

Greenhouse Mitigation Working Group (MWG)

July 19, 2022

Agenda with Meeting Notes

- **Opening Remarks by the Co-Chairs** – MCCC Chair Suzanne Dorsey greeted the members and guests. MWG Co-Chair Kim Coble opened the online meeting at 10 a.m. She indicated that she wanted to talk about implementation of climate action policies. There were 14 members present. The meeting was facilitated by MDE Climate Program Manager Mark Stewart.

Mark announced that the BioMass to Energy subgroup will be meeting soon. Please email him if you are interested in attending the meeting at Mark.stewart1@maryland.gov. Mark also announced that October 19 is the deadline for working groups to finalize their recommendations for the 2022 Annual Report. He asked members to look over the Buildings report part of the 2021 Annual Report before the next meeting on August 16, 10-noon.

Tim Purinton announced that the Nature Conservancy is issuing an RFP, in tandem with MWG, to focus on ZEV infrastructure and vehicle incentives. TNC has funds to advance equitable climate policy.

Decarbonizing Buildings Policy Implementation Status presentation – see attached slides by Mark Stewart, MDE

MDE is required to develop regulations to guide certain commercial and multi-family buildings for Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS). There are some exemptions. Legislation requires energy use intensity, not just direct emissions. An alternative pathway must be included – provide that a fee can be paid that is no less the social cost of carbon for any emissions above target numbers. MDE has less than 12 months to adopt the BEPS regulations.

- **MWG Direction for the Building Energy Transition Implementation Task Force**

Mark Stewart said MDE will conduct stakeholder meetings in the fall regarding the rulemaking process for buildings of 35,000 square feet or more, in accordance with the Climate Solutions Now Act. The deadline to adopt regulations is June 2023.

Kim Coble suggested that MDE or its new Task Force review the exemptions in the law for the Buildings Energy Transition so MWG can fully understand them and their impact overall.

Mark asked members to email any additions or changes to the MWG recommendations in the MCCC Annual Report over last year's as we create the new ones for 2022, and to use as explicit language as possible to assist implementation. "Actionable recommendations" is the goal.

- **EmPOWER Update by PSC** - see attached slides
Discussion after the presentation by Amanda Best centered on the need for further legislative action on the EmPOWER program so that it's programmatic goals and implementation align with the goals for the state's GHG emissions reduction, electric conversion being a center point. One suggestion toward sunseting fossil fuel subsidies is to eliminate rebates and incentives for gas appliances. Commissioner David Lapp is concerned about the electrification goals of the Commission and the current Climate Solutions Now Act versus the EmPOWER program's electric efficiency goals that he hopes will be worked out in the next legislative session. He would like to see the Public Service Commission (PSC) take more climate action.

Amanda also provided this link:

https://www.psc.state.md.us/wp-content/uploads/EmPOWER-Recommendations-to-General-Assembly_Final.pdf

- **Public Comments**

Dr. Alex Pavlak proposed a performance metric that applies dollars per ton of CO2 or equivalent GHG emissions. Can be used across programs. It's a simple, objective tool that would allow you to look at 2 different programs and look at value. Some programs would show an enormous return on investment.

Josh Tulkin, Maryland Sierra Club president, thanked the Commission for their work. Expressed concern that several agencies are not taking on climate action at a fast enough pace. Would like to see the MCCC set the culture of information to get agencies to pursue maximum implementation of the goals. Global message that will require agencies to pursue implementing programs as quickly as possible. Convey to the legislature that their job is not done.

Ruth White, Sierra Club, Howard County, would like to see meeting recordings made available to better understand the slides.

Chris Hoagland, MDE Air Director, and Kim Coble want to see a recommendation for additional funding for programs outside of EmPOWER.

Garrett Fitzgerald, Montgomery County, said he thinks cleanup of the EmPOWER authority should be a priority. Unless very explicit instruction is given to PSC from the legislature, things

at PSC will continue as it has. Scale up EmPOWER with reforms or create something else? A lot of strategy needs to be developed right now. He also wants MWG to look at solar for condominiums and community solar deployment.

Mark Stewart said yes, there will be recommendations on the solar topic.

Mike O'Halloran, MAPTA, said a lot of these issues were rejected by the legislature. Propane and biodiesel play a critical role in the energy portfolio, for instance. Is the 2022 Annual Report going to go back to the legislature with last year's recommendations that were rejected?

Kim Coble answered that she appreciates the point Mike made but views that as a separate process; just because something wasn't right last year doesn't mean it should be dismissed this year. Education, further discussion, work group products, all will move MCCC recommendations forward. Kim wants MWG to look at what tools are available to us in the regulatory process to make progress outside of the legislative process.

Chris Hoagland said MWG will look at what regulatory tools are available to us.

Josh Tulkin again – With the overlap between CSNA and MCCC, he would find it helpful to have the Commission or WGs ask for specific input from stakeholders. To know what type of feedback to give at the appropriate time. A prompt by email would be helpful. Mark Stewart said to let us know if you want to be added to the interested parties email list. Email susan.casey1@maryland.gov

The meeting ended at noon.

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