

Maryland Commission on Climate Change **Education Communications & Outreach Workgroup**

DRAFT 2018 Work Plan Update

Modified 12/01/2017

Purpose

During its 2015 session, the Maryland General Assembly codified the Maryland Commission on Climate Change (MCCC) into law, and charged the Commission with advising the Governor and General Assembly on ways to mitigate the causes of, prepare for, and adapt to the consequences of climate change. The MCCC is chaired by the Secretary of the Maryland Department of the Environment, and consists of 26 members representing diverse interests in the State.

The Education, Communications, and Outreach (ECO) Working Group is one of four working groups that support the objectives of the Commission. The Commission is responsible for prioritizing working group activities, including the following noted in the governing legislation which are especially relevant to the ECO working Group:

- Developing broad public and private partnerships with local, State, and federal agencies;
- Communicating with and educating citizens about the urgency of acting to reduce the impacts of climate change; and
- Addressing any disproportionate impacts of climate change on low-income 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 Working Group has the following core strategies:

- Advising on effective communications strategies for outreach to diverse stakeholders;
- Identifying and advising on opportunities for stakeholder engagement in Commission and State activities, or for State and Commission support of existing community activities;
- Providing best practices for education of various sectors on climate change; and
- Engaging the network of Commission members (inclusive of working groups) to coordinate and provide capacity for such initiatives, as feasible.

Membership

The ECO working group members are appointed by the Chair of the Commission, and represent both public and private interests in climate change. Members include a diverse array of stakeholder groups, and currently include representatives of academic institutions, environmental organizations, government agencies, and business interests, as identified in the governing legislation. A complete membership roster is included in *Appendix A* of this document, and will be maintained as changes may occur during the 2018 year, on the Commission's website.

2018 Priorities

Each working group is charged to establish a comprehensive and accountable annual plan that sets goals and performance benchmarks for the year; prioritizing new and existing climate change actions and initiatives. The following items represent those actions and initiatives which ECO has determined to be a priority in the 2018 year, as well as any associated goals, benchmarks or deliverables. This work plan may be adjusted as is appropriate to maintain the group's purpose as new events and opportunities arise during the 2018 year, and furthermore is subject to the approval and will of the Commission.

Education

E1: Climate Ambassador Program

In 2017, ECO members facilitated the development of a pilot Climate Ambassador Program which partners MDE and Bon Secours in Baltimore, to be launched over the winter of 2017/2018. This program utilizes a train-the-trainer approach, and incorporates materials on climate change into an existing framework; a strategy which ECO will attempt to identify additional opportunities for and repeat in 2018 and beyond, as capacity exists.

E2: Climate Education ToolBox

ECO will work to continue its 2017 work to identify and compile existing resources and tools for climate education targeted at diverse sectors and literacy levels. These resources should draw from products created by environmental education experts like MSDE, MAEOE, MADE-CLEAR, and the National Aquarium, as well as State agencies and other partners. ECO recommends the resulting Climate Education ToolBox, once properly vetted, be housed on the updated Commission website to be launched in 2018.

E4: Commission Fact Sheets

In 2017, ECO collaborated with MDE and the Hatcher Group to create five fact sheets and an infographic that connect climate change impacts in Maryland across the sectors and workgroups. The original topics for the fact sheets include The Commission, The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act, Resiliency to Climate Change, Sea-Level Rise and Flooding, and the Health Impacts of Climate Change. In 2018, ECO plans to work on coordinating the dissemination of these products and how to best increase their utilization in appropriate platforms.

E5: Environmental Literacy

ECO plans to identify efforts such as Project Green Classrooms and the Chesapeake Bay Program which make connections between climate change and environmental literacy. Once identified, ECO will work to support these programs by communicating on events and progress, and collaborating as feasible.

Communications

C1: Maryland Climate Photo Essay

During 2017, ECO members worked to develop a campaign packet and timeline for the Climate Change in Maryland Photo Event - a multi sector effort to engage the public to share what climate change looks like through social media platforms using specific hashtags. In 2018, discussions will continue to coordinate the launch of the campaign among members and stakeholders.

C3: Workgroup partnerships

ECO will assign a liaison to attend Adaptation & Response, Mitigation, and Scientific & Technical Working Group Meetings, as well as Commission and Steering Committee meetings. The purpose of these liaisons will be to identify opportunities for the ECO Working Group to collaborate with and support the Commission, and to further develop broad public and private networks and partnerships consistent with ECO's mission. The goal of these partnerships is to ensure all workgroups are receiving ECO guidance or assistance as requested, and that ECO has access to information and updates in a timely manner to facilitate communication to larger non-Commission audiences.

C4: Communications best practices

In 2018, ECO plans to: (1) utilize the one-pager template to develop a Commission letterhead and logo that can be applied to all Commission materials, to provide a unified "look"; (2) develop and promote the utilization of hashtags for the Commission to utilize on social media; (3) continue providing consult on the Commissions website as MDE makes revisions, with the intention of improving the user-friendliness and public engagement; and (4) additional advisement on communications best practices as requested by the Commission or other Working Groups.

C5: Statewide calendar of climate events

In 2018, efforts will continue to maintain and enhance the breadth of events shared on the “Environment, Public Health and Climate Change in Maryland” calendar, managed by the Maryland Department of Health; and other similar platforms as they may be created or identified. Furthermore, it is the intention of ECO to enhance the visibility of and increase access to such platforms, with the intention of creating a comprehensive resource of events related to climate change in Maryland to be featured on relevant websites.

C6: Compilation of distribution lists and communication partners

ECO will continue work to compile distribution lists for various and diverse sectors which may be useful in both targeted and general climate change communication efforts, including those related to Spanish language education and outreach. Additionally, ECO will continue to update and improve its list of Climate Communicators, who are self-identified community leaders or other trusted messengers willing to assist in outreach and education on climate change.

Outreach

O1: Facilitation of existing outreach and listening sessions

In 2018, ECO will continue to provide support for existing Working Group and State agency outreach efforts as requested. This includes, but is not limited to: (1) identifying communities most vulnerable to climate change in which outreach might occur, and existing trusted messengers in those communities; (2) identifying locally relevant topics related to climate change and its impacts which might best address the concerns of a given community; and (3) identifying emerging methods and best practices for the process of community outreach and engagement.

O2: Distribution list outreach

Utilizing the distribution lists developed under our communication goals, ECO will share resources, events, and updates surrounding the work of the Commission (inclusive of Working Groups), stakeholders and partners as it relates to climate change in Maryland.

O3: Increase external awareness of State climate change work

In 2018, ECO aims to increase external awareness of the Commission and the State’s work on climate change, with a goal of increasing stakeholder engagement in the upcoming 40 by 30 Draft Plan and the 2018 Commission Report which will also address the Draft Plan’s release. ECO will produce a brief guide to accompany the 2018 Report (to be posted online in conjunction with or shortly after the report), which may include (1) information on appropriate educational usage and application of the Report; (2) FAQs about the Report; (3) ways to keep up-to-date on the State’s climate change efforts; and/or (4) a timeline of upcoming events related to the State’s climate change efforts, including expected opportunities for public engagement.

O4: Maintenance of the Outreach Plan

In 2017, ECO adopted an Outreach Plan which will be followed, updated and maintained as applicable throughout the upcoming year.

O5: Recognition of Climate Change Action

In 2017, ECO worked with MDE to incorporate recognition of climate change action taken by businesses, as part of the existing Maryland Green Registry program. In 2018, ECO plans to engage the Chamber of Commerce or community organizations to see if it would be feasible to hold a “climate change mitigation business day/week” where businesses can show off what they are doing to save energy or reduce GHG emissions. ECO also plans to work with MSDE to develop a program which recognizes schools engaged in efforts to reduce their GHG emissions, educate on climate change, or otherwise contribute to the State’s climate goals.

Future Priorities

While certain priorities were established for 2018 based on timing and capacity, the following items are still on the docket upcoming either in 2019 or as capacity becomes available.

****Items removed from the 2018 Priorities list can be placed here, maintaining the same nomenclature (e.g., E2)****

Schedule of Meetings

The ECO Working Group meets monthly to further the priorities laid out in the previous section. Appendix C of this document provides a summary of ECO Working Group meetings scheduled for 2018, as well as tentative topics and action items.

DRAFT

Appendix A

Education, Communication and Outreach Working Group Membership

11/13/17

Co-Chairs	
Allison Rich	Maryland Environmental Health Network
John Kumm	EA Engineering, Science and Technology
MCCC Liaisons	
Lori Arguelles	Alice Ferguson Foundation
Public Sector Representatives	
Ashley Pennington	Johns Hopkins Office of Sustainability
Dannielle Lipinski	Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Denise Robbins	Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Grant Samms	Washington College Center for Environment and Society
Isaac Hametz	Mahan Rykiel Associates
Joelle Novey	Interfaith Power and Light
Kris Hoellen	National Aquarium
Private Sector Representatives	
Michele Mitch-Peterson	Honeywell
Richard Reinhardt	Maryland Chamber of Commerce
State Government Representatives	
Allison Gost	Maryland Department of Health
Colleen Turner	Maryland Department of Transportation
Donna Balado	Maryland State Department of Education
Julie Oberg	Maryland Department of Agriculture
Kaymie Owen	Maryland Energy Administration
Mark Shaffer	Maryland Department of the Environment
Pat Harcourt	UMCES/MADE-CLEAR
Sara Luell	Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
Stephen Schatz	Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Technical Advisors	
George (Tad) Aburn	Maryland Department of the Environment
David Costello	IEER
John Coleman	Maryland Department of Planning

ECO Working Group Recommendations from the MCCC 2017 Report

In 2017, the Education Communication and Outreach (ECO) Working Group made concrete progress in many of the 2017/2018 Work Plan goals. ECO members worked to increase stakeholder awareness and participation in climate-related events in Maryland by continually enhancing the Maryland Department of Health's (MDH) "Environment, Public Health and Climate Change in Maryland" calendar with relevant events and directing traffic to the calendar. The working group developed and began enacting an Outreach Plan, (1) collaborating with partners to both expand and enhance outreach and education by increasing the climate literacy of existing environmental outreach, through development and implementation of the Climate Ambassador pilot; (2) building the Toolkit of climate education resources; and (3) building the list of Climate Communicators. ECO proposed and developed a statement from the Commission regarding President Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement. ECO members also worked to produce five one-pagers on the topics of: The Commission, The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act, Resiliency to Climate Change, Sea-Level Rise and Flooding, and the Health Impacts of Climate Change.

These recommendations continue to expand upon ECO's Work Plan and 2016 recommendations:

Note: The identifying 'Action' numbers refer to the statute which guides the Working Group actions ([Md. Environment Code Ann. §2-1303\(d\)](#)).

Developing broad public and private partnerships (Action 2)

- All Commission stakeholders should contribute to the "Environment, Public Health and Climate Change in Maryland" calendar, maintained by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), and similar platforms.
- ECO and the Commission should continue to formalize partnerships with the Commission's diverse sectors to support a broader network of information and engagement regarding communities vulnerable to climate change.
- ECO should broaden the group's expertise and reach by increasing membership that maintains a balanced perspective.
- ECO should work to identify and support existing efforts to implement climate change education and environmental literacy.

Developing products for use in education, communication, and outreach on climate change (Action 3)

- ECO should collaborate with the Commission's other working groups: Adaptation and Response, Scientific and Technical, and Greenhouse Gas Mitigation, to provide expertise on communication and education around their work products.
- ECO should support dissemination and utilization of Commission fact sheets developed by the Hatcher group, through existing partnerships, community engagement, Commission activities and other identified pathways. ECO should continue to work with stakeholders to identify, build, and collate resources for outreach relevant to a variety of communities and outreach activities (e.g. Toolkit, Communicators List).
- ECO should support the re-design of the Commission website by the Hatcher group and MDE, and recommends that this process include seeking the input of ECO expertise and feedback where applicable.

Appendix B

Education, communication, and outreach related to the Commission's Annual Report (Action 3)

- ECO should support an effort to raise general awareness of the Annual Report and of the work of the Commission, coordinated around the release of the 2017 Report in the November time frame.
- ECO will advise the Commission on best practices for education and outreach surrounding the 2018 Annual Report/40 by 30 GGRA Draft Plan to increase stakeholder engagement.

Developing strategy and process for education, communication, and outreach on climate change (Action 3)

- The Commission's outreach and education should be informed by the ECO Working Group; ECO will work to support this effort by keeping the Commission and other working groups up-to-date on such best practices and emerging methods.
- ECO will continue to advise the Climate Commission regarding the design and implementation of (1) a Climate Ambassadors program which enables a broader discussion on climate change by taking advantage of networks and events in which a message on climate change may be easily worked into the existing framework; and (2) a Climate Champions program that recognizes companies or groups engaged in efforts to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions or otherwise contribute to the State's climate goals.

Addressing any disproportionate impacts of climate change on low-income and vulnerable communities (Action 5)

- ECO should support the education, communication and outreach goals of the Commission by continuing to provide advisement and additional capacity as applicable, to identify communities especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Vulnerability can be defined by exposure to increased flooding and sea level rise and other climate factors, and/or by ability to respond to these events based on socioeconomic status.
- ECO should continue work to identify and collaborate with existing trusted messengers in communities vulnerable to climate change, and the efforts that they are already undertaking.
- ECO strongly supports the MWG's effort to incorporate considerations for environmental justice and underserved communities in its recommendations for the State's 40 by 30 Plan.

Appendix C

Proposed ECO Working Group Meeting Schedule for 2018

Updated 12/01/17

Date/Time	Topic	Potential Collaboration Partners	Deliverables
Wednesday January 24 10:30am – 12:00pm			
Wednesday February 21 10:30am – 12:00pm			
Wednesday March 21 10:30am – 12:00pm			
Wednesday April 18 10:30am – 12:00pm			
April 24th Commission Meeting			
Wednesday May 16* 10:30am – 12:00pm			
June 19th Commission Meeting			
Wednesday June 20 10:30am – 12:00pm			
Wednesday July 18 10:30am – 12:00pm			
Wednesday August 15** 10:30am – 12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report Recs • Distribution Recs 		Draft Annual Report Recs
September 18th Commission Meeting			
Wednesday September 19 10:30am – 12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report Recs • Distribution Recs 		Final Annual Report Recs
October 23rd Commission Meeting			
Wednesday October 24 10:30am – 12:00pm			
November 7th Commission Meeting			
Wednesday November 14 10:30am – 12:00pm			
Wednesday December 19 10:30am – 12:00pm			

* alt: Wednesday, May 23rd

** alt: Wednesday, August 22