

Education, Communication and Outreach (ECO) Working Group  
of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change (MCCC)

May 17, 2017 Meeting Minutes

The meeting was convened at 10:30 at the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) by Tad Aburn, Director, MDE Air & Radiation Management Administration.

Attending in person: John Kumm (EA Engineering, Science, and Technology, Inc., PBC), Pat Harcourt (UMCES), Grant Samms (Washington College Center for Environment & Society), Kris Hoellen (National Aquarium), Allison Gost (DHMH), Kaymie Owen (MEA), Tad Aburn (MDE), Mark Shaffer (MDE), Liz Entwisle (MDE), Brian Hug (MDE), Lisa Nissley (MDE), Jessica Herpel (MDE), Duane Johnson (MDE), Dave Costello (IEER), Steve Pattison (EcoLogix).

Attending by phone: John Coleman (MDP), Luke Wisniewski (MDE), Dave Costello (IEER).

Welcome and Introductions. Tad Aburn convened the meeting and introduced the new Co-Chair, John Kumm, Senior Engineer/Project Manager at EA Engineering, Science, and Technology, Inc., PBC. Attendees introduced themselves.

Social Media Opportunity: Climate Photo Essay. Allison Gost and Grant Samms provided an overview of their social media campaign to invite people to submit photos highlighting climate change in their lives. The campaign will launch in the July/August timeframe using the hashtag, “seemymdclimate” for posts. ECO members are encouraged to help generate a “storm of submissions” by pushing it out through their social media networks. Participants will be invited to post images and tweets showing the effects of climate change and what climate change means to them, with the goal of helping Marylanders visualize climate change. Allison and Grant will coordinate reviewing submissions and present the top 10 posts/tweets to the MCCC at its September meeting. The campaign strategy is not currently being vetted through a marketing firm. Kaymie Owen mentioned that the Governor’s Office of Communications will be having a meeting with all of the agency Directors of Communications/PIOs. She indicated, and confirmed with Mark Shaffer, MDE’s Director of Communications, that they will raise this to aid in having the state agencies assist in the effort. Tad Aburn stated that linking key messages with visual images makes sense and suggested ECO should strive to have images showing the effects from climate change in the upcoming MCCC Annual Report. Kris Hoellen offered to send word out on the campaign to the schools the National Aquarium works with.

ECO Outreach Plan. Tad indicated there are three key actions associated with the Outreach Plan. These are: building the toolkit, developing a larger list of communicators and building a list of communities. It was suggested that breaking down/organizing the list of communicators by groups made sense: agencies, private sector, advocacy groups and universities. Allison reminded everyone it is important that the language and literacy levels of the targeted audiences be factored into the development of toolkit materials. Tad remarked that there is a strong desire from the MCCC to conduct more outreach sessions. He suggested that perhaps sometime this fall/winter, after key community leaders have been engaged, to invite them in for an informal

dinner meeting with Cabinet Secretaries, state elected officials and others for a general dialogue. Kris offered the National Aquarium as a possible venue.

Pat cited the Yale Climate Communications Survey as an excellent resource for understanding opinions and levels of understanding regarding climate change, accessible through an interactive map that allows searches by state, county and Congressional districts:

<http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/ycom-us-2016/> . Several attendees noted it was a very informative survey. Lastly, Tad asked the Working Group members to review what is currently in the toolkit and provide any additional information to Liz Entwisle, as well as information on agency/organization plans to meet with communities.

Tad reported on MDE's recent engagement with communities in Pasadena, North Point, Turner Station and Bon Secours/West Baltimore, noting that while much of the discussion and interest has been on diesel emission reduction efforts, climate change is also a topic of interest. He reported that MDE has been in discussions with the Maryland Motor Truck Association (MMTA) about a diesel idling program and also mentioned a couple Citizen Science air quality sensor projects taking place in Baltimore.

Climate Ambassador Program. Tad reported there is progress on pursuing a Climate Ambassadors and Climate Champions Program. MDE is working on a pilot Climate Ambassador Program in partnership with the Bon Secours Community Works Center. Tad indicated that ideally, it would be great to have an outside funding source for a Climate Ambassador Program such as from the Abell Foundation or Town Creek. He asked David Costello about potential funding support from Town Creek. David indicated that he could not speak to that; however, his organization is scoping out a "Climate for Life" initiative". Allison Gost reported that DHMH is working with the UMD Extension Program to train community health workers to be Climate Ambassadors and is considering launching a pilot on the Eastern Shore. Kris asked whether the Climate Ambassador Program will target youth. There was a general consensus that this makes sense. Mark Shaffer mentioned the Audobon Society in Easton as a possible collaborator for an Eastern Shore focused youth program.

EcoLogix and Hatcher Group Outreach Support. Tad introduced Steve Pattison from EcoLogix who provided a brief overview of EcoLogix' outreach support work for MDE. This includes diesel idling reduction efforts with the Port of Baltimore and MMTA, developing a Climate Ambassador pilot through the Bon Secours Clean and Green Team, and working with business leaders to develop a Climate Champions program. Tad noted that actions that improve a business's energy efficiency and bottom line also reduce GHG emissions and can go into the GGRA Plan as voluntary actions. Tad reported on The Hatcher Group's UMCES-funded work to develop one pager fact sheets and other outreach materials for the MCCC. ECO members were thanked for their participation in an online survey that aided in narrowing down the topics for the one pagers. These will be presented to the MCCC at its June 21 meeting. A second survey will be sent to obtain feedback for the second phase of Hatcher's work on MCCC website enhancements.

Meeting Adjournment. Tad adjourned the meeting at 12:00.

The next ECO Working Group meeting is re-scheduled to June 12 at 10:30 at MDE.