MWAQC Technical Advisory Committee

Meeting Summary

October 13, 2026, 10:00 AM – 11:10 AM

Present:

Emily Bull, Maryland Department of the Environment
Anna Marshall, Baltimore Metropolitan Council
Antoine Thompson, GWRCCC
Christopher Voigt, Virginia Department of Transportation
Doris McLeod, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Hawi Kitila, Maryland Department of the Environment
Joseph Jakuta, District Department of Energy & Environment
Ram Tangirala, District Department of Energy & Environment
Regina Moore, Virginia Department of Transportation
Samuel Kay, District Department of Energy & Environment
Sonya Lewis-Cheatham, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Thatch Gerike, District Department of Energy & Environment
Thomas Foster, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Tim Shepherd, Maryland Department of the Environment
Virginia Burke, Maryland Department of Transportation

Staff:

Sunil Kumar, COG/DEP
Heidi Bonnaffon, COG/DEP
Jeff King, COG/DEP
Jen Desimone, COG/DEP
Jinchul Park, COG/DTP
Leah Boggs, COG/DEP
Dusan Vuksan, COG/DTP
Robert d'Abadie, COG/DTP
Robert Christopher, COG/DEP

Call to Order and Review of Meeting Summary

Emily Bull called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 AM. The September 8, 2026 meeting summary was approved without changes.

2026 Ozone Season and PM2.5 Summary

Sunil Kumar presented a preliminary end-of-season air quality summary. The region recorded five ozone exceedance days in 2026, including four Code Orange days and one Code Red day, the same number as in 2025. He noted that exceedances have declined substantially compared with the late 1990s and early 2000s, even as the number of days above 90°F remains comparatively high, indicating the continued effectiveness of emissions controls.

The preliminary 2024–2026 ozone design value was 68 parts per billion, below the 70 ppb standard. Sunil explained that, based on preliminary calculations, relatively high fourth-highest ozone concentrations at multiple monitors would be needed in 2027 for the regional design value to exceed the standard.

For PM2.5, the region recorded four 24-hour exceedance days: two Code Orange, one Code Red, and one Code Purple. The major episodes were associated with July 4 fireworks and Canadian wildfire smoke on July 17–18. The 2023–2025 annual PM2.5 design value was 8.0 µg/m³, below the 9.0 µg/m³ standard, and the 24-hour design value remained well below the 35 µg/m³ standard. Sunil concluded that the region was attaining all six criteria pollutant standards. No questions were raised.

2015 Ozone NAAQS Redesignation Request and Maintenance Plan

Sunil summarized public comments received during the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia public comment processes, along with state responses and technical corrections to the redesignation request and

maintenance plan. Comments submitted in the District addressed unhealthy air days and impacts on overburdened communities, federal enforcement and regulatory rollbacks, and continued implementation of State Implementation Plan requirements. Responses highlighted the long-term decline in unhealthy air days, existing permitting and enforcement programs, expanded monitoring, the MWAQC air quality resource guide, the federally enforceable nature of the maintenance plan, contingency measures, and continued implementation of applicable SIP controls.

Virginia received comments submitted by the Southern Environmental Law Center on behalf of itself and partner organizations. The comments addressed retention of existing controls, timing for contingency measures, outstanding new source review requirements, and emissions from data centers. Virginia's responses clarified that existing SIP controls will be retained, the 24-month contingency-measure schedule is consistent with EPA guidance, outstanding NSR documents are being prepared for public review, and data center emissions are included in the inventory through point or nonpoint source categories, as applicable.

Sunil also described Virginia technical corrections that removed duplicate emissions for one facility, corrected unit and process identifiers, and updated point-source and total emissions tables. The revisions did not change the conclusion that emissions decline from the base years through 2038 and that the region can maintain the 2015 ozone standard. Updated materials included the Virginia point source white paper, relevant tables in the redesignation request and maintenance plan, a clarification of the point source projection methodology, an explicit statement on continuation of existing controls, and a new appendix containing public comments and responses.

Doris McLeod recommended distinguishing the transportation conformity buffer added to mobile vehicle emissions budgets from the broader maintenance plan safety margin and preparing a short explanation of the conservative MOVES5 approach that freezes the electric vehicle population at 2025 default values. Sunil agreed to revise the presentation terminology and commenter identification.

Joseph Jakuta noted that the District had refined language responding to the comment concerning the MWAQC environmental justice resource and thanked staff for assembling the materials.

In response to a scheduling question, Sunil said the revised documents were posted on the TAC website and would be presented to MWAQC on October 21 for approval. Following approval, staff would post the complete final package on the SIP webpage and circulate the link.

Second Maintenance Plans

Sunil opened an initial discussion of second maintenance plan requirements for the 2008 ozone standard and the revoked 1997 annual PM2.5 standard. He explained that a second maintenance plan covers years 11 through 20 after redesignation and is generally due within eight years of approval of the first maintenance plan.

For the 2008 ozone standard, the first maintenance plan became effective May 15, 2019 for Maryland and Virginia and August 15, 2019 for the District. The second plan is therefore due by May 15, 2027 and would demonstrate maintenance through 2040. Because the current 69 ppb design value is approximately 92 percent of the 75 ppb standard, the region does not qualify for a limited maintenance plan and will need a full plan. Staff anticipates using 2026 or 2027 as an interim inventory year, subject to consultation with EPA, with updated inventories and motor vehicle emissions budgets extending through 2040.

Members discussed how the second ozone maintenance plan could increase the transportation conformity workload by requiring analysis under multiple plans, budgets, years, and potentially meteorological assumptions. Staff noted that some inputs for common milestone years could be shared, but separate budgets and analyses would still be required.

For the 1997 annual PM2.5 standard, Sunil noted that the standard was revoked in 2016, but questions remain about whether consultation and fiscal constraint components of conformity continue until a second maintenance plan is approved. The current design value is well below the former standard and may support a limited maintenance plan if EPA determines that a plan is still required. Doris McLeod said EPA Region 3 is considering why conformity obligations may differ between revoked PM2.5 standards and older ozone standards. Dusan Vuksan observed that regional conformity reports have stated for nearly a decade that PM2.5 conformity does not apply, and those reports have continued to receive federal approval. Members agreed that additional EPA clarification is needed.

State and Local Updates

Virginia: Doris McLeod reported no updates.

District of Columbia: Joseph Jakuta reported that a virtual hearing on adoption of the OTC Phase 4 Consumer Products Model Rule was scheduled for November 9 at 5:30 PM. He also announced that DC DRIVE funding may cover up to 45 percent or more of eligible costs to replace medium- and heavy-duty diesel vehicles with electric vehicles. A link to additional DC DRIVE information was shared in the meeting chat.

Maryland: Emily Bull reported that Maryland had received a 120-day notice regarding the 2024 PM2.5 designations and was reviewing it. She also reported that MWC RACT had been approved the previous week.

With no further business or objections, Emily Bull adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:10 AM.