



AIR AND CLIMATE PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ACPAC)

May 18, 2026
5:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.

Webinar information provided to members via email.

Chair: Ian Marcus

DRAFT VIRTUAL MEETING SUMMARY

ACPAC ATTENDEES: Alex Johnson, Julie Kimmel, Jack Lyman, Ian Marcus, Rev. Jacqueline Norris, Janet Phoenix, Cameron Ramey, Deborah Sphentz, Chris Tandy, James Wang, William Washburn

COG STAFF: Leah Boggs, Maia Davis

**5:30 P.M. 1. CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, MEETING SUMMARY APPROVAL
AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ian Marcus, ACPAC Chair

The meeting was called to order by new Chair Ian Marcus. The meeting had a quorum and there were no amendments to the agenda. The March 2026 meeting summary was approved with no amendments.

COG Staff announced the date of May's data center on land use and that the link to participate in listen-only mode was sent to ACPAC members. ACPAC chair reminded members to promote the climate and energy leadership awards.

5:45 P.M. 2. CHAIR'S REPORTS AND STAFF UPDATES

Ian Marcus, ACPAC Chair

ACPAC Members

Leah Boggs, COG Staff

Chair Marcus provided remarks about CEEPC's 100th meeting anniversary in March. The comments centered around the benefits of engaging in person.

The Chair asked for a volunteer to attend the upcoming MWAQC and CEEPC meetings on behalf of ACPAC leadership. William Washburn agreed to participate.

6:00 P.M. 3. GREENHOUSE GASES AND CLIMATE PROGRESS

Maia Davis, COG Staff

Maia Davis provided highlights of COG's final greenhouse gas inventories and a high-level review of the climate progress trends of key performance indicators from the last 15-20 years. The information was incorporated into the draft Midcourse Review Report.

Presentation Summary

The Midcourse Review assesses the status of regional climate goals, key performance indicators, and implementation levels of key actions to provide direction setting for regional action. The COG Board's goals and priorities related to climate and energy are: greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 20 percent below 2005 levels by 2020 and 50 percent by 2030, 250,000 solar rooftops by 2030, maintaining minimum tree canopy coverage of 50 percent, and electric vehicle (EV) deployment as a priority.

The results of the Midcourse Review are as follows:

- Metropolitan Washington reduced net GHG emissions by 20% from 2005 levels in 2023, with the main drivers decreasing emissions being a cleaner grid, cleaner cars, and decreased vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per person.
- The region has increased grid connected renewable energy systems from less than 500 in 2009 to over 93,000 systems in 2024, totaling to over 1 GW of capacity.
- Green building certifications and ratings in the region (including LEED, ENERGY STAR, Design to Earn ENERGY STAR, EarthCraft, Green Globes, Passive House, and LFI) have increased from only 88 buildings in 2005, to over 7,800 in 2024.
- EV ownership in the region increased from less than 12,000 hybrid (non-PHEV) vehicles in 2005, to over 335,000 hybrid (non-PHEV) and electric (BEV and PHEV) vehicles in 2024.
- EV charging ports in the region have grown from less than 700 ports in 2013 to over 6,800 ports in 2025.
- VMT per capita in the region has been slowly decreasing since 2005 (with a large drop in 2020 and steady recovery in the following years).
- Regional annual transit ridership has been slowly recovering after the 2020 pandemic.
- Regional waste diversion rates steadily increased from 2005 to 2013 but have seen a slight decrease between 2015 and 2023. There are many factors that may contribute to this trend including the economy and the decline in the weight of recyclable materials (lighter packaging and shipping materials, more plastic, less glass).
- As of 2021 the region had a 50% tree canopy. The regional tree canopy experienced a net loss of 28,377 acres between 2014 and 2021.

This report finds that the region is currently meeting GHG emissions reduction goals through positive trends in decarbonizing the electric grid, solar development, green buildings, cleaner cars, and EV chargers. The challenges the region faces to meet its goals are high energy intensive industries (such as data centers), COVID impacts on VMT and transit, COVID impacts and industry shifts in waste diversion, and tree canopy loss. Continued exponential improvement in all positive sectors is needed to meet 2030 goals.

Discussion

- Members called for stronger language to clearly reflect the likelihood of missing 2030 targets under current conditions, emphasizing the need for explicit acknowledgment of required policy changes.
- Accelerated and expanded implementation of regional climate strategies was identified as a priority, with emphasis on addressing major sources of emissions and energy demand. Key focus areas include transportation, clean energy deployment, and the impacts of large energy users.
- Staff noted that the recommendations submitted in the Coalition for Smarter Growth's comment letter have been incorporated in the presentation and the new draft of the Midcourse Review Report.

6:35 P.M. 4. AIR POLLUTION AND PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Jeff Bronstein, UCLA Director of the Levine Family Movement Disorder Center and Professor of Neurology

Presentation Summary

Dr. Jeff Bronstein presented research findings regarding the emerging link between ambient air pollution and Parkinson's Disease (PD). He explained that PD is a progressive neurodegenerative disorder, and while approximately 10-15% of cases are linked to genetics, the vast majority are likely driven by environmental and lifestyle factors. Dr. Bronstein highlighted studies conducted in California's Central Valley that demonstrate a significant association between long-term exposure to fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and an increased risk of developing PD. The presentation detailed the biological pathways through which pollutants may trigger the misfolding of alpha-synuclein proteins, potentially entering the central nervous system through the gut or olfactory system.

Discussion

The committee discussed the specific toxicity of different components of air pollution, the impacts of wildfire smoke, and the potential correlation between air quality and other neurodegenerative conditions like Alzheimer's disease.

7:25 P.M. 5. NEXT ACPAC MEETING AND ADJOURN

The next ACPAC meeting is on July 20, 2026. Chair Ian Marcus adjourned the meeting 5 minutes early.

Meeting Documents:

<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2026/5/18/air-and-climate-public-advisory-committee/>