

Meeting Highlights

COG Climate Change Steering Committee September 26, 2007

1. Call to Order

Chair Nancy Floreen called the Climate Change Steering Committee to order at approximately 12:05 p.m.

Members (and alternates) present:

- The Honorable Nancy Floreen, Montgomery County Council, Chair
- The Honorable Mary Cheh, Council of the District of Columbia
- The Honorable David Snyder, City of Falls Church Council
- The Honorable Del Pepper, Vice Mayor, City of Alexandria
- The Honorable Judith Davis, Mayor, City of Greenbelt
- Harriet Tregoning, DC Office of Planning
- Todd M. Turner, Legislative Officer, Prince George's County
- Tad Aburn, Maryland Department of Environment
- Mercury Payton, City of Manassas Park

Staff/Others present include:

- Stuart Freudberg, Director, Department of Environmental Programs
- Naomi Friedman, Assistant Executive Director
- George Nichols, Principal Environmental Planner
- Leah Boggs, Environmental Planner
- Joan Rohlf, Chief COG Air Quality Planning
- Jeff King, Environmental Planner COG Air Quality Planning
- Sunil Kumar, COG Air Quality Planning
- Nabeel Keblawi, COG Air Quality Planning Intern
- Monica Bansal, COG Department of Transportation Planning
- Reid Ewing, University of Maryland
- Bhesh Dhamala, Fairfax County
- Kanti Srikanth, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Howard Simons, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Brendan Shane, District of Columbia Department of the Environment
- Zack Doberbower, District of Columbia Office of Planning
- Bob Owolabi, Fairfax County DOT

2. Approval of June 26th Meeting Summary and Amendments to the Agenda

The June 26th meeting summary was approved, as submitted. There were no amendments to the agenda.

3. Chair's Remarks and Announcements

Chair Floreen made the following announcements:

Recent Events:

Cool Counties

On July 16, 2007 "Cool Counties" launched their major global warming initiative. The initiative calls for an 80 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2050. Montgomery and Fairfax Counties have both joined the Sierra Club in creation of the Cool Counties Stabilization Declaration.

District of Columbia Car Free Day

On September 18th, the District of Columbia celebrated its first Car Free Day. The purpose of this endeavor was to encourage businesses and residences to use an alternative means of transportation.

National Association of Counties Climate Protection Forum

Naomi Friedman and George Nichols of COG staff attended the Forum. Both staff members agreed that the metropolitan Washington area is in line with the progressive communities and areas across the country.

Updates on Items for Prior Meetings:

Cool Capitol Challenge

The Cool Capitol Challenge is a region-wide partnership of citizens, communities, schools, and government agencies that have joined together to reduce the region's annual CO2 emissions by one billion pounds by Earth Day, April 2008. To date, 265 million pounds of CO2 pledged for an annual energy savings of \$26 million.

Staff Background Memo on Ethanol Fuel as an Alternative Fuel

In response to Supervisor Lori Waters concerns regarding the use of ethanol as an alternative transportation fuel source, COG staff drafted a memo reviewing the energy balance and environmental impacts of ethanol on the region. COG staff will continue researching this topic and bring the findings back to the committee at a later date.

Climate Change Frequently Asked Questions

COG staff developed this as a public education tool for local governments. Jurisdictions could use it as a primer or outreach material to inform citizens and constituents about the issues impacting the region and the efforts taken to address them. Staff will continue to refine the flyer. Councilmember Pepper requested copies for distribution.

Upcoming Events

The U.S Conference of Mayors Climate Summit will be held in Seattle, November 1-2, 2007 and the next MWAQC Air Quality Town Meeting is on November 1, 2007

4. Federal Update

a. Climate/Energy Policy Federal Update and Advocacy Positions

Naomi Friedman, COG Assistant Executive Director, provided members on an update on Federal energy/climate change policy. There has been a lot of action on Capitol Hill to move forward a federal energy bill. There are three provisions in the energy bill that are particularly relevant to the Steering Committee. They are:

- CAFÉ Provisions
- Energy Efficiency Block Grants and
- Federal Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS)

PROVISION 1

The Senate Bill proposes a 35 mpg, hwy/cty for standard cars, SUVs, and light trucks by 2020. The COG Transportation Policy Board (TPB) has previously stated that stricter CAFÉ standards play a key role in helping the region reduce the growth in greenhouse gases. The TPB estimates that the Senate CAFÉ provision would reduce the growth in regional CO2 emissions from vehicles from 2002 to 2030, from an estimated 48% in a status quo scenario, to a 16% growth rate. Stuart Freudberg clarified that the TPB did not endorse a specific bill and that that CAFÉ Standards are only in the Senate Bill, not the House Bill. It would be advantageous for the region for COG to support the Bill. Councilmember David Snyder added that the Washington area is unlike any other metropolitan area, in that our law makers breathe the same air and it is as much their issue as those who live in the area on a full time basis. Chair Floreen agreed that COG should support higher CAFÉ standards.

PROVISION 2

Energy Efficiency Block Grants are a new source of funding for local governments to implement energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction programs and projects. The House requested \$10 billion over 5 years. The grants are supported by the U.S Conference of Mayors, the National Association of Counties, and other groups that support local government activities. Eligibility of these funds is based on population. The Senate and House versions differ in population thresholds for receiving the funds. The Senate Bill has a threshold allowing cities of 35,000 and the 10 largest counties in the state to receive funds. The House Bill has a higher threshold of 50,000 for cities and 200,000 for counties. Supporting the Senate Bill would be beneficial for the region because it includes the smaller jurisdictions like College Park, Arlington County and Greenbelt.

PROVISION 3

There are several states across the country that have Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) in place. The Policy Group endorses the need for a Federal RPS standard, in that it will make it easier for jurisdictions to meet their own renewable energy goals. The House Energy Bill calls for a 15% RPS by 2020, with up to 4% of total energy mix to be met through energy efficiency (11% through renewables).

PROVISION 4

On September 10th, Mayor Fenty kicked off the Green City Campaign which would build the District's "green" workforce and support more transit use. Harriet Tregoning, Director of the District's Office of Planning, explained that provision in the House and Senate energy bills supports Mayor Fenty's program by authorizing resources to train workers for green collar jobs in the region. The types of jobs include the design, manufacture, installation, operation, and maintenance of technologies associated with energy efficiency and renewable energy options. The provision supports the Energy Efficiency Block Grants, in that a trained work force will be needed to utilize these grants. The House amendment, Green Collar Jobs Act of 2007 (H.R. 2847), provides \$125 million a year and the Senate amendment, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Workforce Development (S.1419), provides \$100 million. The House Bill includes the PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.

The discussion was then opened up for comments from the committee. In regards to Federal RPS Standards, Councilmember Berliner stated that having energy efficiency meet up to 5% of energy mix goal is useful. Ms. Tregoning suggested supporting the RPS provision, with a caveat of 5% being met by energy efficiency. Councilmember Berliner also mentioned the general efficiency standards in the bill are desirable. Councilmember Snyder stated that he was in support of the DC Green Collar bill.

The committee agreed to support the above four provisions, including Ms. Tregoning's suggestion for energy efficiency up to 5% of energy mix.

b. Vermont Court Ruling

Jeff King, COG Staff Environmental Planner, explained that the Clean Air Act allows the state of California to adopt stricter vehicle standards than any other state over federal standards. California Low-Emission Vehicle Standards (CAL LEV II) has been adopted by California and Maryland. Vermont is the first state to opt in the CAL LEV II Program. The State of Vermont's executive branch is lobbying the governor to have the waiver denied by EPA.

The program is limited to states, where as regions cannot adopt CAL LEV II. Tad Aburn added that Virginia could possibly opt in and Florida recently adopted the program, as well as North Carolina is considering it. Ms. Tregoning stated that car dealers in the region would benefit from this if it was adopted regionally. Councilmember Snyder

suggested that the committee advocate regional adoption of CAL LEV II by way of a letter. Ms. Tregoning added that Virginia has made provisions for Northern Virginia on other issues and it is worthwhile to do the same on this issue since it is regional in nature. Chair Floreen agreed but cautioned the language in the letter. Stuart Freudberg suggested framing the committee's position by using the term "uniformity on the issue" as a tactical way to advocate for support of this issue to the COG Board.

c. States Update Highlights

- The State of Maryland Climate Change Commission should have its report completed by Mid November 2007.
- The Commonwealth of Virginia has completed a New Energy Plan. Among other things, it calls for the creation of a Commission on Climate Change to make a more comprehensive assessment of greenhouse gas issues and develop a plan for how to reach a greenhouse gas emission reduction goal.
- Councilmember Cheh has proposed new legislation entitled "Clean and Affordable Energy Act of 2007." The Act would amend the Retail Electric Competition and Consumer Protection Act of 1999 to eliminate the Reliable Energy Trust Fund and to clarify the net metering requirements.

5. GHG Workgroup – Benchmarks and Projection Years

Jeff King stated that the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Workgroup is chaired by John Morrill from Arlington County and is expected to meet again in October. Reviewing the data, the emission inventory shows two major sources, electricity and transportation. Currently the group is only looking at CO₂ but will include hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), methane and Nitrous Oxides (N₂O) to the study. All end use sectors are considered, including estimates for commercial aviation. Jeff King went on to explain that state level data was used for all end use sector fuels and scaled down to the local level using population data.

Councilmember Berliner asserted that CAFÉ and RGGI should be accounted for in the analysis. He went on to ask if the utility/electrical sector was included in the analysis. Stuart Freudberg responded that it was.

Chair Floreen inquired how the inventory projections were developed. Mr. King said that he used COG TPB data, EIA state information and the commercial aviation state data, which was scaled down. Harriet Tregoning stated that although the data is not accurate enough, the regional aggregation is helpful. She went on to say that disaggregation may be helpful. She asked if the regional inventory could be disaggregated for local jurisdictions. Staff responded that better data is needed from utilities for fuel and electricity use. Montgomery County is pursuing looking at their fuel tax to determine the consumption of fuels and the District is moving ahead with

suballocation. Mr. Aburn said the regional inventory is consumption-based and it is not based on geography. Maryland's greenhouse gas inventory is also consumption based.

In conclusion, Stuart Freudberg suggested scheduling a Climate Change Work Session to look at this issue more thoroughly. Joan Rohlf's proposed October 24th at 10:00 am, before the MWAQC meeting. Chair Floreen agreed.

6. Growing Cooler: The Evidence of Urban Development and Climate Change

Reid Ewing, Research Professor from the National Center for Smart Growth at the University of Maryland, stated there is scientific consensus on human activity causing a dramatic increase in global warming. International and domestic climate policy discussions are moving toward limiting the increase in temperatures to 2°C to 3°C by cutting GHG emissions by 60-80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

Mr. Ewing indicated the U.S. produces approximately a quarter of all the GHG emissions worldwide. For every gallon of gasoline burned it produces 20 pounds of CO₂. The report proposes a three pronged approach to reducing CO₂ from the transportation sector: (1) improving vehicle efficiency, (2) improving carbon content of the fuel itself, and (3) reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Adopting CAFÉ II standards would only meet 1990 CO₂ levels, and not reduce these levels.

The study provides data on scenario testing, evaluating greenhouse gas emissions from sprawl versus compact development. Mr. Ewing concluded that the Climate Change issue requires taking significant steps, including modifying growth patterns to reduce VMT, to make an impact. He commended Montgomery County for their efforts on this issue and asserted that they should be recognized along side Portland, Oregon. Chair Floreen thanked Mr. Ewing for his time and support.

7. Options for Increasing Participation and Outreach in the Climate Change Steering Committee

Stuart Freudberg, Director, COG Dept. of Environmental Programs, presented the committee with recommendations on broadening participation in the Steering Committee. These options are:

1. Regional Climate Change Conference
2. Invite guest speakers and experts to participate in the committee
3. Committee Work Sessions
4. Public Comment Period
5. Adding additional members to the committee

Because of the abundance of information and related activities on climate change, the COG region would greatly benefit from a regional conference. It would provide a forum where national and international experts and stakeholders could share their

knowledge, there by assisting the region in further development of a regional approach. It is recommended that a small conference planning committee is formed and a target date is set for March 2008.

Inviting guest speakers and experts could assist the committee evaluate work program elements more thoroughly. It is recommended that staff work with the Chair to identify topics and experts to invite to future meetings.

The bi-monthly schedule may not lend itself to effective digestion of the information provided at the Steering Committee meetings. It is recommended to conduct one two-hour work session on key topics.

Other COG committees such as the TPB and MWAQC use the public comment period as a means to insure public participation. Using the internet is an alternative way to facilitate public participation. It is the staff's recommendation to: (1) suspend implementation of a public comment period until a permanent structure for COG's climate change initiative is determined or (2) experiment with a web-based public comment period on specific topics.

Climate Change is a cross-cutting issue that affects disciplines related the environment, transportation, land use, building construction, health and public safety. It is the recommendation of staff to use guest speakers and work sessions to generate interest from a broader audience.

8. Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled meeting is November 28, 2007 at 10:00 Noon. A Steering Committee work session meeting is scheduled on October 24, 2007.

9. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 2:00 pm.