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| COMMUNITY listening session, NORTHERN | Graphic illustration of team in a meeting |
| Virginia department of environmental quality |

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| Date: |  | Time: |  | Location: |
| Feb. 26, 2025 |  | 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM |  | DEQ Northern Regional Office, 13901 Crown Court, Woodbridge, Virginia 22193 |

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| Meeting purpose |
| DEQ is hosting community listening sessions across the Commonwealth to gain local feedback on potential climate actions to be included in the development of Virginia’s Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP). DEQ will gather and analyze all input received at these sessions to help identify community goals, challenges, and potential climate actions to reduce greenhouse (GHG) emissions statewide. This input will be considered holistically when developing the long-term plan. |

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| agenda |
| This meeting consisted of an introductory presentation by DEQ staff, followed by a facilitated community discussion.   |  | | --- | | **TOPICS** | | **Introductions, Video, and Meeting Goals** | | **Review of the Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP)** | | **Overview of the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP)** | | **Community Discussion and Group Activity**   * Discussion questions on potential GHG emission reduction measures | | **Wrap Up**   * How to stay involved with DEQ throughout the CCAP planning process | |
| meeting summary |
| The Northern CCAP Statewide Listening Session was facilitated by DEQ’s Air Division staff and began with an overview presentation of DEQ’s climate planning efforts in Virginia. The first topic covered was a summary of the Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) published in February 2024. Topics covered in this section include:   * DEQ’s public feedback during the PCAP planning process * A summary of PCAP GHG emission reduction measures * Overview of where Virginia’s GHG emissions come from   Following the PCAP overview, DEQ staff presented on its current phase in climate planning: the 2025 Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP). Topics covered in this section include:   * What the CCAP is and what content will be included in the plan * Who is providing input on the plan * DEQ’s engagement process and CCAP development timeline   After the presentation, DEQ staff guided both in-person and virtual attendees through an open discussion on various climate pollution topics to gain localized feedback to be considered as part of the CCAP.  **DEQ sought public input on the following questions:**   1. Which sectors (e.g., agriculture, transportation) are most important to you when reducing GHG emissions? 2. What specific actions are you already taking to reduce GHG emissions, or are already happening in your community? 3. What barriers are preventing you or your community from reducing GHG emissions? 4. What specific emission reduction measures do you wish were in place in your community, or for DEQ to consider in the CCAP? |

After the discussion period, DEQ provided avenues for community members to stay engaged throughout the CCAP planning process, including through the CCAP Community Survey; the listening session feedback form; and the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) e-mail bulletin.

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| Key topics AND takeaways |
| These notes reflect public feedback gathered during the Northern CCAP Statewide Listening Session. This session covered a wide range of topics in **transportation, power, buildings, land use, agriculture, waste**, **and community education,** while focusing on benefits, opportunities, barriers, and concerns in reducing GHG emissions across the Commonwealth.  In **transportation**, participants noted the importance of smart growth, public transit expansion, and fleet electrification to reduce vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) and lower GHG emissions. Specific ideas included expanding electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in communities and incentivizing electrification programs at Virginia’s ports. However, concerns about consumer education, range anxiety, and inadequate charging infrastructure remain obstacles to widespread EV adoption.  The **power** sector discussion focused on increasing community and distributed solar options, alongside a need for stronger legislation to facilitate a clean energy transition. However, the rapid expansion of data centers and continued reliance on coal to meet growing electricity demand pose challenges in electrifying the grid.  For **buildings**, attendees supported energy efficiency incentives and weatherization programs for both homeowners and renters. Ideas included prioritizing solar on rooftops and parking lots, increasing green building initiatives for new developments, and retrofitting older buildings. However, a key barrier noted was that many older structures lack the necessary infrastructure to support energy efficiency upgrades.  In **land use and agriculture**, participants emphasized prioritizing utility-scale solar development on underutilized spaces like brownfields to minimize impacts to agricultural lands. Expanding urban agriculture and agrivoltaics were also supported as emission reduction strategies. Challenges remain in balancing utility-scale solar development with the preservation of forests and farmlands.  Conversations on **waste** highlighted the value of community composting programs and local zero-waste initiatives. For concerns and barriers, attendees discussed current recycling infrastructure inadequacies and a need for expanded data on landfills and waste collection.  Finally, conversations on **community education** noted the need for effective storytelling and public outreach to generate buy-in for climate initiatives. Participants called for regulatory policies that hold major emitters accountable, greater transparency in decision-making, and expanded consumer waste education. Concerns included the negative health impacts of fossil fuel use, overconsumption trends, and limited financial incentives for clean energy adoption under current policies.  Overall, attendees expressed strong support for climate initiatives, but stressed the need for better infrastructure, policy changes, and public engagement to overcome existing barriers.  \**Views and opinions expressed by public attendees during this meeting do not necessarily represent an official position or policy of DEQ. This summary is intended to provide a general overview of key discussion points provided by participants in the listening session. DEQ is capturing local feedback on potential strategies, opportunities, and challenges to reduce GHG emissions across the Commonwealth to inform the development of the CCAP.*   |  | | --- | | **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS** |  1. **To what degree is DEQ considering environmental justice concerns? How is DEQ planning to conduct outreach to low-income and disadvantaged communities for the CCAP?**   *DEQ has developed a community engagement strategy to conduct meaningful outreach and engagement in low-income and disadvantaged communities (LIDACs) across the Commonwealth. These targeted outreach efforts are set to take place between April and June 2025. This effort aims to provide inclusive engagement opportunities for LIDAC representatives and individuals to provide a better understanding of what GHG emissions are, their impacts, and how these are being considered in the CCAP.*  *DEQ plans to employ an array of initiatives to engage communities, including public listening sessions, tabling events, and digital engagements, such as social media or newspaper advertisements, as well as our multilingual community survey. DEQ also intends to expand educational materials, including producing multilingual fact sheets and infographics. These engagements will also highlight the benefit of a clean economy through expanded workforce development opportunities that enable a smooth transition to a lower-carbon economy while creating new jobs and addressing potential workforce gaps across sectors.*  *Additionally, per EPA requirements, the CCAP will demonstrate the level of benefit to LIDACs for all identified emission reduction strategies. EPA also awarded DEQ implementation grants for methane capture and beneficial reuse projects at landfill and coal mine sites across Virginia. This work must also demonstrate that at least 40% of the overall benefits of these projects flow to LIDACs.*   1. **Which sector does landfill gas fall in the GHG inventory?**   *Landfill emissions fall under the waste and wastewater sector.*   1. **When looking at Virginia’s future GHG emissions, it appears that some sectors are growing while others are decreasing. What is the cause of this?**   *Changes in GHG emissions are specific to each sector.*   1. **How will DEQ account for the expected growth of data centers in the GHG inventory?**   *In the Virginia-specific business-as-usual (BAU) model, data centers will be broken out as its own filter to forecast both medium and high load growth projections using data from JLARC, PJM, and Dominion Energy.*   1. **How is imported energy accounted for in the GHG inventory?**   *The 2021 GHG inventory does account for the end use of imported energy. After accounting for all direct emissions in the electric power sector, remaining emissions are reapportioned across the residential, commercial, and industrial sectors.*   1. **How will current or future public policy and legislation impact the CCAP?**   *DEQ intends to develop the CCAP as a roadmap for potential actions that can be taken across sectors to reduce GHG emissions unitl 2050. Although it is a nonbinding plan, the goal is to use this roadmap to inform current and future decision-makers across sectors on how to develop actionable programs and policies in the future, including the costs, feasibility, and necessary implementation of each action. While funding opportunities or political landscapes may adjust over time, the plan can still be used as a reference point to better understand potential climate and energy strategies for Virginia.*   1. **Do you anticipate your award being affected by the recent activity at the federal level related to funds?**   *Currently, DEQ does not anticipate any interruption or delay in the climate planning process. DEQ is in communication with grant managers at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and have been able to access and draw down funds on this grant. DEQ is moving forward with the climate planning process as scheduled.*   1. **How do you define land use emissions?**   *Land use emissions come from conversions in land use types. This may be when land is converted from forests or wetlands to settlements or agriculture. It also accounts for nitrous oxide emissions from settlement soils.*   1. **Has DEQ coordinated with DEQ’s Solid Waste Division as they conduct their statewide solid waste management plan?**   *All historical and projected waste data used in the GHG inventory is received from DEQ’s Solid Waste team. The DEQ Air Division is also partnering with DEQ’s Waste team for one of the methane implementation grants, so their data will also be considered for this work, specifically to analyze impacts in the waste and wastewater sector.*   1. **How will EPA review the plan? What will happen with the CCAP after it is submitted?**   *At this time, DEQ expects EPA to review the CCAP to ensure that all requirements and components have been met. However, DEQ is unaware of any additional or formal review processes from EPA beyond that. At the state level, the CCAP will receive administrative approval from the Secretary’s Office of Historic and Natural Resources, as well as the Governor’s Office.*  *The CCAP is being developed to align with existing state regulations, specifically the Virginia Clean Economy Act, which will act as a guidepost for this exercise. Given that the CCAP is a nonregulatory plan, it is difficult to anticipate what legislation may be developed to impact the implementation of identified emission reduction strategies in the future. DEQ’s awarded methane implementation projects, as well as the Atlantic Conservation Coalition grant, will be used to implement measures in the plan. DEQ is also required to submit a 2027 CCAP status report, which will allow time to revisit any changes in legislation, funding, strategies, and goals.*   1. **How is DEQ engaging universities in the CCAP? Are any community colleges included in these engagements?**   *DEQ has two representatives from Virginia Tech and William & Mary in the CCAP stakeholder group. Additionally, DEQ has conducted outreach to university representatives and students to engage in CCAP community listening sessions. DEQ also expects to host targeted informational webinars to colleges and universities across the Commonwealth to better engage students in this planning process. Community colleges will further be an integral component of the CCAP’s workforce development analysis.*  *Generally, colleges and universities across Virginia have conducted numerous studies relevant to this work, including focuses on climate, energy systems, land use, and decarbonization. To the full extent possible, DEQ intends to catalog and incorporate this information into the CCAP.*   1. **Regarding the** [**JLARC data center study**](https://jlarc.virginia.gov/pdfs/presentations/JLARC%20Virginia%20Data%20Center%20Study_FINAL_12-09-2024.pdf)**[[1]](#footnote-1), how will DEQ evaluate any updates, predictions, and changes to this study over time as data center demand and load growth changes?**   *DEQ has compared load growth projections for data centers from JLARC, PJM, and Dominion Energy. While there are some minor discrepancies between sources, all predicted demands are relatively aligned. DEQ is also required to submit a CCAP status report in 2027. This report will allow DEQ time to revisit the original CCAP and account for any changes in data or projections as new information becomes available.*   1. **Does DEQ coordinate with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts for solar projects?**   *DEQ’s Renewable Energy team has limited coordination with the soil and water conservation districts currently. This coordination is primarily led by DEQ’s Stormwater team.*   1. **What can community members do to support the development and success of the CCAP?**   *There are many avenues for members of the public to engage in the CCAP planning process. The* [*DEQ Community Survey*](https://forms.office.com/g/9fEmjsdHbE) *is open to all Virginia residents until May 30, 2025, to share their input on the development of the plan. The CPRG team will also accept any written comments on the plan, which can be emailed to* [*CPRG@deq.virginia.gov*](mailto:CPRG@deq.virginia.gov)*. DEQ will also host an informal public comment and review period in fall 2025 after the draft CCAP is released. To stay informed of any upcoming events, or to find relevant documents and recordings on this work, interested parties may visit the CPRG website and calendar at* [*https://www.deq.virginia.gov/CPRG*](https://www.deq.virginia.gov/CPRG)*.* |
| loMATERIALS SHARED |
| 1. [Meeting Handouts:](https://www.deq.virginia.gov/home/showdocument?id=27885)  * Graphic of Virginia’s 2021 GHG emissions inventory * CCAP content requirements * Definitions of GHG emissions inventory sectors, with example emission reduction measures * Discussion questions * Glossary of commonly used terms and acronyms * CCAP Public Participation Guide  1. [CCAP Community Survey](https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=qeUKYsFOoE-GQV2fOGxzCVC8Dk4UohFOlps-0n7WWaJUOFFUMDNDU1NCTTNFTzdEQlRVNExQUFJERC4u&route=shorturl) 2. [[Meeting Presentation](https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:751a6f2f-c600-40b5-8c35-5c908eca32bd)](https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:1d7fd191-5fea-4803-a2a4-84d068c9f5b2) 3. [Post-Meeting Feedback Form](https://forms.office.com/g/1kuqTZtvSu) 4. [Meeting Recording](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3SS01QTqhE) |
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1. [jlarc.virginia.gov/pdfs/presentations/JLARC Virginia Data Center Study\_FINAL\_12-09-2024.pdf](https://jlarc.virginia.gov/pdfs/presentations/JLARC%20Virginia%20Data%20Center%20Study_FINAL_12-09-2024.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)