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| virtual listening session, statewide | Graphic illustration of team in a meeting |
| Virginia department of environmental quality |

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| Date: |  | Time: |  | Location: |
| Feb. 24, 2025 |  | 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM |  | Virtual, Webex |

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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**   * Discussion questions on potential GHG emission reduction measures | | **Wrap Up**   * How to stay involved with DEQ throughout the CCAP planning process | |

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| meeting summary |
| The 12pm Virtual Statewide CCAP 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 12pm Virtual Statewide CCAP Listening Session.  This session covered a wide range of topics in **transportation, power and energy demand, natural lands, buildings,** and **waste** while focusing on benefits, opportunities, barriers, and concerns in reducing GHG emissions across the Commonwealth.  In **transportation**, the discussion highlighted several opportunities to reduce emissions and improve accessibility. Reducing flight travel and expanding consumer education on electric vehicles (EVs) were key points, along with expanding EV charging infrastructure and the use of electric school buses. Participants also emphasized the need for public transit expansion into suburban areas, and introducing micro transit routes in rural communities.  However, significant barriers remain. Limited public transit access in suburban and rural areas restricts mobility options, while the high cost of EVs and fleet conversions presents financial restrictions. A lack of biking and walking infrastructure reinforces car dependency, and concerns were raised about continued highway expansion.  In the **power sector**, solar power investment in low-income communities was noted as a priority, as was giving consumers greater choice in sourcing renewable energy through community choice aggregation programs. Attendees further noted the benefit of solar on public and private schools across the state. Virtual power plants and agrivoltaics were highlighted as strategies to increase efficiency and sustainability. Despite these opportunities, attendees expressed concern over the large energy, water, and land use consumption of data centers.  For **natural lands,** attendees identified opportunities to protect and restore natural landscapes by planting native species, expanding tree canopies, and removing invasive plants to protect watersheds and strengthen wildlife ecosystems. However, rapid urban development and the loss of natural lands was noted as a concern.  **Building** efficiency and resiliency were discussed as opportunities to reduce GHG emissions. Examples provided include increasing residential solar options and incentivizing energy efficient upgrades for homeowners. The cost of energy efficient home upgrades was considered a primary barrier to reducing emissions.  **Waste** was another major focus of conversation. Attendees discussed support for expanding residential and commercial composting programs, encouraging producer responsibility for product waste, and reducing consumer waste overall. Inefficient recycling processes remains a major hurdle to diverting waste from landfills.  Overall, the conversation highlighted both innovative solutions and significant challenges in reducing climate pollution across sectors.  \**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. **How are data centers included in your future GHG emission projections and scenarios? Will data centers be segmented in the commercial and electricity inventories?**   *Data centers are included in the current GHG inventory under the electric power sector. The commercial energy sector also accounts for Virginia’s imported electricity used to support data center operations.*  *DEQ is working to develop a more Virginia-specific future GHG inventory based on current electricity demand projections for data center load growth. This will enable DEQ to better address potential ways to reduce emissions in this sector. DEQ is also working to identify the specific electricity demands of data centers by segmenting it into its own category, given its significance within Virginia.*   1. **What are the effects, if known, of the pending federal grants suspensions/revocations on this process for DEQ?**   *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. **Is chemical recycling a helpful strategy?**   *According to an October 2021 Government Accountability Office report[[1]](#footnote-1), chemical recycling is a plastic recycling method using “heat, chemical reactions, or both to break down used plastics into raw materials for new plastic, fuel, or other chemicals.” Chemical recycling could enable more plastics to be recycled instead of landfilled, which could produce positive environmental impacts and create higher quality secondary materials for reuse. However, current accessibility challenges may limit its effectiveness, given that it requires advanced technologies and high startup costs that are not readily available to jurisdictions across Virginia.*   1. **How will this plan be used, even if the federal policies or funding are no longer supportive of climate change action planning?**   *DEQ intends to develop the CCAP as a roadmap for potential actions that can be taken across sectors to reduce GHG emissions by 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 in Virginia. A status report will also be completed in 2027 to reflect on the CCAP’s progress and to make any revisions as needed.*   1. **How should those who cannot attend a community listening session provide feedback?**   *DEQ offers many ways to share input if members of the public are unable to attend the scheduled community listening sessions. The CCAP Community Survey will be open until the end of May 2025. This survey seeks the same feedback as covered at the listening sessions and provides an opportunity to share feedback on what climate actions most to you and your community. You may also submit written feedback on the plan at any time to* [*CPRG@deq.virginia.gov*](mailto:CPRG@deq.virginia.gov)*. The DEQ CPRG team is also available upon request to further discuss the CCAP and clarify its content with any interested parties.*   1. **What types of performance metrics and targets will the plan set?**   *The plan will set an interim year and end year to track emission reduction targets as currently set at the state and federal level. In particular, the CCAP will consider targets set in the Virginia Clean Economy Act (VCEA) to achieve statewide net-zero GHG emissions by 2045.*  *Additionally, various performance metrics will be set for each sector, with the intent to display the quantified emission impacts of high, medium, and low action for each sector. DEQ will also consider the required funds, authorities, and infrastructure needed to meet varying levels of action for emission reduction strategies.* |
| MATERIALS SHARED |
| 1. [Meeting Handouts:](https://www.deq.virginia.gov/home/showdocument?id=27882)  * 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://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-g53EroZN8) 3. [Post-Meeting Feedback Form](https://forms.office.com/g/1kuqTZtvSu) 4. [Meeting Recording](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGXBx-FIpG0) |
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1. https://www.gao.gov/blog/can-chemical-recycling-reduce-plastic-pollution [↑](#footnote-ref-1)