

Maryland Commission on Climate Change (MCCC)

Education Communications & Outreach (ECO) Work Group

DRAFT 2020 Work Plan as of 3.24..20

Membership

The MCCC is chaired by the Secretary of the Maryland Department of the Environment. The Commission membership represents diverse interests in the State.

The Education, Communications, and Outreach (ECO) work group is one of four work groups that support the objectives of the Commission. ECO members are appointed by the Chair of the Commission, and represent both public and private interests in climate change. Members include an array of stakeholder groups, and currently include representatives of academic institutions, environmental organizations, government agencies, and business interests, as identified in the governing legislation. The current membership roster (and meeting dates) can be found on the [ECO webpage](#). ECO leadership will work in 2020 to increase the membership to better diversify and energize the group. The MCCC chair, Secretary Grumbles committed to making appointments a priority (via letters).

The Commission is responsible for prioritizing group activities, including the following activities noted in the governing legislation that are especially relevant to ECO:

- Develop broad public and private partnerships with local, State, and federal agencies;
- Communicate with and educate Marylanders about the urgency of acting to reduce the impacts of climate change; and
- Address any disproportionate impacts of climate change on disadvantaged and vulnerable communities.

To support education, communication, and outreach among diverse stakeholders on the causes of climate change, its potential impacts to Marylanders, and mitigation and adaptation strategies, the ECO Work Group:

- Advises the Commission on effective communications strategies and best practices for education, communication and outreach to diverse stakeholders;
- Embraces opportunities for stakeholder engagement in Commission, State or community activities;
- Engages the network of Commission and work groups to coordinate and provide capacity for such initiatives, as feasible; and
- Leverages the interests and initiatives of public and private sector organizations outside of the Commission to advance the Commission's objectives.

Process

ECO has access to a wide variety of internal and external assets, including the expertise and resources of ECO members, various State agencies, and the three other work groups of the Commission. ECO members are encouraged to support and enhance the visibility of MDE's outreach regarding climate change issues, and likewise, support relevant public events through social media or similar platforms.

ECO manages and promotes the use of several fact sheets used by the Commission, the State, and other entities to connect climate change impacts in Maryland across the sectors and workgroups. The fact sheet topics include Addressing Climate Change in Maryland: An Overview; Maryland Planning for Sea-Level Rise; Maryland's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions Act; Responding to the Health Impacts of Climate Change; Increasing Resilience to Climate Change; Buying Local and Climate Change; and Tackling Climate Change. ECO is responsible for updating [the fact sheets](#) that are housed on the Commission website as needed.

2020 Priorities

The following items represent actions and initiatives which ECO has determined to be a priority in 2020. This work plan may be adjusted as is appropriate to maintain the group's purpose as new events and opportunities arise during the year to correspond with the Commission's mission.

Expand outreach to disadvantaged and vulnerable communities

ECO will work with the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities (CEJSC) to identify communities and grassroots organizations to partner with to increase awareness of State climate change work. CEJSC is a twenty member body that is tasked with advising State government on environmental justice and analyzing the effectiveness of State and local government laws and policies to address issues of environmental justice and sustainable communities. ECO, with support from CEJSC, will review how programs included in the GGRA Plan, specifically in the energy and transportation sectors, could impact local communities. By considering the specific impacts to disadvantaged and vulnerable communities, ECO can support effective dialogue around this topic, and in doing so can inspire positive action against the negative effects of climate change on our State. (Mapping will be needed.)

Communicate climate action co-benefits for the climate, employment, and the economy

ECO will explore the connection between climate action and the economy, and how we can better support business efforts to communicate and adapt to climate change. In 2020 ECO will recruit partners and gather case studies and success stories that we may develop on this issue. ECO can develop new outreach tools to address the economic and environmental benefits of climate action, including:

- a. historical evidence that environmental regulations don't necessarily adversely impact economic activity;
- b. the growing realization of the need for integrating sustainability into human activities;
- c. the GGRA mandates concerning coincident job growth and economic development (partnering with Dept. of Commerce); and
- d. the methods and means of achieving a just transition (partnering with Dept. of Labor) for sectors of the economy disproportionately affected by decarbonization.

Communicate to leaders at the state and local level about the Commission's actions and explore and pursue speaking opportunities for Chairman Grumbles and/or his designees from the Commission.

- a. Reach out to Maryland Association of Counties and Maryland Municipal League for opportunities (especially annual conferences).
- b. Offer content to members of the General Assembly and local governments for their outreach efforts (newsletters, social media, etc.)

c. ECO will continue to work with MDE to incorporate recognition of climate change action taken by businesses, as part of the existing Maryland Green Registry program.

ECO Meeting Schedule for 2020 (and the MCCC Quarterly Meetings)

All meetings are held at MDE or will be held via Webinar or Teleconference. Meeting dates and times are subject to changes so please keep an eye on the [MCCC](#) website. You will receive an email before each ECO meeting. ECO members can decide on each month's topics and action items.