitment to climate change that almost all of the CEEPC members have demonstrated. I again urge you to adjust your agenda for next Wednesday to set up a process with a hard deadline of getting CEEPC recommendations or guidance to both the MWCOG Board and to the TPB within the next several weeks.

Thank you again for allowing public input. I would be happy to discuss these comments at your convenience.

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cc :

Charles Allen, Chair, MWCOG BOD
Christina Henderson, Chair, MWCOG TPB
Kenny Boddye, Chair, MWAQC

Anita Bonds, Vice-Chair, MWAQC
Tom Dernoga, Vice Chair, MWAQC
David Snyder, Vice Chair, MWAQC
Julie Kimmel, Chair ACPAC
William Washburn, Vice-Chair ACPAC
ACPAC Recommendation Sub-Committee
Chris Hoagland, MDE

July 24, 2024 Email Comments

Additional CEEPC Meetings Before Late September

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Wed, Jul 24,
11:52 AM



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to Jolene, Takis,
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us, Julie, James,
William, HERBERT,
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Mark, bcc: me 

Chairwoman Ivey - Thank you for your efforts today to push the ACPAC recommendations.

Your comment on how scary the presentation from Sunny Wescott was ... was very accurate. The two presentations that followed Sunny's presentation were equally scary.

I know you see the disconnect between her very alarming presentation and the potential 6 month (or longer) delay in addressing the call for urgent action from ACPAC. The ACPAC call for urgent action and stronger goals is specifically designed to try and avoid some of the most horrific potential consequences of climate change. Again, the ACPAC recommendation was unanimously supported and submitted to CEEPC before your May 2024 meeting.

I urge you to follow the lead of MWAQC Chair Boddye who has set up a process where a group of MWAQC members are meeting three times between May and late September (both CEEPC and MWAQC meet next in late September) to address an urgent issue that is on the MWAQC priority list ... environmental justice. As CEEPC Chair you do have this authority.

You may also want to allow some of the ACPAC experts that helped write the ACPAC recommendations and stakeholder experts to participate in the interim meetings designed to support a strong final recommendation from CEEPC at your September meeting.

If there is anything that I can do to help ... just ask.

The climate crisis is very real and as ACPAC Chair Kimmel said during her update at today's meeting ... Every single day of delay matters.

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