Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

AIR AND CLIMATE PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ACPAC)

September 15, 2025
5:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.

Webinar information provided to members via email.

Chair: William Washburn

DRAFT TELECONFERENCE MEETING SUMMARY

ACPAC ATTENDEES: William Washburn, Wiilliam Marsh, Peter Mecca, Jacqueline Norris, James Wang, Ian Marcus, Deborah Shprentz, Jack Lyman, Chris Tandy, Julie Kimmel

COG STAFF: Leah Boggs, Alissa Boggs, Marlee Moore, Caroline Sherman

OTHER ATTENDEES: Emily Carr (ICF Consultant), Deb Harris (ICF Consultant)

5:35 P.M. **1. CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, MEETING SUMMARY APPROVAL AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**
William Washburn, ACPAC Vice Chair

The meeting was called to order by Chair William Washburn. The July 21 meeting summary was approved with no amendments. The meeting had a quorum and there were no amendments to the agenda.

Leah Boggs provided an overview of EPA's Proposal to repeal the Endangerment Finding.

- July 2025 EPA announced intentions to repeal the 2009 Endangerment Finding as well as related vehicle emissions standards.
- The original finding was issued as a result of a Supreme Court decision in Massachusetts v. EPA (2007) and established EPA as the authority to regulate GHGs from vehicles and stationary sources including:
    - Clean Power Plan (2015–2016)
    - Methane rules for oil & gas, and
    - Carbon regulations for power plants.

- COG Action
    - Presentation made at the Transportation Planning Board Technical Advisory Committee
    - CEEPC will submit letter opposing the repeal siting specific regional impacts: endangerment to the 2030 and 2050 goals and loss of federal authority puts greater burden on state and local governments and there are risks of fragmented and inefficient implementation.
        - ACPAC Chair asked if it would be possible to include a statement on health impacts on vulnerable populations.
- Member Deborah Shprentz asked about EPA's potential proposal to streamline permitting requirements for data centers. She will send relevant information to Leah Boggs.
    - EPA Loosens Air Permitting Requirement to Speed Energy and Data Center Construction
- Elder Dr. Jacqueline V. Norris will send information on protests related to data centers in Prince George's County to Leah Boggs.

5:40 P.M. **2. MID-COURSE REVIEW: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND CASE STUDIES**

Alissa Boggs, COG Staff
Caroline Sherman, COG Extern
Marlee Moore, COG Extern

Presentation Summary

- The mid-course review (MCR) is assessing progress toward the region's 2030 climate and energy goals, which were adopted in 2020. The MCR compiles GHG inventories, renewable energy data, and local government implementation surveys to provide a clear picture of whether the region is on track.
- The MCR is organized around the same sectors as the 2030 plan – Greenhouse Gases, Clean Electricity, Zero Energy Buildings, Zero Emissions Vehicles, Mode Shift and Travel Behavior, Zero Waste, and Sequestration - and will highlight one to three key performance indicators for each.
- Recent findings show strong growth in green building certifications, from fewer than 100 in 2005 to more than 7,800 by 2024. Grid-connected renewable energy systems have expanded rapidly, surpassing the 2017 goal of 30,000 systems and reaching more than 93,000 systems by 2024, with a long-term target of 250,000 by 2030.
- Electricity use has remained relatively flat in most jurisdictions, while commercial demand in Northern Virginia has grown due to data center expansion. Natural gas use continues to fluctuate with winter weather.

- Local case studies highlighted local leadership and efforts towards achieving climate action goals, focusing on community engagement.

Discussion

- The Town of Leesburg and Loudoun County are piloting an on-demand transit service within the Town of Leesburg limits.
- PJM is considering using back diesel generators to meet the electricity demands of data centers. Another key performance indicator is tracking battery energy storage systems (BESS) to measure grid resiliency. Linking BESS with solar generation and other renewables can create a firm power source.
    - COG has started tracking BESS in the region; however, the information wasn't robust enough to include. COG made note of the suggestion regarding engaging local governments about permitting or measuring battery storage systems to establish a baseline.
    - Suggestion: incentivize BESS.
- The region met the 2020 goal of 20% reductions below the 2005 baseline. Due to COVID, the region saw higher reductions; however, the current GHG inventory levels were expected.
- Loudoun County's growth in commercial energy is impacting the goals of the region.
- Clean energy transition from coal to natural gas improves regional grid emissions factors significantly.
- Solar co-ops, like Solarized Nova and SUN, enhance affordable solar installations through community outreach and group purchasing.
- Prince George's County developed a clean energy report to accelerate solar technology deployment and supports community planning for solar projects.
- Alexandria City High School and Arlington's Alice West Fleet Elementary achieve net zero energy through efficient design and renewable resources.
- Fairfax County's Charge Up program promotes EV charging stations, incentivizing electric vehicle adoption and improving air quality.
- Montgomery County's Flex expansion study enhances on-demand transit services, increasing accessibility for diverse economic backgrounds.

6:15 P.M. **3. COMPREHENSIVE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN**
Emily Carr, ICF

Presentation Summary

- The Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP), developed under EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) program analyzes the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The required elements of the CCAP includes GHG mitigation measures and

models their potential reductions across all sectors, a “What would it take” scenario and model to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, a co-pollutant benefits analysis, and a workforce assessment.

- The 2020 MSA GHG inventory identified on-road transportation as the largest source of emissions (33 percent), followed by commercial buildings (24 percent), while natural and working lands serve as a net carbon sink. Business-as-usual projections show emissions declining modestly over time due to cleaner electricity from state renewable portfolio standards, but transportation remains the largest source through 2050.
- The measures analysis shows that the most significant reductions by 2050 come from zero-emission vehicle adoption, followed by building energy efficiency and electrification.
- Co-pollutant modeling indicates that implementing these measures would also reduce harmful air pollutants, leading to fewer cases of respiratory and cardiovascular illness, fewer hospital visits, and lower mortality. The associated health co-benefits could save the region hundreds of millions of dollars annually in avoided healthcare costs.
- The workforce assessment found that the regional labor market is generally balanced, with no major shortages across most occupations. Potential gaps may emerge in specialized areas such as electric vehicle maintenance and energy auditing. Training capacity is strong in building trades and electrical work, but stakeholders emphasized the need for equitable access to training, competitive pay, and retention strategies. Local programs, such as Montgomery County’s apprenticeship initiative in emerging transportation technologies, demonstrate effective models that could be scaled across the region.
- Overall, the CCAP concludes that with coordinated action, the region can achieve deep emissions reductions, deliver substantial public health benefits, and prepare its workforce for the transition to a clean energy economy.

<u>Discussion</u>

- Many of the local actions in the CCAP are not heavily dependent on federal regulations or programs as compared to some of the state plans.
- does not address the current federal role backs.
- The planning region for the CCAP extends beyond the COG footprint to include Jefferson County, WV, whose participation has been limited. Jefferson County’s interest was mainly focused on data centers.
- The workforce development measure included outreach to utilities, other than VA. There’s not been much success with outreach to Rappahannock Electric. This will be an important element for additional analysis.

6:40 P.M. **4. MEMBER TIME**
ACPAC Members

- Suggestion: advocate for more renewables on the grid, related to MD's inability to retire coal-fired power plants due to increased demand from data centers.
- What are the hurdles for small modular nuclear power.
- Concern raised about on-site generation for data centers using natural gas turbines and its environmental impacts, including noise and emissions.
    - The average data center is permitted at 10 tons/year for PM 2.5
    - An existing data center in Loudoun County is permitted at 56.51 tons/year and is expected to get a second data center.
    - Loudoun County policy makers have said they want small modular nuclear and hydrogen; however, data centers are using natural gas turbines.
    - Low amounts of natural gas coming into the County has sparked an increase in natural gas infrastructure projects including expansion of the Mountain Valley pipeline, as well as 4-5 additional natural gas projects.
    - Chris Tandy provided link: New EPA Guidance Clarifies When Data Centers and Other Operators May Utilize Emergency Backup Generators to Support Local Power Supply
- Concern raised about rising electricity costs affecting communities, despite energy efficiency improvements.
- Public outreach on renewables is crucial.

7:30 P.M. **5. NEXT ACPAC MEETING AND ADJOURN**

The next ACPAC meeting is November 17. Chair William Washburn adjourned the meeting.

Meeting Documents:

https://www.mwcog.org/events/2025/9/15/air-and-climate-public-advisory-committee/