

MWAQC Technical Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
December 10, 10 AM to 11:30 AM

Present:

Roger Thunell, Maryland Department of the Environment
Allyson Frantz, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Anna Marshall, Baltimore Metropolitan Council
Britany Whited, District Department of Energy & Environment
Chris Voigt, Virginia Department of Transportation
Dawn Hawkins-Nixon, Prince George's County
Doris McLeod, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Jennifer Roelke, Maryland Department of the Environment
Jim Ponticello, Virginia Department of Transportation
Joseph Jakuta, District Department of Energy & Environment
Marcia Ways, Maryland Department of the Environment
Malcolm Watson, Fairfax County Department of Transportation
Melissa Atwood, City of Alexandria
Regina Moore, Virginia Department of Transportation
Sophia Cortazzo, Maryland Department of Transportation
Sonya Lewis-Cheatham, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Thomas Foster, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Tom Ballou, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Virginia Burke, Maryland Department of Transportation
Chuck Tuner, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

Staff:

Sunil Kumar, COG/DEP
Alissa Boggs, COG/DEP
Dusan Vuksan, COG/DTP
Erin Morrow, COG/DTP
Jane Posey, COG/DTP
Jeff King, COG/DEP
Ken Desimone, COG/DEP
Jinchul Park, COG/DTP
Robert Christopher, COG/DEP
Robert d'Abadie, COG/DTP
Tim Masters, COGDEP
Wanda Owens, COG/DTP

1. Call to Order & Review of Meeting Summary

Roger Thunell called the meeting to order at 10 AM. The November 12th meeting summary was approved without any changes.

2. DISCUSSION ON EJ SUBCOMMITTEE/ACTION PLAN MEASURES

Robert Christopher led the discussion on EJ subcommittee measures. The members discussed each measure in detail, focusing on specific issues concerning their implementation. Specific issues concerning their implementation were brought up by state air agency staff.

Robert summarized the list of measures, and their corresponding priority status based on their economic feasibility, enforceability, implementation feasibility, improvement of air quality, and benefits to disadvantaged communities.

Environmental Justice (EJ) measures outline a variety of strategies aimed at improving air quality and supporting disadvantaged communities. These strategies are categorized into several key

areas:

Foster Stronger Partnerships: This involves partnering with health departments to study correlations between health impacts and poor air quality and combining efforts with advocacy groups to educate the public on these impacts.

Improve Air Quality Monitoring: Enhancing the monitoring of air quality to ensure better data collection and analysis.

Increase Public Outreach and Education: Promoting awareness and education about air quality issues among the public.

Promote Land Use Planning: Supporting land use planning initiatives that contribute to air quality improvement.

Reduce Emissions from Stationary Sources: Implementing measures to reduce emissions from fixed sources like factories and power plants.

Reduce Vehicle Emissions: Encouraging actions to decrease emissions from vehicles, enhancing enforcement, retrofitting diesel vehicles, and promoting public transportation.

These strategies were developed based on feedback from listening sessions and public comments. They are prioritized based on their potential to improve air quality in disadvantaged communities, their feasibility of implementation and enforcement, and their economic viability. The goal is to create an action plan that addresses environmental justice and air quality issues effectively.

Virginia Burke asked for confirmation on the prioritization of actions in the spreadsheet. She noted that actions with a lot of high priority (green) indicators seemed to be the ones that would get the most attention. She also inquired about the implementation and enforceability of the measures, asking whether it would involve state, local, or county governments.

Roger Thunell had questions about the implementation and enforceability of the measures. Roger asked whether the plan would involve state, local, or county governments and who the EJ community or the disadvantaged community should address the issues. He asked for more time to review those measures.

Jim Ponticello emphasized the importance of ensuring that all measures identified on the list are voluntary. Jim mentioned that in the past, lists of voluntary measures were clearly labeled as such, and recommended that the same approach be taken for the current list. He asked who did the rankings. Jeff said that it was mainly the contractor, MWAQC staff, and the EJ subcommittee.

Roger asked for the timeline for finalizing measures or the action plan. Jeff said the current expectation is February 2025, but it could probably take some more time.

Tom emphasized that the situation at the state level and the local level can be quite different and will likely remain different for each individual jurisdiction. He pointed out that what is happening in Maryland and DC is not necessarily the same as what is happening in Virginia, and it may never be the same. Tom stressed the importance of understanding that while the measures can be sponsored by MWAQC, the decision to implement them lies with the localities. Challenges were discussed regarding the implementation of monitoring, including the high cost and complexity of monitoring. Joseph Jakuta brought up the issue of how long the monitoring should be undertaken given budget constraints.

Members discussed whether monitoring in EJ areas should be temporary or permanent. Members discussed the need for federal guidance on incorporating EJ into SIPs.

On the issue of advocating standards for new non-NAAQS pollutants, members agreed that it was difficult to do so considering non-availability of experts on the subject. Roger Thunell said that we will have to rely on EPA for setting standards for pollutants such as black carbon or other toxic pollutants.

There was a discussion on the difficulty of freezing permitting. Concerns were raised about the feasibility and impact of enhanced enforcement of pollution sources, given existing levels of controls and resource limitations. Doris mentioned that writing a new regulation is very resource intensive and there is not much left to regulate in northern Virginia. Roger said that the regulation process doesn't usually address hotspots. It addresses statewide facilities, and that's what makes it difficult to implement within an EJ area, because it is done statewide.

Jim Ponticello was opposed to limiting highway expansion projects in Virginia. VDOT is already required to look at EJ in highway expansion projects. He thought things like increase in public transit could be done.

On fugitive dust, Doris said it is a non-NAAQS pollutant. Joseph was concerned with additional controls on stationary point sources as not much left is to be done. Jeff King pointed to the National Engineering Products facility that is in Ivy city, which is of big concern to the public living there. Joseph said that those are already well controlled and he was not sure what else could be controlled.

It was noted that data center generators are already using state-of-the-art emission controls, and further reductions would require new technologies.

Joseph suggested consideration should be given to trying to get people to take active transportation and moving people to bikes and walking.

3. State/Local Updates

Joseph said that the District ended the comment period for an updated order control regulation on December 9. This will allow the District to speed up some actions towards approving and disapproving some of the plans. There will be some movement in the next day or next couple of days on a few of other control plans. Maryland Virginia didn't have any updates.