

**MINUTES OF
CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL
June 23, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER:

Robert Barkanic called the meeting to order at 12:31 PM.

CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL (CAC) MEMBERS' PRESENT:

Robert Barkanic	Katherine Heatherington Cunfer
Trisha Salvia	Duane Mowery
George Ambrose	John St Clair
Jacquelyn Bonomo	Thaddeus Stevens
Carol Collier	John Walliser
William Fink	James Welty
Jason Foster	

DEP STAFF PRESENT:

Ian Irvin, Executive Director	Jesse Walker, Office of General Counsel
Casey Damicantonio, Policy Office	Luke Zisloft, Bureau of Air Quality
Joshua Neyhart, Policy Office	Sean Wenrich, Bureau of Air Quality
Lindsay Williamson, Office of General Counsel	Catherine Menke, Bureau of Air Quality
	Brian Trowbridge, Bureau of Air Quality

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Robert Barkanic solicited additions or corrections to May 2026 Minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes made by Jim Welty and seconded by Jacquelyn Bonomo. Adopted unanimously.

DEP UPDATE:

Joshua Neyhart- Executive Policy Specialist, Department of Environmental Protection

Budget discussions were currently ongoing, with a due date of June 30th. The Department is planning to discuss the budget with the CAC at the CAC's next meeting.

The Department is monitoring several pieces of legislation, such as small modular nuclear reactors or SMRs. Energy industry is interested in, and the administration supports, bringing SMRs online. Another bill is a prohibition of oil and gas waste brine spreading, which passed the House and is in Senate. There is a third bill of interest, which is focused on how to determine the attainable bottom for plugging conventional wells. This bill would help make decisions towards determining the bottom of oil and gas wells and speed up well plugging. The

Department wants to do more with oil and gas wells and make sure plugging these wells are done properly so it does not go back to taxpayers.

In mid-June, DEP celebrated the 400th well plugging during the Shapiro administration in Western Pennsylvania. Former Pittsburgh Steelers running back, Jerome Bettis, “The Bus,” was involved with this work and attended the event, which was a highlight. Also in mid-June, the Department announced the Governor’s Awards for Excellence, awarding 26 groups who are doing amazing work in Environmental Projects. The awards banquet was on Thursday, June 25th.

The Department announced a \$10 million dollar grant for an Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization project. Pennsylvania has the biggest portfolio of abandoned mine lands in the country with estimated 400 to 500 thousand acres. RISE grants were the Department’s \$396 million project for manufacturing carbon emission reduction from medium to large scale grants. \$52 million remain, and DEP plans on doing another round.

Regarding SPEED, there are currently 16 applications in queue. Out of the 24 applications that have gone through SPEED program, 10 have been issued, averaging only 29% of the allowable time frame under Payback. Currently, 261 qualified individual professionals have been approved to do work under Chapters 105 and 102. Kevin White, Bureau of Permitting Coordination, is prioritizing leadership in the major projects division. DEP has hired a new program manager who will be announced the first week of July.

Interesting news is that the four falcon babies have fledged successfully. You can see them on camera before they leave the nest, and the parents typically stay there. The falcon parents have been at the Rachel Carson State Office Building for about 3 or 4 years.

Last highlight is a brine production well operated by BCD Properties in the Northwest. DEP issued a permit to BCD that regulates construction operations to produce salt brine under the authority establishing the Oil and Gas Act. Those types of wells target brine salt formations that produce a product such as road stabilization, runway de-icing, or road de-icing, dust suppression. These already exist in Pennsylvania. Brine cannot be used in a manner that causes pollution or threatens pollution to the waters of the Commonwealth.

Questions:

Do the baby falcons come back to the nest?

Once the babies fledge, they come down from the building to building. DEP and DCNR have falcon watchers, who will bring the baby back up to the nest once they land, also giving a chance to check the baby’s health.

Attainable bottom and well plugging, how long would this last? What is life expectancy? Also, what is the average cost to plug those wells?

By modern standards, wells should be plugged in a way that there is never a leak, eliminating the need to go back to the well. There are times when it is not possible to obtain the actual depth of a well. So, DEP wants to ensure that the wells are plugged at the maximum depth, and, by doing so, DEP does not have to come back. For example, one well was plugged with a cannonball. In another example, someone recently lit fireworks off in their hunting camp and the entire yard caught on fire, when it was realized there was a well leaking gas. Once the well is initially plugged by a company it is no longer the company's responsibility but the taxpayers. As for cost, I will have to get back to you with the numbers.

Chapters 121 and 127 Rulemaking

Luke Zeisloft, DEP, Bureau of Air Quality

Sean Wenrich, DEP, Bureau of Air Quality

The proposed amendments to Chapters 121 and 127 would add and revise definitions to provide further clarity, including clarifying the role of the Department in planning approval and permit compliance demonstrations. The Amendments also remove obsolete language and duplicative notification requirement and language on inter pollutant trading that is no longer allowable because of a recent federal case law. The Amendments also specify the deadline for submitting a Title V operating permit application to be consistent with the Clean Air Act and correct typographical. These Amendments provide continued administrative efficiency for DEP to directly implement, enforce its regulations, updates definitions, correct regional organizations, and clarify roles. Finally, the Amendments revise the newspaper publication notice requirement for air plan approvals and operating permits from three notices to one, allows DEP to email notifications and clarify terminology and modernize document delivery requirements to electronic means for general plan approvals and general operating permits.

Chapter 126, Subchapter E Rulemaking

Catherine Menke, DEP, Bureau of Air Quality

Brian Trowbridge, DEP, Bureau of Air Quality

In 2002, the Environmental Quality Board adopted a program to have California's Heavy duty diesel program incorporated into DEP's regulations. California's diesel program continued until 2021 when it was suspended by U.S. EPA. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) published a rule proposing to harmonize the California program with the Federal Heavy-Duty Diesel (HDD) program. This proposed rulemaking would rescind 25 Pa. Code Chapter 126, Subchapter E due to regulatory uncertainty surrounding viability of the CA HDD program. Discussions between CARB and EPA to harmonize CA HDD Program and Federal HDD program are ongoing. PA HDD program served its intended purpose as a bridge between standards. DEP never sought federal approval of the PA HDD program and did not claim emission reduction credits to assist in meeting federal air quality standards so there will be no penalty for rescinding.

The rulemaking will not change the environmental protection outcomes; enforcement of the program has been suspended since 2021. Due to California proposing to harmonize with the Federal program, our PA program would achieve the same emissions reduction with or without the program.

Questions:

Would this effect manufacturers, like a construction company, or drivers like MAC trucking?

This would be more for the drivers as they seek the State standard. By rescinding this rule, the drivers would only seek the Federal Standard, instead of both.

Public Comments

There were no public comments during this meeting.

If going to proposed rulemaking, the Public comment period for the two rulemakings is for 60 days. Public comments on the rulemaking should be directly sent to the Department.

Policy and Regulatory Oversight Committee:

Ian Irvin provided the recommendation of the Policy & Regulatory Oversight Committee, approving that the rulemakings proceed forward to the proposed rulemaking stage.

Motion to approve that that two rulemakings proceed forward to the proposed rulemaking stage made by Jacquelyn Bonomo and seconded by Thaddeus Stevens. Adopted unanimously.

CAC Committee Reports-

- Public Participation: Nothing to report
- Strategic Issues: Committee has met and is continuing to refine recommendations and a report on data centers as it relates to DEP jurisdiction.
- Legislative: Discussing different bills such as Recycling Act bill and Data Center bills/ A few bills have been placed in a holding pattern, including Gov. Shapiro's GRID, Bill 2650, Crane Energy and TMI, and NPDES waiver bill. The Committee is trying to gain DEP's thoughts.

New Business/Open Discussion:

Executive Director Irvin is tracking public comments, creating easier access to the Council for submitted written comments, and sending a letter thanking public commenters for his or her participation and what the Council has done or will be doing. Executive Director Irvin is also tracking presentations, who they have represented over the last year or two, and any actions of the Council.

Public Comments on the Council's Response to the Department's Sixth Act 54 report: Public comments are due on Friday, August 7th.

Executive Director Irvin has distributed the draft final version of the Council's 2025 Annual report. Executive Director Irvin solicited approval of the report.

Motion to approve, made by Jaqueline Bonomo and seconded by George Ambrose. Adopted unanimously.

Executive Director Irvin informed the Council that, during gubernatorial election years, the Council has historically drafted a Transition Report. Executive Director Irvin will send out copies of previous versions of the Transition Report to the Council to begin work on this year's version of the Transition Report.

Election for Chair and New Chairperson for CAC July 2026 to June 2027

Nominations Committee has nominated Robert Barkanic to serve as Chairperson and Trisha Salvia to serve as Vice Chairperson.

Executive Director Irvin opened the floor for floor nominations.

Thad Stevens moved that nominations be closed, William Fink seconded.

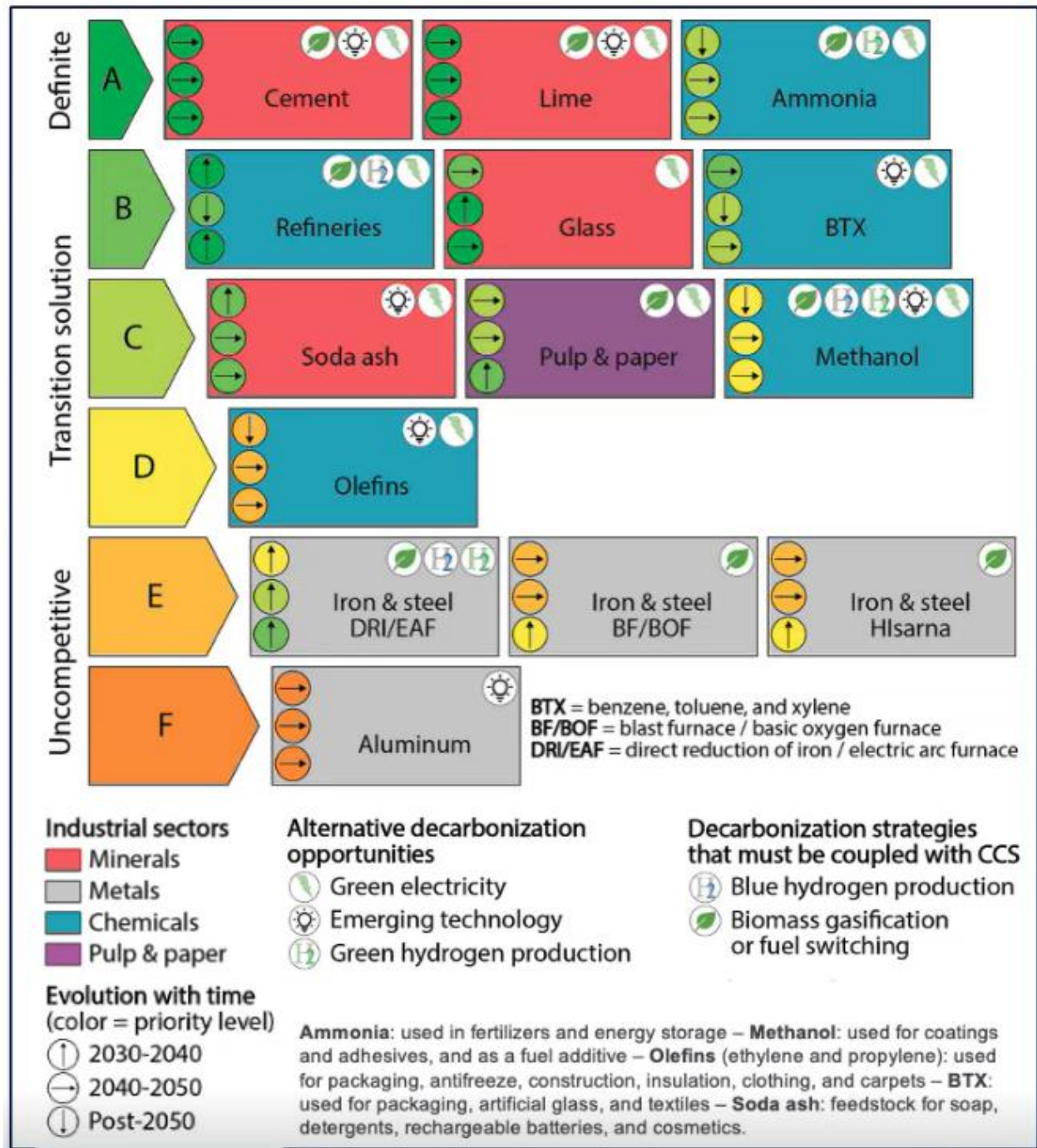
Robert Barkanic and Trisha Salvia were elected to the roles of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Council, respectively, unanimously.

Avenues for Carbon Management in Pennsylvania

Dr. Hélène Pilorgé, Clean Energy Conversions Laboratory, Kleinman Center for Energy Policy, University of Pennsylvania

There is a continued need for decarbonization. At current rates, by the end of the century, we will increase the temperature globally. Using management strategies, we need to stop emitting and start reducing the amount of CO₂ emissions, capture and store CO₂ before it is released into the atmosphere, and capture and store CO₂ already in the atmosphere.

Topic I: Carbon capture and storage, which industries to prioritize such as Fertilizer, hydrogenation, methanol, hydrocracking, desulphurization, steel, and chemical feedstock.



Currently, there is no requirement; however, there is a credit incentive, which is a step in the correct direction. Nevertheless, it is not enough to solve the issue. Storage would be deep underground further than drinking water and this is possible as they have already been used for Oil and Gas.

Dr. Pilorgé gave a summary of carbon capture on different types of industries, carbon storage associated with rare earth element extraction and environmental clean-up of coal wastes, and

enhanced rock weathering under PA's conditions to evaluate the climate benefit and the benefits for farmers.

Questions:

How this process would benefit farmers?

Enhanced rock would replace fertilizer, which would be more cost effective for the farmer and potentially increase yields. It has not been fully proven but that is what we are predicting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Next meeting will be September 1st, at 12:30 in Room 105 at RCSOB or online.

Thaddus Stevens moved to adjourn the meeting. William Fink second the motion, which was unanimously approved.

June 23, 2026, meeting of the CAC was adjourned at 4:00 pm.