

**CLIMATE CHANGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
February 21, 2023
9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Rachel Carson State Office Building,
and via Teams**

MEMBERS/ALTERNATES PRESENT:

Chairperson Steve Krug	Flora Cardoni
Jason Kelso	Elizabeth Marx
Kim Kipin-McDonald	Glendon King (for Rep. Daryl Metcalfe)
Jaret Gibbons	Lindsay Baxter
Patrick Henderson	Jennifer Greenberg
Regi Sam (for Gladys Brown Dutrieuille)	Christopher Sandvig
Greg Czarnecki (for Cindy Dunn)	Rep. Perry Stambaugh
Adam Walters (for Neil Weaver)	Rep. Ben Sanchez

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Paul Morris, Marc Mondor, Terry Bossert, Rep. Sara Innamorato

PA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (DEP) STAFF:

Lindsay Byron, Megan Porta, Christopher Nafe, Kerry Campbell, Laura Rigge, David Althoff, Sarah Pinter, Special Murray, Cole Gessner, Gregory Lenahan

INVITED GUESTS: Mark Hand, Lisa Richardson

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

Chad Heister, Roy Gothie, Franklin Egan, Mark Huncik, Josie Gaskey, Ariana Genna, Stephanie Sigafos, Joshua Jedlicka, Lindsay Williamson, Nick Troutman, Kyle Rosato, Andrew Ritter Jr., Martha Hart, Michael Rooney, Marc Ramson, Kailee Glock

MEETING:

The February 21, 2023, meeting of the Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC or Committee) was called to order at 9:04 a.m. by Chairperson Steve Krug. With 15 of 20 seated members present at the start of the meeting, a quorum was established.

MINUTES: The minutes of the December 13, 2022, CCAC meeting were presented to the Committee for approval. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Kelso and seconded by Mr. Czarnecki. There were no requests to edit the minutes by any members. The motion to approve the minutes carried by a voice vote and passed.

MEETING SUMMARY: (This narrative provides a summary of the discussions that took place during the meeting. It is not a transcript of the proceedings.)

2022 CCAC Meeting Review – Christopher Nafe, DEP

Mr. Nafe reviewed some of the key takeaways from the CCAC meetings held in 2022. They included topics on transportation, electricity generation, the industrial sector and fuel supply, agriculture and land use, buildings, climate adaptation, and public health and environmental justice. Mr. Nafe discussed how the information shared during these presentations can inform our climate planning and actions going forward.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Sandvig asked if there was any discussion or takeaways on VMTs (vehicle miles traveled) and Mr. Nafe said there was discussion regarding increasing multimodal transportation in conjunction with urban planning. Mr. Nafe suggested a further discussion with PADOT may be of benefit for the group. Mr. Sandvig said he does have a contact that may be able to present at an upcoming CCAC meeting.

Ms. Marx commented that under the “buildings” presentations there was no information regarding the Low-Income Usage Reduction Program, which funds about 81 million dollars annually to many people in EJ communities. There was also no mention of the Weatherization Assistance Program. She appreciated key takeaways regarding public health and EJ communities. Mr. Nafe stated that we intend to incorporate EJ into those programs moving forward.

Proposed 2024 Climate Impacts Assessment (IA) and Climate Action Plan (CAP) Scope of Work (SOW) – Lindsay Byron, DEP

Ms. Byron presented on the proposed scope of work for the 2024 Climate Impacts Assessment and Climate Action Plan, which was shared with the committee prior to the meeting for review. Ms. Byron reviewed the comments from the CCAC on the 2021 CAP, and listed the suggestions and themes being considered for the 2024 CAP based on those comments.

The CCAC was asked to suggest subtitles for the CAP, which will drive the tone of the document. The final documents will be published at the end of October 2024. CCAC members were asked to provide feedback on the 2024 PA CIA and CAP SOW during the discussion time, or via email to lbyron@pa.gov. CCAC feedback should be received no later than close of business Monday, February 27th, DEP will consider CCAC feedback and aim to begin procurement process on February 28th.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Henderson asked why there seemed to be a shift from in-state consumption to in-state generation. Ms. Byron stated that we want to maintain consistency with previous iterations and modeling. Mr. Campbell and Chairperson Krug stated that from a carbon accounting perspective, generation is considered appropriate due to the large percentage of electricity exported.

Chairperson Krug commented that the IRA is the most significant legislation in a generation, and this should be considered in the SOW. He also stated he wanted to add significant proposals and strategies for the industrial sector. Additionally, the AEPS was last updated in 2014 should be addressed. Chairperson Krug was also concerned that the SOW proposed that the contractor should attend CCAC meetings every four months vs. every two months. Mr. Sandvig agreed that every two months is more appropriate and also commented that transportation should be included; how to shift from private vehicles and fossil fuel-based vehicles. Mr. Althoff stated that the four-month meeting requirement was to add flexibility for the contractor. Chairperson Krug wanted to add a requirement for the contractor to attend at least six CCAC meetings.

Ms. Marx asked a question regarding specific recommendations to the General Assembly and various agencies. Ms. Byron said that the Act requires us to give specific legislative recommendations to the General Assembly. Ms. Marx stated she would like us to make recommendations for policy changes in situations where multiple agencies are involved. She is glad to see more emphasis on costs vs. benefits; the cost to the end user should be analyzed.

Mr. Campbell stated that the subtitle will be influenced by our communications office and it should reflect the scope of the document. He asked that the CCAC provide their input.

Mr. Walters stated that he agreed with the IRA addition that Chairperson Krug mentioned earlier. He asked if the major issues discussed at the CCAC meetings in 2022 are going to be in the SOW for the CAP. Ms. Byron stated that is the goal, with input from the contractor and the committee. Mr. Althoff stated that the speakers, presentations and discussions delivered to the committee in 2022 were provided so that the information could be used to inform the 2024 CAP and the committee should provide feedback if that should be the case. Mr. Sandvig asked if the previous versions were too high level for implementation in the eyes of Mr. Althoff/DEP. Mr. Althoff stated the strategies are relatively high-level and he'd like to see more regarding progress towards the CAP discussing the current state of progress as was described in the 2022 presentations and the incorporation of specific strategies to move from current efforts to be able to achieve the 2050 goals. Mr. Nafe commented that he previously reviewed some specific examples of success in PA for the purpose of incorporation into this document. Ms. Cardoni stated that she agrees with having more specific examples; she said we should also look at what other states have done/what has worked. Chairperson Krug commented that the subtitle, should begin it with a positive action word so that it might draw people's attention.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comments were presented at this meeting.

Climate Action for EJ Communities – Sarah Pinter, DEP

Ms. Pinter discussed the Climate Action for EJ Communities project. The EPO strives to incorporate environmental justice in all its work and will engage directly with EJ communities to provide support, assess challenges, and capture opportunities. This program is aimed at understanding EJ communities' biggest obstacles to climate resilience. DEP has hired a contractor to facilitate community engagement to develop and implement climate strategies that will benefit EJ communities, with the end result being a guide for implementation of these strategies to maximally benefit EJ communities and measure the success. This builds upon the 2021 CAP and IA, as EJ communities are more vulnerable to climate change impacts. This program aims to address these inequities while advancing PA's climate goals by: engaging with and listening to EJ communities to better address their needs; ensuring GHG reduction strategies produce meaningful health, welfare, and community benefits; prioritizing state and federal funding to ensure assistance is available where it is most needed. The guide will be a menu of climate resilience strategies that benefit EJ communities for government and community leaders. Locations for these community meetings have been selected based on DEP EJ status, DOE Disadvantaged Community status, and Local Climate Action Plan participation. The meetings will introduce the project and outline the most serious climate impacts in PA and the contractor will facilitate these discussions. Online surveys will be used to gather additional participant input from those unable to attend. This input will be used to refine the preliminary action list and develop a final guide to climate action for EJ communities. DEP anticipates that the guide will be published this summer.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Sandvig asked if we considered including PennDOT in this project and why DEP is not considering putting this into policy and instead is writing a guidebook. Ms. Pinter replied that we have not contacted PennDOT yet, and, as EPO is not a regulatory office, this is not enforceable guidebook of actions, but will inform future decisions. Also, the EJ office is in the process of updating their policy.

Mr. Czarnecki said he would like urban tree planting to be included and DCNR has programs to teach people how to plant and maintain trees. They've planted about ½ million trees thus far and the climate change benefits they provide are numerous.

Mr. Henderson asked for clarification of an EJ community, as DEP is in process of updating this definition. Ms. Pinter stated that the current definition is 20% or more residents live in poverty or 30% or more residents are minorities. The new definition will be more involved. Mr. Henderson stated that we should not assume what EJ priorities are so we should be careful how that input is shaped (no predisposed concepts). Also, there is a distinction between EJ and EJ communities. He asked what opportunities non-EJ community residents would have for their opinions. Ms. Pinter stated that the surveys will be open to all PA residents so no one will be excluded from giving their opinions. Mr. Campbell commented that this project is aimed at getting feedback from people who historically have not had opportunities to give their feedback.

Centre Region Climate Action – Lisa Richardson, SmartPivot Energy – Lisa Richardson from the Centre Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) presented on their Smart Pivot Energy program. CRCOG consists of 6 municipalities in Centre county which work together for items such as parks, libraries, planning and building codes, refuse and recycling, and the Climate Action & Sustainability Committee. They completed a GHG inventory and report in 2020. In 2021, community and stakeholders were engaged via a survey, a vulnerability assessment was completed, and the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan was adopted. The report assessed climate vulnerabilities, identifies GHG emissions, and contains over 80 actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change; those areas include land management, renewable energy, solid waste, clean and healthy water, energy and buildings, and sustainable transportation. They also participated in the 2022 EPO Capstone program with students from East Stroudsburg University, whose focus was reducing energy demand at both residential and commercial properties and increasing energy efficiency. The students created an energy efficiency toolkit, which CRCOG will use on their website. Their website is aimed to help homeowners and businesses go solar. They have also partnered with Solsmart, which is a national program that helps communities become solar leaders. They provide best practices, technical assistance, and resources. They assign points for accomplishing specific tasks and activities, which equate to a gold, silver, or bronze status. In 2022, CRCOG received a silver certification. CRCOG's goal is to balance solar with their prime farmlands. They also focus on the local business community and presented the C-PACE program to local developers. C-PACE provides low-cost, long-term funding and loans for energy efficiency and water resiliency projects. CRCOG also had a collaboration between local government and a nonprofit housing organization applying for a 1-million-dollar grant to perform renovations improving energy efficiency. CRCOG realized they didn't have the workforce needed to complete the energy efficiency upgrades. The clean energy transition involves creating job growth, so CRCOG is considering workforce development and an apprentice program to help their local builders. COG also thinks nonprofit green banks would motivate people to support clean energy projects. Other ideas being considering are a Clean Cities Coalition and Climate Fellows, which would involve community volunteers.

DISCUSSION:

Chairperson Krug asked if the county is interested in a Climate Action Plan. Ms. Richardson stated she does think they would be interested, as nearby municipalities have expressed interest. He also asked if the county has a sustainability planner and Ms. Richardson said they do not.

Updates

Ms. Byron provided a summary of climate outreach conducted by state agencies since the last meeting.

Mark Hand provided an update from the Governor's GreenGov Council. Mr. Hand reviewed the Commonwealth's goals derived from Executive Order 2019-01, and shared that the 2022 GreenGov Annual Report will be published soon. He shared that commonwealth buildings saw no energy consumption reduction for FY 2022 – there was a half percent increase, but commonwealth buildings have reported an overall a 12.5% decrease over the past 3 years. This small increase in energy use in FY 2022 is likely due to reoccupation of facilities after pandemic. With regard to passenger fleets – in 2019 the commonwealth had 53 EVs, and by the end of 2022 we had 203 EVs in our fleet. We have a goal of 971 EVs by 2025. Mr. Hand stated that the ability to provide charging has been the initial challenge. The commonwealth currently has 108 EV charging plugs, and 300 planned for installation this year. Mr. Hand provided an update on the commonwealth's renewable energy procurement – the commonwealth's PA PULSE generation contract with Constellation is for 191MW of in-state solar. Beginning in 2023, Constellation is providing renewable energy credits until the full 191MW resource is online. He shared that the commonwealth is also adding solar deployments on state properties, with 5.5MW currently installed across various agencies. With regard to new buildings – the commonwealth has built ten new high-performance buildings in 2022 to bring the total to 41. Mr. Hand shared that not much progress has been made on reducing vehicle miles travelled. He stated that medium and heavy-duty vehicles make up about 80% of miles travelled by commonwealth employees, and approximately 90% of vehicle emissions, and noted that this is something to look into in order to make further progress. Mr. Hand also provided an update related to the Climate Resilience and Mitigation Network - nine state agencies signed a memorandum of understanding to participate in and fund the network, which is based on the success of the former Climate Leadership Academy.

Mr. Henderson stated that a more interactive format would be favorable for the climate trainings provided through the Climate Network. He also asked if the 3% energy use reduction goal for state agencies considers remote workers. Mr. Hand replied that for the energy reduction goal they are only able to track the entire portfolio of state buildings for which the commonwealth has access to electricity data. Mr. Henderson asked how far toward the commonwealth's green energy reduction goal does the PA PULSE purchase get us. Mr. Hand replied that it is expected to supply approximately half of all of the electricity use for state agencies.

Ms. Marx asked if the state is taking advantage of utility-funded programs. Mr. Hand responded that had not made much use of those programs, but the projects that the state is undertaking have their own paybacks, and they would proceed regardless of those programs. Ms. Marx also asked if the PA Housing Finance Authority is part of the Climate Network, and Mr. Hand responded that they are currently contributors. Ms. Marx suggested that the PA Housing Finance Authority, PUC, and DCED would be good additions.

Ms. Cardoni asked how IRA and IJJA is interfacing with GreenGov's work. Mr. Hand responded that he is awaiting further guidance on those IRA and IJJA-funded programs. Mr. Krug suggested that the PA Treasury may have to provide that guidance, as it will involve tax credits.

Next Meeting

Ms. Byron reminded the Committee that the next meeting will be held April 25, 2023

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Jaret Gibbons and seconded by Mr. Joe Sherrick. The motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.