

Education Communications & Outreach Working Group Charter and 2016 Work Plan

Purpose

The purpose of the Education, Communications, and Outreach Working Group (“ECO”) is to assist the Maryland Commission on Climate Change (“Commission”) in fulfilling its responsibilities to engage, educate, and communicate with diverse stakeholders by:

- Advising on effective communications strategies for cohesive and strategic outreach to the Commission’s diverse stakeholders & Maryland citizens
- Identifying and advising on opportunities for diverse stakeholder & citizen engagement
- Providing tools and advising on best management practices for educating various sectors on complex climate change ideas
- Educating, communicating, and providing outreach on issues related to climate change & GGRA

Membership

ECO is composed of public information officers from the state agencies on the Commission, and a diverse array of public and private stakeholder groups, including communities responding to climate change, all of whom possess unique content expertise in either education, communications, or outreach.

ECO shall have a chair (and/or Co-Chairs) with content expertise and the chair shall act as a liaison to the Commission Steering Committee. A consistent dedicated staff person should create work products to serve the workgroup. Technical advisors shall also engage in ECO Workgroup to provide technical support.

Responsibilities

ECO will undertake the following responsibilities:

- Building a sustainable platform and capacity to conduct public outreach and education on the Commission’s triple messaging on greenhouse gas reductions, the economy and public health
- Providing strategic expertise, advice, and counsel for communications regarding the annual report to be released by the Commission
- Serving as liaisons or advisors to other Commission working groups to counsel on best management practices for strategic communications
- Identifying, prioritizing, and pursuing relationships and opportunities for engagement with key stakeholders
- Producing and maintaining an ongoing calendar of events and strategic contacts for the calendar year update it to the extent ECO members have relevant information.
- Supporting a set of focused public outreach meetings, on behalf of the Commission, through either existing platforms or through Commission specific events
- Liaisons shall be identified to report back to workgroup
- Recommending annual performance goals & benchmarks for approval by the commission
- Leveraging communications opportunities by identifying cross sector opportunities

Priorities

- Create a highly visible, user-friendly, effective communication platform/website
- Serve as a resource and advisor to the Commission, its Steering Committee, and the other working groups
- Seek public input on Commission goals, priorities and reports in order to enhance Commission products and information

Process

ECO will

January-March: Communications Evaluation & Recommendations

- ECO workgroup will establish annual benchmarks and goals (a number of initiatives or meetings)
- ECO will build capacity by identifying resources for a robust and sustainable communications platform that supports the Commission in effective public engagement and climate change education
- ECO will develop recommendations to and the Commission and its working groups on effective ways to engage the public
- ECO will recommend best practices for developing and maintaining an internal platform where Commission materials can be shared by workgroup and commission members
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April – June: Outreach Evaluation & Recommendations

- ECO will develop recommendations for a schedule of public listening sessions and outreach activities ECO will review & evaluate outreach efforts and methods used in 2015, to determine what was most effective and recommend changes that could result in better outcomes to meet Commission and working groups' goals
- ECO will identify sectors (geographic, industry, demographic) that have not yet been reached and recommend steps

July-Nov: Support to Work Groups & Commission

- ECO will solicit feedback on above tasks from other working groups
- ECO will respond to Commission & Steering Committee proposals for outreach, education, and communications
- ECO will pursue actions identified in above tasks to the extent that members have available resources
- Eco will prepare and plan a communications and outreach strategy around the Commission's annual report
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December: Evaluation and Planning

- ECO will conduct a 2016 evaluation and prepare a 2017 work plan that sets annual goals and performance benchmarks as required in the legislation establishing the Commission.¹

¹ "Maryland Commission on Climate Change" (HB514), Ch. 429, 2015 Laws of Maryland. Section 2-1303(D) of the law provides: "The Commission shall prioritize working group actions,

Resource Needs

In order to be successful ECO will need access to information and work products developed by other working groups and staffing in order to conduct the work undertaken by the volunteer members of the Working Group. ECO also recommends that a consultant once again be hired to write the Commission's annual report and that outside help be contracted for media relations around the public meetings and the release of the report and any other communication needs such as the communications platform/web portal noted above as a priority.

Schedule of Meetings

ECO meets once a month (third Wednesday) by phone or in person to pursue the listed responsibilities or to respond to requests from the Commission or its working groups for outreach and communications advice.

including ... (11) establishing comprehensive and accountable annual working group work plans that set annual goals and performance benchmarks."