Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE
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Air Quality Planning
Work Program and Budget

Fiscal Year 2026
(July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026)

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Prepared by

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I. Background

This document presents the work program for the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) to be carried out for Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026). It describes the work to be carried out by the staff of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) that is directly funded in this work program, as well as the in-kind contributions of the state air quality management agencies from the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. The tasks outlined in this work program are designed to ensure a regional approach to meeting the federal health standards in the metropolitan Washington region. Through the activities described for the coming year, several important steps will be taken towards improving the air quality of the region and meeting the deadlines required by the Clean Air Act.

Certification of the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee

The authority of MWAQC is derived from the certifications made by the Governors of Maryland and Virginia and the Mayor of the District of Columbia pursuant to Title I, "Provisions for Attainment and Maintenance of National Ambient Air Quality Standards," of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (section 174, 42 U.S. Code 7504).

Mission of Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee

The primary responsibilities of MWAQC are development of regional carbon monoxide (CO), ozone, and fine particulate ($PM_{2.5}$) National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) plans for meeting the federal health standards for the criteria pollutants for which the Washington, DC-MD-VA region has been designated as being in nonattainment. The air quality plans developed by MWAQC are provided to the states for incorporation in the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for submittal to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Air Quality Classifications of the Washington Metropolitan Region

Table 1 lists various criteria air pollutants and whether the metropolitan Washington region is in attainment of the relevant air quality standards.

Table 1 Air quality classifications of the metropolitan Washington region

Pollutant	Attainment	Nonattainment
Ozone (O_3)		
2015 Standard*	●	
2008 Standard	●	
Fine Particles ($PM_{2.5}$)	●	
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	●	
Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2)	●	
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)	●	

*Based on the final 2021-2023 data, including EPA's proposed Exceptional Events waiver. Draft 2022-2024 data also shows the region is meeting the standard.

Membership on MWAQC

Membership on MWAQC consists of representatives from 22 member local governments within the non-attainment area, as well as the directors or their designees from the state air quality management agencies and state transportation agencies, representatives of state legislatures, and the chair of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB). MWAQC's bylaws allow for the expansion or contraction of MWAQC membership, depending on the geographic scope of the designated nonattainment area.

Organizational Structure of MWAQC

MWAQC adopted by-laws which established the positions of chair and three vice chairs, and it has several standing subcommittees or special supporting committees including an Executive Committee, a Technical Advisory Committee, and a Public Advisory Committee. The Technical Advisory Committee has several standing subcommittees: Conformity, Attainment Modeling, Emissions Inventory, and Local Government Initiatives Subcommittee.

Interstate Air Quality Council

The Interstate Air Quality Council (IAQC) is a cabinet-level collaboration between the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland and the Commonwealth of Virginia. It is comprised of the secretaries of the environment and transportation. IAQC resolves difficult issues if needed to ensure the mutual goals of improved air quality and efficient transportation are met.

Staff Support to MWAQC

The lead role for administrative and technical support to MWAQC is held by the staff of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). Major additional complementary technical staff support is provided by the staff of the state air quality management agencies. In 1996, MWAQC established a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) which formally broadened its staff support to include local government technical staff as well as staff representing the state transportation agencies.

II. FY 2026 MWAQC Work Program Objectives

The metropolitan Washington region was initially designated as a marginal nonattainment area for the 2015 ozone NAAQS. It was then reclassified to a moderate nonattainment area in November 2022. Based on the 2021-2023 data, including an EPA proposed Exceptional Events Waiver for the 2023 Canadian wildfire data, the region shows that it is in attainment of the standard. Draft 2022-2024 data continue to show that the region is meeting the ozone standard. In FY 2026, work will focus on developing a request to redesignate the region to attainment/maintenance and a Maintenance Plan (RR/MP). These documents are required to redesignate the region to attainment/maintenance.

MWAQC staff will assist the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), with the support of the District and Maryland, to develop a RR/MP for the 1-hour ozone standard, which is needed to move forward with Virginia's Nonattainment New Source Review (NNSR) certification requirements for the 2015 ozone standard. The specifics (including content and schedule) of the 1-hour ozone standard maintenance plan are currently being discussed by Virginia DEQ staff and the EPA. An additional description of this work activity and associated fiscal budget information will be appended to the work program once finalized.

MWAQC FY 2026 work program objectives include:

- Develop redesignation request and maintenance plan for the 2015 ozone standard.
- Track air monitor data for ozone and fine particles and report status to MWAQC.
- Identify cost-effective contingency measures to meet the requirements of maintaining the 2015 ozone standard.
- Closely monitor regional ozone and fine particle data to assure the region continues to meet the federal health standards.
- Work with local members to identify and implement initiatives to reduce air pollution and protect residents that live in areas with unhealthy levels of air pollution.
- Track regulatory actions related to air quality and the transport of pollution and comment when appropriate.
- Review and comment on transportation conformity assessments for ozone.
- Communicate to regional leaders and the public on improvements to air quality and the need for actions to reduce emissions and continue to meet the air standards.

Role of COG/MWAQC Staff

The lead role for administrative and technical support to MWAQC is held by COG/MWAQC staff. Close collaboration between MWAQC staff and the state air agencies will be necessary to review and revise inventories as needed for ozone, potential control measures, and calculation of necessary reductions needed to meet the standards. MWAQC staff will hold monthly calls with the state air agencies to coordinate work tasks and use of resources. As in the past, MWAQC staff will work closely with COG's Department of Transportation Planning (DTP) staff on mobile emissions inventory and conformity issues.

This document is intended to guide the activities of MWAQC through the 12-month period from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026. In subsequent sections, the reader will find detailed descriptions of the six major work program areas that are included in this work program. The core work areas are as follows:

1. Emissions Inventory Development
2. Regional Control Measures
3. Transportation Conformity/Mobile Emissions Analysis
4. Public Participation
5. MWAQC Support
6. Program Management

Costs for each of the above tasks are also included along with more detailed descriptions in Section III of this document.

The states and COG staff will meet periodically to discuss the work program status once contracts have been executed. COG will report quarterly on expenses. With the consent of the chair of MWAQC and/or the Executive Committee, in consultation with the states and in concurrence with the funding agencies, specific subtasks may be delayed, new tasks or subtasks added or substituted, or existing tasks or subtasks modified in scope pending available budget. These actions will take place only as long as EPA deadlines, as interpreted by MWAQC, are achieved.

III. FY 2026 Work Program Task Descriptions

The following is a detailed description of the six major work program areas.

1. Emissions Inventory Development

In FY 2026, staff will work on the development of inventories that will be used for the redesignation request/maintenance plan (RR/MP) for the 2015 ozone standard.

MWAQC staff will develop the necessary inventories to be submitted as part of the RR/MP.

Staff will coordinate with and assist the state air agencies and TPB staff to determine the necessary data for on-road modeling inputs and review on-road model inputs and emissions inventories. Staff will coordinate with TPB staff to develop Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets (MVEBs). The addition of safety margins to the MVEBs under the 2015 ozone standard maintenance plan will be provided, as available and as allowed.

Staff will coordinate with state air agencies to receive point and nonpoint source inventories for the required milestone years. Staff will coordinate with state air agencies to develop marine and rail airport inventories and to receive MOVES model inputs to develop nonroad inventories for all milestone years. Staff will coordinate with state air agencies to receive MOVES model inputs for on-road inventories. Staff will develop MOVES model inputs files, provide them to TPB staff for developing on-road inventories, and review model inputs and input/output files prepared by TPB staff.

Staff will participate in meetings to support inventory development and keep track of various control measures being adopted by states to reduce ozone. Staff will work with the states to identify the range of contingency measures and voluntary actions that may be needed for future year inventories.

Staff will participate in quarterly modeling research meetings/webinars held by the University of Maryland and the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) staff. COG staff will present informational briefings on the results of modeling exercises to the TAC and MWAQC.

Deliverables:	Deadline:
a) Identification and development of inventories for the RR/MP.	Ongoing
b) Meetings of UMD/MDE Modeling	Quarterly
c) Attend Emissions Inventory Trainings and Conferences	As needed
d) Emissions Inventory Subcommittee Calls	As needed

2. Regional Control Measures

The focus areas will be ozone planning and identifying cost-effective contingency measures. MWAQC will plan to meet Clean Air Act and EPA requirements for having the area redesignated to attainment for the 2015 ozone standard.

The metropolitan Washington region was initially designated as a marginal nonattainment area for the 2015 ozone NAAQS. Based on the 2019-2021 data, EPA proposed a Clean Data Determination (CDD) for the region but has yet to finalize the determination. Based on the

2021-2023 data, including an EPA proposed Exceptional Events Waiver for the 2023 Canadian wildfire data, the region shows that it is in attainment of the standard. Draft 2022-2024 data continue to show that the region is meeting the ozone standard. In FY 2026, work will focus on developing a Redesignation Request and a Maintenance Plan and (RR/MP).

As directed by MWAQC, staff will provide assistance to develop and implement recommended actions to maintain the ozone standard and work toward eliminating unhealthy air days. Actions should be cost-effective, viable, implementable, and include co-benefits for criteria pollutants. Staff will facilitate further discussions among MWAQC member agencies and COG committees, such as COG's Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC), TPB, and TPB Technical Committee on the findings and potential implementation actions included in the control measure recommendations. Efforts will involve the development of necessary measures for use in the 2015 ozone NAAQS RR/MP and planning and implementation support for local government actions to improve air quality.

Staff will provide support for the planning and development process related to the 2015 ozone standard including providing a forum for coordinating policies and measures among state air and energy agencies and local jurisdictions to improve the region's air.

Support for Control Measure Development:
Control measures will be developed and include identification, review, and analysis of existing and new measures (for the development of contingency measures) for potential inclusion in planning support documents for the RR/MP.

Staff will focus on federal, state, and local measures and will evaluate the extent to which measures are strong candidates for inclusion in planning documents. Control/contingency measures development and evaluation will be conducted in close collaboration with the MWAQC TAC and state and local agency staff. Presentations will also be developed for COG's Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC) and MWAQC. Local actions development work will be coordinated with the Built Environment and Energy Advisory Committee (BEEAC) and CEEPC as well.

Support for Local Government Actions to Improve Air Quality:
Local governments in the Washington region will continue to work on their commitments to reduce emissions. MWAQC staff will assist local members to develop and implement programs to reduce ozone precursors by highlighting and prioritizing measures to reduce and maintain ozone levels – both in the short and long term. Local measures may include those related to energy efficiency, renewable energy, low-emission vehicles, anti-idling, high-performance buildings, electric lawn and garden equipment, transportation demand management (TDM), low-impact development, and tree canopy management. Staff will identify priority measures and provide technical expertise, in cooperation with the states, to assist local governments in the development of strategies and programs to reduce emissions of ozone precursors, provide co-benefits for $PM_{2.5}$ and greenhouse gases, and to provide a methodology for calculating and reporting evidence of actions taken.

Additional Activities:
COG will assist local members to develop and implement air quality policies, projects, and programs to address unhealthy levels of air pollution in impacted communities around the region.

Staff will participate with groups such as CEEPC, BEEAC, Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition (GWRCCC), and similar efforts that will help reduce emissions.

Staff will stay abreast of Ozone Transport Commission/Mid-Atlantic Regional Air Management Association (OTC/MARAMA) ozone precursor pollutant inventory development and photochemical modeling. Staff will provide support for the planning process related to the 2015 ozone standard.

Staff will track federal statutory and judicial regulatory actions that affect air quality, including air pollution transport, in the Washington region and work with MWAQC to take appropriate policy actions and comment as needed. Staff will provide information and a forum for coordinating public policies that affect air quality among the state air and energy agencies and local governments in the region.

Deliverables:	Deadline:
a) Identify, evaluate, measure, document measures to reduce ozone precursors and identify potential co-benefits	Ongoing
b) Identify opportunities to expand local control measures	Ongoing
c) Track implementation of state and local control measures	Ongoing
d) Track/report on State and federal Legislative Activity	Ongoing
e) Regional Workgroups	As scheduled

3. Transportation Conformity/Mobile Emissions Analysis

During FY 2026, staff will support any conformity analysis conducted by TPB staff. MWAQC staff will review and comment on any activities related to the conformity analysis undertaken in support of the long-range transportation plan. If necessary, MWAQC staff will present the results of the conformity analysis to MWAQC and facilitate development of a comment letter.

The Conformity Subcommittee may choose to review regional transportation conformity work and participate in the TPB interagency consultation process. Upon request by the TPB and the TPB Technical Committee, staff may provide briefings on EPA rulings, air quality standards, and guidance as they apply to conformity in the Washington region.

Staff will coordinate planning the 2015 ozone RR/MP schedule and tasks with TPB staff. MWAQC staff will coordinate with TPB staff to develop mobile emissions inventories needed for the 2015 MP and the establishment of new Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets (MVEBs). The addition of safety margins when developing the MVEBs for the 2015 ozone attainment MP will be provided, as available and as allowed, for each scenario.

In addition to the above work activities, MWAQC staff will assist TPB with inputs as well as technical work supporting state environmental planning activities. MWAQC staff will work

closely with state air and transportation agencies and COG TPB staff to revisit and potentially refresh inputs for the EPA Motor Vehicle Emission Simulator (MOVES) model, including any activities related to the vehicle registration/vehicle identification number (VIN) data.

Deliverables:	Deadline:
a) Comment on Transportation Conformity Analysis	TPB deadline
b) Provide Briefings and Written Reports to TPB and TPB Technical Committee	Ongoing
c) Review analysis input, output, and acquire and quality assure data	Ongoing

4. Public Participation

Task 1: ACPAC

Staff will support the Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC), an advisory committee to MWAQC and to the Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC), by attending meetings, providing program support, and briefing the committee on federal regulations, air quality progress, air quality planning issues, local member initiatives, and proposed actions of MWAQC. ACPAC will meet six times in FY 2026. The ACPAC Chair will participate in MWAQC meetings to report on the Committee's deliberations and recommendations as a regular part of MWAQC meetings.

Task 2: Air Quality Reporting and Outreach

MWAQC leadership, COG/MWAQC Air Quality staff and COG Public Affairs staff will meet with the media, particularly environmental reporters and editorial boards, to inform them about air quality issues and progress. Staff will make periodic reports about the air quality challenges associated with the NAAQS, current emissions and related air quality trends to the COG Board of Directors, Chief Administrative Officers' Committee and to member local governments as requested. The goal is to inform decision-makers about air quality improvements, issues and challenges. This task also covers COG staff time to respond to media inquiries or support the MWAQC leadership in responding to media inquiries.

Public outreach will be conducted to promote the region's air quality improvements, challenges of meeting the air quality standards, to promote local member initiatives, and foster equity and inclusion. Existing materials will be updated, and new materials will be developed such as press releases, chair talking points, guest blogs, and the air quality dashboard.

Deliverables:	Deadline:
a) ACPAC Meetings	As scheduled (6)
b) ACPAC Member Recruitment	January 2026
c) Respond to Media Inquiries	Ongoing
d) Develop/Update Materials	As needed

5. MWAQC Support

MWAQC Support includes staff support for MWAQC meetings, MWAQC Executive Committee, TAC, State Air Coordination, and subcommittee meetings and calls. Staff will coordinate and participate in all meetings, including preparing agendas, minutes, presentations, and

materials, and securing speakers. MWAQC will hold four regular business meetings to discuss planning, local measures, air quality monitoring, regulations, guidance and legislation about air quality issues affecting the Washington region and whether or not to comment or act on proposed plans. Staff will coordinate with the chair and vice chairs, responding to requests, and develop materials for new members.

The TAC will meet monthly or as needed, with regular subcommittee meetings. Staff will recruit stakeholders to participate as TAC stakeholder members. The Executive Committee will meet five times during the year. Staff will hold monthly calls with the state air agencies to coordinate use of resources and attainment progress. The Local Government Initiatives Subcommittee will meet as needed to help identify and implement priority/voluntary measures.

Deliverables:	Deadline:
a) MWAQC Meetings	As scheduled (4)
b) MWAQC Executive Committee Calls	As scheduled (5)
c) Technical Advisory Committee Calls	Monthly or as scheduled
d) TAC Stakeholder Recruitment	January 2026
e) State Air Agency Coordination Calls	Monthly
f) Subcommittee calls (local government initiatives, emissions inventory, conformity)	As Scheduled

6. Project Management

Staff will prepare a draft work program and budget for the fiscal year 2027. Staff will work with the MWAQC Budget Subcommittee and MWAQC to get an approved budget in the spring before the fiscal year begins. Staff will work with funding agencies to finalize grants and contracts and invoice as required. Staff will provide quarterly financial and status reports to track the progress of implementing the approved work program and budget.

Staff uses information technology extensively in performing analyses, completing written summaries, downloading information and data from EPA, and the Internet for a variety of research needs. Contribution to computer support for project staff and management systems is accounted for in this task. Efforts to provide materials on the COG website may also fall under this task.

Deliverables:	Deadline:
a) Quarterly Expense and Progress Reports	Quarterly
b) MWAQC Budget Committee	As scheduled
c) Draft MWAQC FY2027 Work Program and Budget	March 2026
d) Adopt MWAQC FY2027 Work Program and Budget	May 2026

IV. Funding Sources and Projected Budget

The MWAQC Work Program for FY 2026 is a 12-month work program and budget for the period from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026.

The MWAQC bylaws, adopted in October 2004, include a funding formula that allocates contributions to the MWAQC budget by thirds: 1/3 from state air agencies, 1/3 from state transportation agencies, and 1/3 from local governments (Table 1). The budget for the core work program is a total of $606,555. The state air agencies, the state and local departments of transportation and the Transportation Planning Board, and the Council of Governments will each contribute $202,185. The funding by task is shown in Table 2. The MWAQC bylaws also state that "nothing shall preclude additional sub-regional efforts to be added to the work program at the request and expense of individual state agencies and local governments."

Note that the funding from the TPB to support air quality planning and conformity is contingent upon TPB's approval of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for FY 2026. Contributions from the State Air Agencies are contingent on approval of their organization's funding. If needed, the MWAQC Work Program will be revised should the final budget amount change.

Table 1
FY 2026 MWAQC Funding Contributions by Source

Source	Approved FY 2025	Requested FY 2026	Change
State DOT/TPB	$197,107	$202,185	+$5,078
COG member jurisdictions	$197,107	$202,185	+$5,078
State Air Agencies*			
DOEE	$23,149	$23,779	+$629
MDE*	$87,755	$90,112	+$2,357
VDEQ	$86,203	$88,297	+$2,094
States. Subtotal	$197,107	$202,185	+$5,078
TOTAL	$591,320	$606,555	+$15,235 (2.6%)

*Funded by the Maryland Department of Transportation

Table 2
FY 2026 Air Quality Core Work Program Tasks
(Breakdown of Costs by Type)

Core Work Program Tasks	COG staff* ($)	Consultants ($)	Direct ($)	Total Cost ($)
1. Emissions Inventory Development	$55,354		$2,000	$57,354
2. Regional Control Measures	$113,434		$1,500	$114,934
3. Transportation Conformity/Mobile Emissions Analysis	$202,185		$0	$202,185
4. Public Participation	$48,062		$10,000	$58,062
5. MWAQC Support	$117,856		$12,500	$130,356
6. Project Management	$41,620		$2,048	$43,668
TOTAL	$578,507	$0	$28,048	$606,555

*Fully burdened - includes indirect costs

Table 3
Air Quality Core Work Program Expense Comparison

Work Program Areas	Approved FY 2025			Requested FY 2026			Change
	COG staff* ($)	Direct ($)	Total Cost ($)	COG staff* ($)	Direct ($)	Total Cost ($)	
1. Emissions Inventory Development	$50,539	$2,000	$52,539	$55,354	$2,000	$57,354	+9.1%
2. Regional Control Measures	$126,268	$1,500	$127,768	$113,434	$1,500	$114,934	-10.0%
3. Transportation Conformity/Mobile Emissions Analysis	$197,107	$0	$197,107	$202,185	$0	$202,185	+2.6%
4. Public Participation	$43,588	$10,000	$53,588	$48,062	$10,000	$58,062	+8.3%
5. MWAQC Support	$108,226	$12,500	$120,726	$117,856	$12,500	$130,356	+7.9%
6. Project Management	$37,569	$2,032	$39,601	$41,620	$2,048	$43,668	+10.2%
TOTAL	$563,297	$28,032	$591,320	$578,507	$28,048	$606,555	+2.6%

*Fully burdened - includes indirect costs