



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** COG Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Clark Mercer, COG Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Executive Director's Report – May 2025  
**DATE:** May 7, 2025

---

## POLICY BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

**National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)** – In April, TPB Chair James Walkinshaw signed the Bike to Work Day proclamation, encouraging cities and counties to promote commuting via bicycling on May 15 for the regionwide event coordinated by the COG/TPB Commuter Connections program. The board was also brief on the federal transportation reauthorization process and five draft principles to be part of the TPB's legislative proposal. In addition, the TPB received an update on the Virginia I-495/95 Southside Express Lanes project study and public comment as well as an update on DMVMoves.

**Food and Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Policy Committee** – At its April meeting, in honor of National and DMV Food Waste Prevention Week, members heard from a panel of experts on programs and policies to prevent food waste and increase composting from Food Rescue US-DC, the City of Laurel, and Arlington County. The Capital Area Food Bank also provided an update on its new pop-up food distributions in the region for lower wage federal workers and contractors potentially facing job loss. FARM members discussed the need to come together to support each other and the region at a time when already high levels of food insecurity could be exacerbated.



### COG Hosts First-Ever Capital Caucus

On April 10, COG held its inaugural Capital Caucus Reception, uniting DC, Maryland, and Virginia lawmakers to boost regional collaboration. Leaders discussed post-session outcomes, economic resilience, and Metro funding, stressing the importance of cross-state coordination and COG's role as a legislative hub ahead of 2026.

[Read highlights and view photos from the event](#)

## OUTREACH & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

**Public Safety** – On May 3, COG hosted the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Wreath Laying Ceremony and Honor Guard Competition in honor of corrections officers who have fallen in the line of duty. COG Board Chair Rodney Lusk spoke about the heroism and dedication of these officers.

From April 15-17, COG, the Northern Virginia Emergency Response System, and the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, hosted the National Capital Region (NCR) Fire Health & Safety Seminar. Dozens of national experts and presenters provided around 200 participants with information and resources on topics including lessons learned related to lithium-ion battery fires, the impacts of cancer to the firefighting community, tactical safety on emergency scenes, and leveraging data to inform a safer emergency response.

On April 22, COG hosted a pilot session of the Alerting Law Enforcement to the Tactics of Extremists training delivered by the Center for Naval Analyses. The goal of the training, tailored to the NCR, is to equip law enforcement officers with the information to protect themselves and their departments from extremist beliefs and recruitment.

**Earth Month Highlights and Climate Award Nominations** – In recognition of Earth Day on April 22, a global observance dedicated to environmental protection, and Earth Month, COG showcased regional efforts to build climate resilience, clean up area rivers and waterways, and more on social media throughout the month of April. Additionally, the nominating period for the 2025 Climate & Energy Leadership Awards seeking applications from government agencies and NGOs is open through June 30. COG's annual awards highlight a broad range of climate solutions for their unique engagement practices as well as their results, creativity, and replicability.

[Learn more about COG's Climate Awards, nominate an org](#)

**Battery Management Campaign** – COG runs a battery management campaign annually aimed at educating audiences about batteries, how they can spark fires, and advising that they should never go in the trash or recycling. The campaign, which will run on social media platforms through May, will promote reducing waste, improve safety awareness, and inform on how to properly recycle batteries.



### COG, Metro host Safety & Security Summit

On April 29, Metro and COG jointly hosted a first-ever Safety and Security Summit, convening fire chiefs, police chiefs, and 911 center directors for a deep dive to learn more about Metro's safety and security strategies, crime reduction efforts, and emerging technologies and training resources. U.S. Senator Mark Warner also joined the gathering, which served as an opportunity for area leaders to discuss opportunities for greater collaboration.

[Learn more about the Safety & Security Summit](#)

## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

### **Regional Economy/Federal Workforce Cuts**

- COG's April Board meeting discussion regarding the impact of federal workforce cuts was covered by Fox 5, WUSA9, WTOP, WAMU, and ARL/FFXNow. Clark Mercer was also interviewed for a story on the federal workforce for 7 News.

[Fox 5](#)

**WorldPride** – COG's April Board meeting discussion on preparations for the WorldPride event was covered by several outlets, including the Washington Business Journal, WTOP, WUSA9, Axios, Washington Blade, and the Advocate.

[WTOP](#)

**Safety and Security Summit** – COG and WMATA's Safety and Security Summit was covered by NBC4, WUSA9, and DC News Now.

[WUSA9](#)

### **DMV Spotlight on Homelessness** – COG

Housing Manager Hilary Chapman appeared on the DMV Spotlight podcast to discuss regional efforts to reduce homelessness.

[WMAL](#)

**COG's Street Smart Safety Campaign** – COG's Street Smart Safety Campaign was covered by WUSA9, Fox 5, and NBC4

[Fox 5](#)



### **Collaboration in Action: Solving Homelessness as a Region**

On the latest episode of Collaboration in Action, Clark Mercer explores homelessness in the DMV with COG members and partners and takes a behind the scenes look at the annual Point-in-Time count of the unhoused.

[Watch the episode](#)