

**MINUTES OF MEETING
OF THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL
January 9, 2024**

CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL (CAC) MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bob Barkanic	Jerome Shabazz
Jacqueline Bonomo	John St. Clair
Cynthia Carrow	Thad Stevens
Bill Fink	John Walliser
Duane Mowery	Jim Welty
Trisha Salvia	Tim Weston
James Schmid	

CAC STAFF PRESENT:

Ian Irvin, Executive Director, Citizens Advisory Council

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Chairperson Tim Weston called the meeting to order at 12:40 PM. Chairperson Jerome Shabazz subsequently joined and led the rest of the meeting.

DEP UPDATE:

Jessica Shirley, the new Interim Acting Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), arrived in her new role with extensive experience within the agency. She anticipates that business will continue as usual with the initiatives under former Secretary Negrin but with greater focus on feasibility. The permitting plan initiative remains a top priority, and DEP will undergo a significant IT overhaul in 2024. The Governor's Office is moving swiftly to appoint a permanent Secretary and has identified candidates, including Interim Acting Secretary Shirley.

RGGI Update

The Administration appealed the Commonwealth Court decision to the Supreme Court last year in order to protect and preserve important executive authority for this Administration and all future governors. The Governor stands ready to implement the recommendations of the RGGI Working Group. Should legislative leaders choose to constructively engage, there is confidence that a strong alternative to RGGI could be agreed upon.

Methane Emissions Reduction Plan (MERP)

The Department of Energy (DOE) announced the availability of up to \$350 million nationwide, via the Inflation Reduction Act, in formula grant funding to help monitor and reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector. The goal of MERP is for oil and gas well owners to voluntarily and permanently reduce methane emissions from leaks and daily operations of low-producing conventional wells on non-federal lands. Based on the federal MERP grant formula, on December 15 Pennsylvania was allocated roughly \$44 million. DEP believes the formula miscalculated Pennsylvania's applicable well count by almost half and plans to engage DOE on a greater monetary allocation in the future. MERP funds must be obligated by DEP over a five-year period ending September 2028. No later than February 13, 2024, DEP must submit a

Community Benefits Plan and an amended budget to address the supplemental dollar amount that is reflected in the final grant award.

Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program (CPRG) Outreach

During November and December, DEP performed outreach and engagement on the CPRG, which was spearheaded by the Energy Programs Office with help from the Office of Environmental Justice. The feedback from these efforts will be used to inform the Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) and programs proposed for funding eligibility under CPRG Implementation Grants. DEP held two inter-agency meetings to coordinate across state government on the CPRG Plans and held several outreach sessions to target stakeholders, including targeted workshops for the industrial sector on November 30 and local government on December 11. DEP also held five outreach sessions within communities across the Commonwealth. Participants of the community outreach sessions highlighted transportation challenges, environmental education, weatherization and improving housing stock, and repairing government trust as top priorities for their communities. These industry, government, and stakeholder engagement sessions were particularly important because only climate pollution reduction strategies included in the PCAP will be eligible for the Phase II competitive Implementation Grant funding.

Q&A revolved around the status of the Chesapeake Bay Program and well plugging costs being determined by the ability to gain access to the well.

PENNSYLVANIA'S PFAS MCL RULE

Dawn Hissner, Chief, Operations, Monitoring & Compliance Division

Jill Anderson, Chief, Technical Support Section

This presentation discussed the background of PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), the MCL rulemaking process and provisions of DEP's PFAS MCL Rule, a PFAS sampling plan, details of a Toxicology Services Contract executed with Drexel University, funding for PFAS projects, EPA actions to address PFAS, and a Proposed National Primary Drinking Water Regulation.

Q&A included a discussion of the significant infrastructure improvements needed to public water supplies and wastewater systems to improve PFAS technologies and whether DEP has begun to develop a program to facilitate the analysis or treatment of wells should a private owner decide to do sampling and it is determined that the private well might be contaminated.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comments were received by three individuals. Those individuals, along with any organization he or she is representing is listed below, and hyperlinks to the written comments are provided. As provided under Section 9.4 of the Council's Bylaws, "the publication or summarization of comments received does not imply any endorsement of such comments by the CAC."

[Sandy Field, No False Solutions PA](#)

[Karen Feridun, Co-Founder of Better Path Coalition \(now No False Solutions PA\)](#)

[Dr. Barbara Brandom, Concerned Health Professional of PA \(Affiliated with Physicians for Social Responsibility\)](#)

HYDROGEN HUBS

Team PA

Thomas Murphy, Senior Managing Director of Strategy Energy Initiates Hydrogen Hubs – A New Frontier in Energy

This presentation discussed the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)'s commitment to kickstart an H2 economy, the Decarbonization Network of Appalachia, blue hydrogen's suitability to Appalachia, cutting edge technologies (autothermal reforming and partial oxidation) H2Hubs can leverage, capturing emissions from H2 production through Carbon Capture, Utilization & Storage technology, creating a network of hydrogen producers, consumers, and local connective infrastructure through H2Hubs, and H2Hub Community Benefit Plans.

Q&A included discussion about the Community Benefits Plan and identifying environmental issues to make sure the Department is ready to deal with them.

CAC COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Legislative

The December meeting focused on electronic waste recycling in HB 1603 and SB 734. Executive Director Irvin prepared an overview and analysis of the Bills, identifying gaps and where clarity was needed. DEP will have white papers available to the CAC soon. The Executive Director also mentioned legislation focused on crypto mining, HB 1476, as well as amendments to the Regulatory Review Act, HB 1925. The committee will report back to the CAC after the white papers on electronic waste recycling have been reviewed and next steps are determined.

The Executive Director offered that Earth Justice has committed to giving a presentation to the CAC regarding crypto currency. The PA Resources Council will present to the CAC on electronic waste issues in March and hear from the State of California about the last 10-15 years of electronic waste recycling if these Bills become law.

Strategic Issues

The Committee met last week and will have a follow-up meeting this week to debrief on the hydrogen hub presentation, as well as to determine if there are next steps related to electronic waste recycling legislation and the crypto currency issues.

Several presentations are scheduled for upcoming committee meetings: Department of Transportation in February around pipelines and Department of Energy in March. Focus will be directed toward finding someone to talk to the committee on the details of ARCH2 and MACH2.

Policy & Regulatory Oversight

No committee meeting this month. No new Air regulations. The Executive Director will reach out to the committee members about restarting monthly meetings.

NEW BUSINESS/OPEN DISCUSSION

The CAC lost both Co-Chairs of the Public Participation Committee, Rev. Mitch Hescoc and Dr. Jaime Bracey-Green. Anyone interested should make themselves known.

CAC's newest member, Jason Foster, will be starting next month and his bio will be sent to the CAC members prior to that time.

Chairman Shabazz stated that he has received very positive feedback from every committee about Executive Director Irvin's follow-through and his availability to look for information and resources.

Executive Director Irvin stated that he is working on the 2022 and 2023 CAC Annual Reports and is compiling information for a handbook to formalize onboarding for new members, bylaws, mission statements, statutes applicable to the Council, simplified Roberts Rules, major achievements of the Council over the last 55 years, and a roster of past Chairpersons and members since 1971.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 14, 2023

Chairman Shabazz solicited additions or corrections to the November 14, 2023 Minutes. A request was made that spelling of Jeff Walentosky's name be corrected.

With the correction of the misspelled name, Executive Director Irvin made a motion to approve the Minutes of the November 14, 2023 meeting, which was unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT:

**With no further business, Chairman Shabazz motioned to adjourn the meeting, and all were in favor.
The January 9, 2024 meeting of the CAC was adjourned at 3:41 PM.**