

Mitigation Working Group

2021 Work Plan

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 MDE Secretary Ben Grumbles and consists of 24 members representing diverse interests in the State.

The Mitigation Working Group (MWG) is one of four working groups that support the objectives of the Commission. The purpose of the MWG is to recommend regulatory, market-based and voluntary programs to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. These strategies are to be designed in support of a strong economy and job creation in Maryland.

Membership

The MWG is a balanced group co-chaired by two commissioners from the environmental nonprofit and business communities, with administrative support provided by Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) staff.

2021 Priorities

The MWG is partially driven by the schedule set by the 2016 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (GGRA) legislation, which required MDE to coordinate with other agencies and the Climate Commission to produce a plan with specific strategies to achieve the most recent benchmark GHG emission reduction requirement (40 percent reduction from 2006 levels by 2030). Furthermore, the plan has been developed in recognition of the IPCC's finding that developed countries must reduce GHG emissions between 80 to 90 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.

In its 2020 Annual Report, the Commission recommended that the state adopt more ambitious GHG reduction requirements in line with more recent scientific findings. The Commission's recommended goals are to achieve a 50% reduction from 2006 levels by 2030, and to develop plans in recognition of the IPCC's finding that developed countries must reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions as early as 2045.

The Commission also outlined an improved approach to Environmental and Climate Justice and tasked the MWG with developing an energy transition plan for buildings.

The MWG's priorities for 2021 include:

1. Develop an Energy Transition Plan for Maryland's buildings stock.
2. Implement the Commission's approach to Environmental and Climate Justice, including bringing a greater diversity of voices into the MWG and its processes and addressing justice in all of the MWG's work products.
3. Identify and evaluate opportunities to achieve deeper greenhouse gas reductions, in line with the Commission's recommended goals and informed by MDE's forthcoming final plan to achieve the GGRA goals.
4. Provide expertise and input as MDE and other agencies develop the 2020 Greenhouse Gas Inventory, including methodology updates regarding global warming potentials and new forest sequestration modeling.

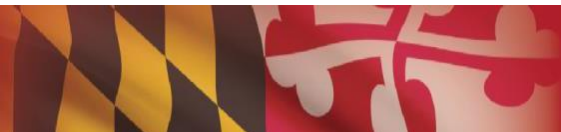
Process

The MWG has access to a wide variety of internal and external assets, including the expertise and resources of MWG members, various State agencies, and the three other working groups of the Commission. In the past, the MWG has regularly sourced subject matter experts to inform its discussions and recommendations and plans to continue doing so in 2021. Relevant information and analysis will be requested from appropriate state agencies or other institutions (public and private), as necessary to have robust discussions on the mechanisms and pathways called for under the individual topics listed in Appendix C of this document. The MWG will also coordinate with the Scientific and Technical Working Group (STWG), the Adaptation and Response Working Group (ARWG) and the Education, Communication and Outreach Working Group (ECO) on cross-cutting issues as appropriate.

The ultimate aim of each meeting - whether the context is discussion, analysis, identification, assessment, or evaluation - will be to develop an associated recommendation for the appropriate parties moving forward. It is the goal of the MWG to make these recommendations as specific as possible. Recommendations may call for execution of specific measures, programs, or pathways; or they may identify specific information needed to determine the appropriate measure, program, or pathway, and call for action related to gathering and analyzing such information.

Schedule of Meetings

The MWG meets monthly. A schedule of monthly meeting topics and tasks follows.



MWG Workplan Recommendations from 2020 Annual Report

GHG Reduction Goals and other GGRA of 2016 Provisions

1. MDE should compare its processes against the World Resources Institute (WRI) accounting and reporting standard for GHG reduction goals and identify any inconsistencies. The MWG will evaluate formal adoption of the WRI protocol.
2. MDE should create an open-source online access point for the E3 Maryland PATHWAYS emissions model, like the Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool (CAST) that provides model inputs and allows the public to do scenario planning.

Environmental and Climate Justice and Just Transition

3. MDE should work with the public, other agencies, the General Assembly, and the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities to identify environmental and climate justice communities and the threats and effects those individual communities are facing.
4. To supplement that practice, MDE should complete a thorough community environmental equity analysis regarding the impact of its suite of climate action policies, programs and proposals on communities of color, low-income communities, communities historically overburdened by pollution, and communities underserved by our historic energy and transportation systems. Community representatives should be included in the design of the study. The plan should be designed to identify specific goals and objectives (and evaluation/reporting thereof) to ensure equitable distribution of economic benefits produced by climate action strategies, policies and programs. MDE should commit to prioritizing benefits to communities who have been disproportionately burdened by GHG emissions and other pollutants and are underserved or under-resourced.
5. The MWG should study policy solutions like California's Buy Clean California Act (AB262) and Washington State's Buy Clean and Buy Fair Washington Act to determine whether such policies would be beneficial to Maryland jobs and GHG goals.
6. As part of the manufacturing study required by the GGRA of 2016 in 2022, the Commission, working with other State agencies should analyze (1) how to promote manufacturing in-state in a way that creates sustainable, high-quality jobs related to renewable energy (including transportation, building retrofits, etc); (2) benefits of including provisions in procurement and other policies like prevailing wages, project labor agreements, labor harmony agreements, and buy Maryland/buy USA/hire Maryland policies.
7. The MWG should study and report on long-term job impacts on industries and communities as energy transition policies are implemented. This includes both job loss and job creation opportunities. The goal is to ensure the generation of sustainable economic benefits from climate action strategies, policies, and programs and address economic dislocations. Design efforts to ensure a just transition for workers and communities. Just transition policies must address wage replacement, guarantees of health care and retirement security, job training and job placement. Efforts for communities must address loss of tax base and strains on community programs. The study should also include programs to minimize negative impacts, including creating jobs in remediation and clean up.

Transportation

8. MDOT should compile and provide to MWG research from ZEEVIC and others on barriers to ZEV and mechanisms to reduce those barriers, and the impact of ridesharing and connected autonomous vehicles on GHG emissions.

Building Energy Use

9. *Maryland should produce an Energy Transition Plan by the end of 2021.*

The State should develop an Energy Transition Plan to coordinate long-term activities and ensure that the overall buildings sector strategy achieves equitable benefits for disadvantaged communities, anticipates and prevents escalating distribution system costs for shrinking pools of natural gas customers, and takes advantage of opportunities for economic growth, including for the agricultural community from renewable fuel development and EmPOWER market optimization. In 2021, the MWG should coordinate the necessary research and planning process.

As part of the Energy Transition Plan, MDE should commission a study of the market potential and consumer economics of renewable thermal / beneficial electrification examining incremental first costs, payback periods, appropriate incentive levels and source GHG savings associated with oil, propane, electric and natural gas options.

The MWG should consult with PSC on a methodology or series of alternative methods to evaluate source emissions and electric loads associated with building electrification.

Short-Lived Climate Pollutants

10. MDE should update its supplemental GHG inventory estimating the impact of methane pollution leaking from natural gas production and distribution systems using the latest available estimates of leakage rates, and under the latest versions of both the 20-year global warming potential and 100-year global warming potential for methane.

Natural and Working Lands

11. The MWG will evaluate the use of waste from managed forests, the forest products industry, food crops, horticulture, livestock, and food processing for energy, where consistent with IPCC definition for renewable bioenergy, and where carbon stocks are renewed within a year of use.

MWG Meeting Schedule for 2021

Updated 1/22/2021

(Subject to revision by the working group)

Meeting	Proposed Topic (Lead Agency)
January 19	2021 Work Plan Finalization (MDE) Final GGRA Plan (MDE) Transportation: Update on TCI and MHD ZEV MOU processes, ZEV progress update (MDOT, MDE)
February 16	Building Energy Transition Plan: Scoping, process, research & analysis priorities (MDE, Subgroup)
March 16	Transportation (MDOT, MDE) Timeline and Methodology Updates for 2020 GHG Inventory (MDE, DNR)
April 19	MCCC Meeting (TBD)
April 20	Just Transition / Long Term Job Impacts: Towson Study and Other State Policies (MDE) Natural and Working Lands (MDA, DNR)
May 18	Biomass to Energy (DNR) Electricity & RGGI Program Review (MDE, MEA)
June 21	MCCC Meeting (TBD)
June 22	Methane (MDE) Federal and State Policy Changes: Fed 100-day measures and 2021 MGA Session
July 20	Building Energy Transition Plan Mid-year check-in: Research & analysis results from subgroup (MDE, Subgroup)
August 17	NWL: Agriculture & Forests Carbon Trading; Blue Carbon (MDA, DNR)
September 13	MCCC Meeting (TBD)
September 21 (two meetings?)	Building Energy Transition Plan Late-year check-in: Potential Recommendations for MWG (MDE, Subgroup) Draft 2021 Recommendations
October 19	Final 2021 Recommendations
November 15	MCCC Meeting (TBD)
November 16	2022 Workplan
December 14	Building Energy Transition Plan: Final Plan (MDE, Subgroup) 2022 Workplan