



## METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE (MWAQC)

September 24, 2025  
12:30 P.M. – 2:00 P.M.  
Virtual Meeting

Chair: Tom Dernoga, Prince George's County

### MEETING SUMMARY

#### MWAQC MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES

- Tom Dernoga, Prince George's County (Chair)
- Alan Hew, City of College Park (Vice Chair)
- David Snyder, City of Falls Church
- Tom Ballou, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
- Kenny Boddy, Prince William County
- Virginia Burke, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Joseph Jakuta, District Department of Energy and Environment
- Kristin Mink, Montgomery County
- Doris McLeod, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
- Yolanda Pensmith, Loudoun County
- Jim Ponticello, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Amalia Pleake-Tamm, Calvery County
- Wanda Rogers, City of Bowie
- Evandro Santos, Prince William County
- Roger Schlegel, City of Takoma Park
- Maria Sinner, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Julius D. Spain, Sr., Arlington County
- Dan Storck, Fairfax County
- Roger Thunnell, Maryland Department of the Environment
- Sonia Vasquez Luna, City of Manassas
- Bill Washburn, Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee Chair

- Kristen Weaver, City of Greenbelt
- Jenny Willoughby, City of Frederick

#### OTHERS

- Allyson Frantz, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
- Surea Gainey, Legislative Aide Council Member Sayles
- Richard Jackson, District Department of Energy and Environment
- Jennifer Marroquin-Garcia, Cheverly Council Member
- Regina Moore, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Bill Pugh, Coalition for Smarter Growth
- Catherine Salarano, Maryland Department of the Environment
- Danielle Simms, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
- Taylor Ware, Chief of Staff Council Member Shayla Adams-Stafford

#### COG STAFF

- Alissa Boggs, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Leah Boggs, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Robert Christopher, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Robert d'Abadie, COG Department of Transportation Planning

- Jen Desimone, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Lyn Erickson, COG Department of Transportation Planning
- Jeff King, COG Climate, Energy, and Air Program Director
- Sunil Kumar, COG Department of Environmental Programs
- Mark Moran, COG Department of Transportation Planning
- Jinchul Park, COG Department of Transportation Planning
- Daniel Son, COG Department of Transportation Planning
- Dusan Vuksan, COG Department of Transportation Planning

## **1. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD, APPROVE MINUTES, CHAIR'S REMARKS**

*Tom Dernoga, MWAQC Chair*

Chair Tom Dernoga called the meeting to order. Public comment provided by Bill Pugh, the Transportation Climate Director with the Coalition for Smarter Growth. He reiterated his comments in a letter provided to MWAQC that the region's current transportation plan (Visualize 2050) will not meet the greenhouse gas reduction goals. He notes that a rapid increase in electric vehicle adoption and aggressive vehicle miles traveled reduction will both be required to meet the goal given the proposed highway expansion projects in the plan. The May MWAQC meeting summary was approved without any changes.

## **2. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

MWAQC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) – Joseph Jakuta (DOEE)

MWAQC-TAC held a call on September 12:

- At the last TAC meeting, COG staff presented an ozone season summary to date. Both ozone and PM2.5 levels have been in good to moderate range, with no exceedances of either standard.
- Committee members discussed the status of the 2015 Ozone NAAQS Redesignation Request (RR)/Maintenance Plan (MP) Inventory, and inventories for the two plans for milestone years 2017, 2022, 2032, and 2038 as well as the draft schedule.
- Members were briefed on the Draft Visualize 2050 Transportation Conformity Analysis and discussed a draft MWAQC Comment Letter on the analysis.
- Members were provided on the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program regarding what it will take to get to “net zero” in the region.
- Members were briefed on EPA's proposal to revoke the greenhouse gas endangerment finding including comment provided by the Climate Energy & Environment Policy Committee opposing the repeal.

Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC) – William Washburn (ACPAC Chair)

ACPAC held a webinar meeting on September 15:

- ACPAC received an update from COG staff on the midcourse review of progress towards the regional 2030 climate goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 50% by 2030. Part of the review
- ACPAC received an update from ICF on EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) requirements and draft details on the data center measure, including greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory and projections.
- ACPAC held a member discussion concerning the growing impact of data centers on greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs, expressing concern about facilities using natural gas turbines due to pollution and noise:

- The committee reached consensus to advocate for battery storage and on-site renewable energy as key performance indicators in the mid-course review.
- Members urged that communications to EPA include comments about the widespread adverse health impacts of unmonitored and unregulated greenhouse gases on vulnerable populations.;
- The importance of transit-oriented development was highlighted, with DC's agreement to fund transportation improvements near the Commanders football stadium cited as an example of green development.
- The next ACPAC meeting is November 17, 2025.

#### Clean Air Partners – Jen Desimone (COG Staff)

Clean Air Partners have been involved in the following:

- Clean Air Partners concluded their summer campaign with events in Silver Spring and Towson, Maryland during Ozone Action Month in August. The eco bubble exhibit and pop-up display were used to educate residents on ways to reduce vehicle emissions.
- In partnership with the City of Alexandria, a mini lawn tool exchange program was held at the Alexandria Ace Hardware store, allowing residents to swap gas-powered lawn equipment for new electric mowers, leaf blowers, and weed trimmers. The full regional lawn tool exchange, launched in May, resulted in nearly 500 pieces of equipment being exchanged over three weekends at ten participating Ace Hardware stores across the Baltimore-Washington region.
- An additional event is planned for October, where Clean Air Partners will participate in Fairfax County's climate action conference and showcase their lawn bubble exhibit.

#### Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) – Jeff King (COG Climate, Energy, and Air Program Director on behalf of CEEPC leadership)

CEEPC held a webinar meeting on September 24:

- The committee received a presentation from Peter Clackett (US Geological Service, Chesapeake Bay Program) on the latest tree canopy data for 2021, which is central to tracking local and regional tree canopy changes. Some member counties have experienced significant tree canopy loss, highlighting the need for increased protection efforts.
- ICF consultants briefed the committee on updates to the comprehensive climate action plan, including a new workforce analysis and a measure addressing data centers.
- COG staff (Maia Davis) provided a mid-course review of progress toward 2030 greenhouse gas goals, sharing updates on key performance metrics such as installed solar systems and detailed case studies of climate actions across the region.
- Staff member Robert Christopher updated the committee on a letter sent by the Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CPC) regarding the EPA proposal to repeal the greenhouse gas endangerment finding.

### **3. LOCAL AND STATE UPDATES**

#### *Local Members and State Air Agencies*

- Kenny Boddye (Prince William County Supervisor Occoquan District) shared that a new law allows localities to set up a tree canopy fund. Developers unable to preserve mature trees can contribute to this fund, which supports reforestation and canopy restoration elsewhere in the county. Work to establish the fund is ongoing.
- Julius D. "JD" Spain, Sr. (Member, Arlington County Board) said Arlington is exploring community engagement around gas-powered leaf blowers, with potential proposals to prohibit their use, following similar efforts in Alexandria.
- Tom Ballou (Air Data Analysis & Planning Director at Virginia Department of Environmental Quality) said the state submitted a source-specific attainment plan for a southwestern county that resolved a longstanding SO<sub>2</sub> issue, marking progress in air quality management.

- Roger Schlegel (Takoma Park Council Member) reported progress on installing fleet EV chargers to support city fleet electrification and advancing the design phase for the Metropolitan Branch Trail, a key regional link.

#### **4. MWAQC NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR 2026 OFFICERS**

*Tom Dernoga, MWAQC Chair*

The committee discussed the upcoming election of officers, which will take place at the December meeting. To prepare, volunteers were appointed to serve on the nominating committee responsible for developing the 2026 slate of officers. Members from the District of Columbia and Frederick County agreed to participate, and the committee sought a volunteer from Virginia, ultimately receiving one. It was clarified that serving on the nominating committee involves a single, virtual meeting lasting no more than 30 minutes, making it a minimal time commitment. The committee members are Colin Burrell (District of Columbia), Shannone Moore (Frederick County), and Kenny Boddy (Prince William County).

**Action: Members of the nominating committee were selected.**

#### **5. TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY RESULTS AND COMMENT LETTER**

*Rob d'Abadie, COG Transportation Engineer*

*Sunil Kumar, COG Environmental Engineer*

Robert d'Abadie introduced the draft Visualize 2050 transportation conformity analysis, confirming that the region's long-range transportation plan and 2026–2029 TIP meet federal air quality requirements. Projected emissions for VOCs and NOx will remain below EPA-approved budgets, regardless of whether the I-4905 South Side Express Lanes are constructed. The analysis updates previous plans, incorporates new demographic and vehicle data, and evaluates regionally significant projects. Trends show population and fleet growth, a shift toward more light-duty trucks, and an increase in average vehicle age, which may slow emissions reductions. Travel demand modeling indicates continued growth in vehicle and transit trips, but per capita vehicle miles traveled are expected to decrease. Overall, the region's emissions are projected to stay below federal thresholds through 2050.

Discussion:

- The committee reviewed a draft comment letter supporting the conformity analysis and agreeing with the proposed emission budgets. The letter encourages ongoing efforts to reduce transportation emissions, so future levels stay below EPA limits without relying on safety margins. It highlights the need for continued investment in public transit, ridesharing, and active transportation. Members briefly discussed whether to reference new health research and whether to expand the list of signatories beyond the chair.

**Action: The committee received a presentation on air quality conformity and approved a letter from MWAQC to TPB.**

#### **6. OZONE SEASON UPDATE**

*Sunil Kumar, COG Environmental Engineer*

Sunil Kumar provided a brief update on air quality data for the summer ozone season, covering March 1 through September 15. Most days had good air quality, with only five days exceeding the ozone standard (code orange), all occurring in June and July. The long-term trend shows a significant decrease in exceedance days since the late 1990s, with recent years maintaining low numbers due to effective emission control programs at federal, state, and local levels. Weather variability remains a key factor in year-to-year changes. The region's design value for ozone is now at 69 ppb, meeting the EPA standard

and qualifying the area for redesignation to attainment status. The committee is preparing the necessary maintenance and redesignation plans to support this status.

**Action: The committee received the presentation.**

## **7. EPA'S RECONSIDERATION OF THE ENDANGERMENT FINDING**

*Jeff King, COG Climate, Energy, and Air Program Director*

*Robert Christopher, COG Environmental Planner*

Jeff King and Robert Christopher updated the committee on the EPA's proposal to repeal the endangerment finding, which currently gives EPA authority to regulate greenhouse gases from vehicles and stationary sources under the Clean Air Act. The endangerment finding, established in 2009 following a Supreme Court ruling, has served as the legal foundation for federal climate rules. The proposed repeal would remove EPA's authority to set greenhouse gas standards, shifting responsibility to states and creating regulatory uncertainty. EPA claims the repeal would reduce compliance costs and boost competitiveness, but opponents argue it would lead to long-term climate and health damage, increased emissions, and higher costs for states and localities to meet climate goals. The committee also discussed the legal and policy implications, including the potential for Congress to codify greenhouse gases as pollutants, and highlighted the importance of maintaining a federal baseline for consistent climate action.

## **8. ADJOURN**

*Tom Dernoga, MWAQC Chair*

Chair Tom Dernoga adjourned the meeting. The next MWAQC meeting is scheduled for December 03, 2025.