

Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee Meeting Summary

**February 27, 2024 at 11:00 A.M.
Government Center Conference Room 11**

Board of Supervisors Members Present:

Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay
Supervisor Walter L. Alcorn, Hunter Mill District
Supervisor James N. Bierman, Jr., Dranesville District
Supervisor Patrick S. Herrity, Springfield District
Supervisor Andres F. Jimenez, Mason District (Committee Vice-Chairman)
Supervisor Rodney L. Lusk, Franconia District
Supervisor Dalia A. Palchik, Providence District
Supervisor Kathy L. Smith, Sully District
Supervisor Daniel G. Storck, Mount Vernon District
Supervisor James R. Walkinshaw, Braddock District (Committee Chairman)

Others Present:

Bryan J. Hill, County Executive
Beth Teare, County Attorney

Link to agenda and meeting materials: [Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee Meeting: Feb. 27, 2024 | Board Of Supervisors \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 A.M.

Item I: Opening Remarks

Committee Chairman Walkinshaw thanked Supervisor Storck for his leadership of the committee over the last four years. The December 12, 2023, meeting summary was then accepted.

Item II: Environmental Quality Advisory Council Annual Report on the Environment

The Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC) Chair, Larry Zaragoza, presented the 2023 Annual Report on the Environment (ARE). He introduced EQAC's Vice-Chair, Ken Lanfear, and other members in attendance: Bryan Campbell, Renee Grebe, Clyde Wilber, and Eric Goplerud. He presented EQAC's top recommendation to update the employee compensation policy for areas with critical staff shortages such as wastewater and solid waste to attract and retain employees. Additional recommendations included minimizing ecological degradation from development pressure, budgeting and implementing a Zero Waste Plan for the public, adopting a public plan that shows how climate goals are being implemented and achieved, and planning and implementing an electric vehicle (EV) charging network for county residents.

EQAC Chair Zaragoza presented the budget priorities in the ARE to set the wastewater treatment fee rate to meet upgrade and maintenance needs for the wastewater collection system and to increase the Stormwater Service District rate in 2024 by at least one-quarter penny, from 3.25 to 3.50 cents per \$100. He then shared EQAC's proposed topics to review in 2024 and concluded by asking what EQAC could do to make the ARE more useful or improve their work.

Committee Chairman Walkinshaw emphasized the need for EQAC to work with the Planning Commission on the Policy Plan, a suggestion reiterated by Chairman McKay and Supervisor Jimenez. Chairman McKay commented on the need to increase public awareness of our climate goals and progress and asked that EQAC look at the Climate Action Dashboard and consider how it might be augmented. He asked EQAC to look at federal incentives for the maintenance of EV charging infrastructure as well as considerations for the legislative packet that could help address this issue. He noted that EQAC's priority recommendation on environmental degradation needs to account for the older parts of the county in need of revitalization.

Supervisor Bierman recommended that tree preservation and infill development be added to EQAC's list of things to consider, as it relates to the top recommendation in the 2023 ARE. EQAC Vice Chair, Ken Lanfear, agreed that tree canopy is a critical issue and noted that tree cover is one of the biggest indicators of heat islands, a concern for low-income communities.

Supervisor Jimenez commented on EQAC's budget priorities, noting that any recommended cost increases should be implemented equitably and not disproportionately impact low-income residents. Supervisor Lusk also commented on the budget priorities, acknowledging the need for compensation for staff. On the tree canopy issue, Supervisor Lusk added that this is a particular concern for mobile home parks and manufactured housing communities in his district. He also noted a need to coordinate resiliency and water needs on military bases in the county.

Supervisor Palchik asked for EQAC's help in engaging with the community on our climate goals, particularly in opportunity areas. Supervisor Storck reiterated this sentiment, adding that the county cannot achieve its climate goals without cross-sector community engagement. He thinks this is an opportunity where EQAC could do more to build lines of connection and community climate champions.

Supervisor Alcorn asked EQAC to consider efficiencies or needs for interdepartmental coordination in county programming and services.

EQAC Chair Zaragoza expressed the council's intention to pursue committee suggestions. Commissioner Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner, Chairman of the Fairfax County Planning Commission, shared that he is looking forward to working with EQAC and other environmental groups throughout the policy planning process. Commissioner Cortina, Chair of the Planning Commission's Environmental Committee, will be liaising with EQAC.

Item III: Climate Action Progress Update

John Morrill, Director, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) updated the committee on the county's climate action progress. He explained OEEC's role in coordinating

with over 25 county agencies to address the causes and effects of climate change through the three plans adopted by the Board of Supervisors: The Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP), Operational Energy Strategy (OES), and Resilient Fairfax. He noted the county's combined approach to implement the three plans, and the subsequent organization of participating agencies into the Interagency Climate Team with its six implementation groups.

Mr. Morrill shared the goals of CECAP and progress thus far in reaching carbon neutrality by 2050. He highlighted that the county's greenhouse gas emissions are down about 30 percent from 2005, due to the cleaning of the electric grid and gains in buildings and transportation, with energy use flat or declining in the past 10 years. He summarized progress on specific initiatives, including the pursuit of federal grant opportunities, public outreach campaigns on climate action, the enhancement of extreme heat services for residents, and implementation of programming for residents and businesses, including Charge Up Fairfax, Green Business Partners, and the Energy Conservation Assistance Program. He noted progress on the OES since its 2021 adoption with the completion of 13 energy retrofits, installation of five solar rooftop systems, and installation of 110 EV charging ports. Mr. Morrill shared the priorities for CY 2024, including identifying gaps in our road to carbon neutrality, growing community-facing programs at a broader scale and enhancing visibility of climate action activity and progress.

Committee Chairman Walkinshaw noted the importance of sharing our progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions with the community. These reductions occurred despite the county growing by 12 percent in the same timeframe. He noted that the federal grant opportunities emerging in the climate and energy sector are new and highly complex; it takes a lot of staff time and resources to complete applications. Staff have been asked to let the Board know if additional resources are needed.

Chairman McKay suggested that there be a way to tell the community, in simple terms, what we need them to do to help us meet our climate goals. He suggested identifying three to four actions in each of the outcome areas. Mr. Morrill expressed the importance of community climate champions to encourage action amongst peers. The county continues to identify champions and develop case studies through programs like Green Business Partners. Chairman McKay then asked if there were other municipalities in the country that have developed a partnership with a charging network to accelerate the installation of public charging infrastructure in commercial spaces. He noted that this could be a revenue generator. Mr. Morrill said that staff would investigate this possibility. (*See addendum*).

Supervisor Smith asked about the pros and cons of installing Level 3 chargers on county property instead of just Level 2 chargers. Mr. Morrill explained that the cost for Level 3 chargers is typically ten times higher than Level 2. Committee Chairman Walkinshaw added that work was being done with an outside group to identify charging network gaps.

Supervisor Alcorn asked what percentage of the climate neutrality goal we will achieve if we accomplish all of the sector-specific goals in CECAP. Mr. Morrill estimated that the percentage would be high. Supervisor Alcorn said that it would be helpful to know a percentage. He stated that it would also be helpful to get a sense of which sector goals are more important in reaching our climate neutrality goals. (*See addendum*).

Committee Chairman Walkinshaw suggested that Board members distribute the county's climate action checklists in their districts to provide the community with specific actions. He stated that it would be helpful to map those actions to our broader metrics and goals.

Supervisor Storck stated that CECAP includes 2030 and other interim goals before we must meet our 2050 carbon neutrality goal. He noted that climate action implementation consolidates and reflects several of our environmental initiatives, including those that preceded CECAP, OES and Resilient Fairfax. He suggested friendly competition between Board offices to help organize and develop champions within their communities and drive forward specific actions.

Supervisor Palchik asked how the Board could help highlight Green Business Partners. Mr. Morrill answered that OEEC has been brainstorming ideas to encourage further outreach. Supervisor Palchik offered her support in promoting any 2024 outreach events.

Supervisor Jimenez commented on the federal funding opportunities emerging in the climate and energy realm. He noted that vulnerable communities are a major focus of these grants. He encouraged OEEC to contact his office and noted the potential of the Mason District as an innovative hub for the kind of work that the federal government is funding.

Supervisor Bierman mentioned the importance of making sure our residential buildings are conserving energy, for both new development and existing buildings. Mr. Morrill explained that it's largely a matter of encouraging or incentivizing action; the county has no authority to require new residential buildings to exceed code requirements. Committee Chairman Walkinshaw added that this is a challenging issue that we will keep working on in the Legislative Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 P.M.

ADDENDUM -- Staff Responses to Two Questions (page 3)

1. "...Chairman McKay then asked if there were other municipalities in the country that have developed a partnership with a charging network to accelerate the installation of public charging infrastructure in commercial spaces..."

Response – Staff found there are several public-private partnerships (PPPs) across the country that result in EV charging for public use; examples were found in Maryland, New York, and California. The private firms involved in these include ChargePoint, an EV charging equipment manufacturer used by the county for its own fleet, as well as several other EV charging equipment manufacturers.

OEEC is engaging a consultant to prepare a community EV readiness strategic plan (as well as an EV transition plan for the county fleet), which will include best practices to achieve widespread EV charging throughout the community; the consultant report will be completed in April 2025. The PPP option is one approach that will be explored.

2. "...Supervisor Alcorn asked what percentage of the climate neutrality goal we will achieve if we accomplish all of the sector-specific goals in CECAP. Mr. Morrill estimated that the percentage would be high. Supervisor Alcorn said that it would be helpful to know a percentage. He stated that it would also be helpful to get a sense of which sector goals are more important in reaching our climate neutrality goals..."

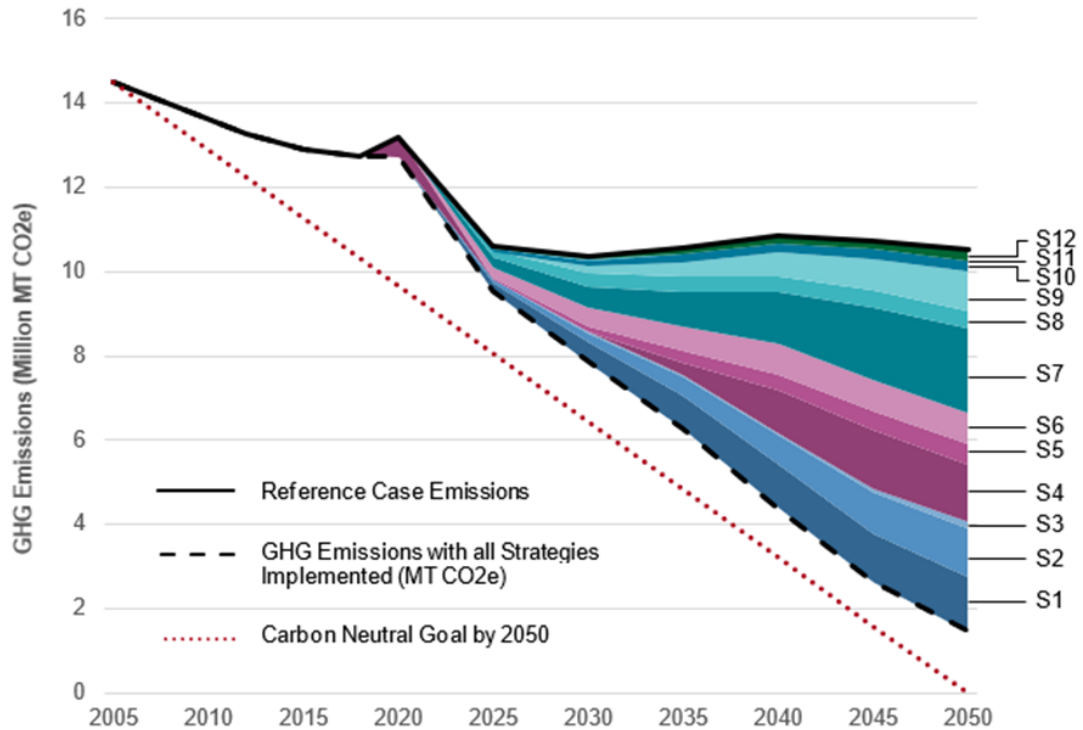
Response – Drawing from the analysis in the CECAP, the twelve sector strategies provide an 87% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The remaining 13% needed for neutrality would come from offsets, sequestration, or technologies not yet identifiable. The table below shows the contributions of the eight most significant strategies, which account for a total of over 80% GHG reduction. The role of the county is also summarized in qualitative terms, identifying to what extent county actions and programming can further these goals, mindful of market forces, personal decisions, and regulatory hurdles.

Eight Most Significant Strategies Toward Carbon Neutrality from CECAP	Share of Emissions Reduction	Influence of County Role?
S7. Increase Electric Vehicle Use	19.4	Some
S4. Renewable Energy on Electric Grid	13.2	Limited
S1. Energy Efficiency in Existing Buildings	12.6	Some
S2. Electrify Existing Buildings	10.9	Limited
S9. Vehicle Fuel Economy and Low-Carbon Fuels	9.0	Limited
S6. Hydrogen and Clean Biogas	7.0	Limited
S5. Onsite Renewable Energy	4.4	Some
S8. Public Transport., Transportation Demand Mgmt	3.7	Some
Total	80.2%	

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Addendum

OEEC will prepare a more detailed analysis providing additional context on the county role and what is needed to achieve carbon neutrality. That analysis will be presented in late calendar 2024.

These eight strategies are among the twelve strategies presented in the [CECAP report in a “wedge chart” \(p. 39\)](#), reproduced here:



- S1: Increase energy efficiency and conservation in existing buildings
- S2: Electrify existing buildings
- S3: Implement green building standards for new buildings
- S4: Increase the amount of renewable energy in the electric grid
- S5: Increase production of onsite renewable energy
- S6: Increase energy supply from resource-recovered gas, hydrogen, and power-to-gas
- S7: Increase electric vehicle (EV) adoption
- S8: Support sustainable land use, active transportation, public transportation, and transportation demand management (TDM) to reduce vehicle-miles traveled
- S9: Increase fuel economy and use of low-carbon fuels for transportation
- S10: Reduce the amount of waste generated and divert waste from landfills and waste-to-energy facilities
- S11: Responsibly manage all waste generated, including collected residential and commercial waste, wastewater, and other items
- S12: Support preservation, restoration, and expansion of natural systems, green spaces, and soil quality