

Maryland Commission on Climate Change Meeting Summary

October 16, 2019

Attendance: Ben Grumbles, Nancy Kopp, Han Schmidt, Spyridon Papadimas, Matt Fleming, Earl Lewis, Robert McCord, Chris Rice, Peter Goodwin, Colby Ferguson, Charles Deegan, Dr. Russ Dickerson, Deborah Prout, Senator Paul Pinsky, Lori Arguelles, Michael Powell, C. Richard D'Amato, Anne Lindner, Les Knapp, Michael Bibb, Bob Kozak, Jeff Silva, John Mosheim, Cindy Osorto, Joanne Ivancic, Ruth White, Cheryl Arney

Attendance phone – Mike Tidwell, Dana Stein, Bruce Lesh

Maryland Department of the Environment released the [2019 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act \(GGRA\) Draft Plan](#) on Tuesday, October 15th.

The meeting served as a first look at the Plan. MDE gave a thorough [presentation](#) on the contents of the plan.

Public Comments

After an introduction from Ben Grumbles, members of the public opened up the meeting with resounding support for the use of biofuels in Maryland. Biofuels have potential to help with transportation, one of the largest sections of the MD GHG Inventory, especially when faced with the fact that we are not yet ready to deploy a full electric vehicle fleet. Several specific suggestions were made: pushing for a higher percent of ethanol in transportation fuels, funding biofuel research, and creating incentives for smaller companies to enter the industry. Two of the aforementioned speakers were representing Advanced Biofuels USA, who have more information on biofuels [here](#).

Working Group Updates

The Work Groups all gave brief updates. They are preparing their final recommendations for the Annual Report and will appreciate any feedback.

ARWG

- Work Group released a [Saltwater Intrusion Plan](#):
- DNR released the [Floodplain Guidance Plan](#) link

ECO

- Drafting recommendations for the GGRA report
- Setting up collaboration between ECO and MDE for outreach

STWG

- STWG is looking to the future and preparing for questions or issues that may arise following the GGRA Draft Plan release.

- Blue carbon and tidal wetland restoration as a technique for carbon sequestration is generating significant interest. Maryland/Virginia Sea Grant and Maryland DMMP have both recently held workshops. Workshop reports will be distributed to STWG when available to inform the 2019 task of quantifying the potential carbon reductions

MWG

- MWG is still looking for a new co-chair, and is looking for recommendations.
- MWG progress transitioned into GGRA update

Tad Aburn and Chris Hoagland presented an overview of the different sections of the GGRA Draft Plan.

See [link to GGRA](#) released October 2019:

MDE realized that most people would not have time to read the report in its entirety yet, and gave the presentation with the intent of preparing the audience to dig through the report. Several questions were raised during the presentation. The key points of the resulting discussion are as follows:

- Initial questions were concerned with the details of the report, specifically, the methodology. All of the methodology and applicable figures are in the report and its appendices.
- In regards to the Methane Global Warming Potential (GWP), there were concerns over using the 100 year value versus the 20 year value. MDE chose to use the 100 year GWP for methane to keep it consistent with GHG inventories including 2006 baseline – changing it now would require recalculating over a decade's worth of past inventories and changing the goal.
- Senator Pinsky voiced his concerns that the plan was too reliant on programs such as CARES and TCI that not-finalized
 - The current plan meets (and exceeds) our goal, giving leeway if certain measures don't work out (for any reason, legislative or otherwise).
 - If CARES and TCI don't result in benefits as modeled would we need to make augmentations to the plan?
 - How we would go about closing coal plants in the transition to cleaner energy.
 - Transportation: How is the GHG impact of investments in transportation infrastructure quantified in the Plan?
 - How does increasing VMT not offset benefits of other transportation programs like improved public transit?