

CLIMATE CHANGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

June 24, 2025, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Rachel Carson State Office Building, and via Teams

MEMBERS/ALTERNATES PRESENT:

In-Person:

Chairperson Elizabeth Marx
Flora Cardoni
Joe Sherrick (for Chairperson DeFrank)

Kevin Warren
Steven Krug
Rep. Perry Stambaugh
Terry Bossert
Patrick Henderson
Rep. Ben Sanchez
Adam Walters (for Secretary Rick Siger)
Jennifer Greenberg
Jaret Gibbons

Online:

Jason Kelso
Jaret Gibbons
Marc Mondor

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sara Innamorato, Daryl Metcalfe, Christopher Sandvig, Cindy Dunn, Jennifer Greenburg, Vice Chairperson Lindsay Baxter, Adam Walters, Perry Stambaugh, Zachery Smith, Paul Morris

PA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (DEP) STAFF:

In-Person: Lindsay Byron, Chris Nafe, Danielle Lewis, David Althoff, Jessica Kelly, Amanda Eyer, Kerry Campbell, Kelsey Irvine, Collen Unroe, Lena Smith, Naimul Islam, Maria Solomidou, Chloe Wilson, John Wetzel, Amanda Amsbaugh

Online: Jessica Kelly, Greg Smith, Laura Rigge, Sarah Pinter

INVITED GUESTS:

Derek Dauphin, Emily Yates, Becky Bradley

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

Online: David Hess, Nathan Eachus, Susan Myerov, Christian Martinez, Jacob Misal, Brian Smiley, Jacob Newman, Krish Patel, William Sabey, Laura King, Jeffrey Young, Roy Gothie, Glendon King

MEETING: The June 24, 2025, meeting of the Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC or Committee) was called to order at 9:05 a.m. by Chairperson Elizabeth Marx. With 13 of 21 seated members present at the start of the meeting; a quorum was established.

MINUTES: The April 22, 2025, CCAC meeting minutes were presented to the Committee for approval. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Flora Cardoni and seconded by Mr. Joe Sherrick. No one opposed the motion. The motion to approve the minutes without amendments was carried by a voice vote and passed.

MEETING SUMMARY: (This narrative provides a summary of the discussions that took place during the meeting. It is not a transcript of the proceedings.)

Public Comment

Mr. Nathan Eachus, a resident of Luzerne County, provided public comment expressing concerns about the environmental and climate impacts of fossil fuel-powered data centers, including potential facilities in Pennsylvania. He also raised issues related to industrial pollution, such as acid mine drainage, wastewater from oil and gas operations, and fracking-related spills. Additionally, Mr. Eachus voiced concerns about transparency and public access related to CCAC meetings. Committee members acknowledged the comment and noted the importance of understanding the environmental implications of emerging industries and maintaining open public engagement.

Presentations:

Presenter: Becky Bradley, Executive Director, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC)

Ms. Becky Bradley presented on LVPC's integrated approach to land use, transportation, and environmental planning in the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton region. She highlighted efforts to direct growth into mixed-use, multimodal corridors while preserving natural resources such as floodplains, forests, and farmland. The presentation also emphasized investment in "trail-transportation" infrastructure, electric vehicle deployment, and the use of smart traffic systems to reduce emissions as part of the region's Transportation Decarbonization Plan.

Sustainable Transit Initiatives at Pittsburgh Regional Transit

Presenter: Derek Dauphin, Director of Planning and Service Development, PRT

Mr. Derek Dauphin discussed PRT's transition to zero-emission buses, including battery electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. He outlined service improvements such as redesigned routes and signal prioritization, along with strategies to enhance equity by deploying clean technologies in overburdened communities. Efforts to strengthen multimodal connections and expand community engagement were also highlighted.

SEPTA's Strategy for Transportation Decarbonization and Equity

Presenter: Emily Yates, Chief Innovation Officer, SEPTA

Ms. Emily Yates outlined SEPTA's approach to decarbonizing one of the nation's largest and oldest transit systems. She described SEPTA's Zero Emission Bus program, renewable energy investments, and the "Bus Revolution" system redesign aimed at improving access and service in underserved neighborhoods. SEPTA's planning includes workforce training, depot upgrades, and close coordination with environmental justice and community partners.

Discussion

Following the presentations, Chairperson Marx invited questions and comments from committee members. Mr. Steve Krug highlighted the importance of transportation planning during fiscal constraint and referenced Lehigh Valley's goals related to greening highways and parking areas. He suggested considering solar canopies over park-and-ride facilities and acknowledged SEPTA's solar energy investments.

Mr. Marc Mondor requested clarification on renewable diesel versus hybrid diesel. Ms. Yates explained that hybrid diesel vehicles use electric batteries but still consume traditional diesel, while Mr. Dauphin noted that renewable diesel is a plant-based alternative that can further reduce emissions under certain conditions.

Chairperson Marx asked about coordination with water utilities on green stormwater infrastructure. Ms. Bradley noted that LVPC collaborates with all 16 sewer and water authorities in the region and is leading a bi-county Act 167 stormwater plan. Ms. Yates described SEPTA's partnership with the Philadelphia Water Department, including landscape improvements for stormwater management. Mr. Dauphin shared that PRT is working with local nonprofits and the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority on green infrastructure and tree planting.

Chairperson Marx closed the discussion by thanking the presenters and emphasizing the value of continued dialogue on sustainable transportation, land use, and infrastructure resilience.

Greenhouse Gas Inventory

Ms. Kelsey Irvine from DEP's Energy Programs Office presented the draft 2025 Greenhouse Gas Inventory, based on 2022 emissions data. The report shows a 21.2% reduction in emissions compared to 2005, with a slight net decrease from 2021 to 2022. Most sectors saw small declines, except residential and commercial, which experienced minor increases due to fuel use for heating. Electricity sector emissions continue to fall due to the shift from coal to natural gas, though coal still accounts for a disproportionate share of emissions. Transportation emissions have declined overall, with pandemic-related drops rebounding slowly. Carbon sequestration from land use and forestry has slightly decreased, and emissions in agriculture and waste have remained stable. The inventory confirms Pennsylvania is making progress but has not yet reached its 26% reduction target. Committee members were asked to provide feedback by the following Tuesday.

Discussion

During the greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory discussion, Mr. Sherrick asked whether diesel emissions from agriculture, such as those reduced through no-till farming, are counted under agriculture or transportation. Ms. Irvine clarified they are categorized under transportation, though some non-road agricultural vehicles are included. Mr. Kevin Warren inquired about the accuracy of methane emissions from leaking gas wells. Ms. Irvine responded that the data likely underestimates actual emissions due to limited information, though they are using the best available resources and are exploring improvements.

Mr. Krug asked about a rise in carbon sequestration in the forestry sector between 2021 and 2022. Ms. Irvine noted it was a minor fluctuation, possibly due to land use changes or wildfires. Mr. Mondor asked about changes in who compiles the inventory. Ms. Byron explained that DEP has prepared the GHG inventory for many years, although Penn State was involved in a previous climate assessment.

Chairperson Marx raised concerns about stagnant or increasing emissions in some sectors and questioned whether the current Climate Action Plan is ambitious enough. She called for stronger analysis and reflection on outcomes in future inventories. Ms. Irvine emphasized the inventory's role as a reporting tool, while Mr. Dave Althoff agreed deeper interpretation should be part of the Climate Action Plan moving forward, especially as planning looks beyond 2025 toward long-term goals.

Ms. Cardoni observed that while carbon dioxide emissions appear to be decreasing, methane emissions have risen, particularly between 2021 and 2022. She expressed concern about natural gas continuing to dominate electricity generation instead of being replaced by renewable sources like wind or solar, which would better align with the goals of the Climate Action Plan.

Mr. Warren added that interpreting emissions trends is difficult without basic context and suggest including metrics around vehicle efficiency or distance traveled for the transportation sector. Mr. Sherrick echoed this point for stronger use of trend data and metrics around population and GDP growth related to emissions declines.

DEP Updates

DEP staff provided several key program updates. Applications are now open for RISE PA, the state's CPRG-funded implementation grant program supporting medium and large-scale industrial decarbonization projects, with a deadline of August 29. Smaller-scale project applications through PennTAP are due by August 15. The Energy Programs Office continues its Clean Energy Opportunity Spotlight webinar series, with upcoming sessions covering Alternative Fuels Incentive Grants (June 29), RISE PA (July 31), and residential energy assessments (August 28).

Ms. Jessica Kelly introduced the Pennsylvania Grid Resilience Grant Program, which offers approximately \$8 million to support projects that improve electric grid reliability and resilience. Eligible applicants include utilities, grid operators, and others with innovative resilience solutions. Funded projects may include weatherization, adaptive protection, pole management, and equipment upgrades, but not new generation facilities, cybersecurity, or land purchases. Match requirements vary (1:1 or 1:3) depending on utility size. The first step is submitting a concept paper by August 8; full applications are due November 1, but only applicants who

submit a concept paper are eligible. Applicants are encouraged to contact DEP early to assess project eligibility.

Next Meeting

Ms. Byron reminded the committee that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 21st, and shared a proposed agenda for that meeting.

New Business

- No new business was introduced or discussed during this session.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Cardoni and seconded by Mr. Mondor, motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:50 am.