

Maryland Climate Change Commission
Operational Policies
Updated 08/25/2016

Commission Details & Schedule

The Maryland Climate Change Commission is a 26 member body created by 2015 SB 258/HB 514. This law codified an Executive Order issued in 2014. The remaining 2016 meetings are listed below.

Monday, September 19th, 12:30pm - 2:30 pm
Maryland Department of Environment, Montgomery Park, Baltimore, MD

Wednesday, October 14th 1:00pm - 3:00pm
Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Annapolis, MD

Wednesday, November 9th, 12:30pm - 2:30 pm
Maryland Department of Environment, Montgomery Park, Baltimore, MD

Commission Membership

- A member of the State Senate and the MD House of Delegates
- The Secretaries of the Departments of the Environment, Agriculture, Natural Resources, Planning, Transportation, and General Services
- The State Treasurer
- The State Superintendent of Schools
- The Director of Maryland Energy Administration
- The President of University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
- The Chair of the Critical Area Commission
- The President of the Maryland Farm Bureau
- A member appointed by the Maryland Associations of Counties
- A member appointed by the Maryland Municipal League
- The Senate President and the Speaker of the House each appoint members to represent the following communities: Business, Nonprofit Organizations, Organized Labor (one related to the building trade and one related to manufacturing), Philanthropic Organizations
- The Governor appoints a climate change expert and a public health expert, each from a Maryland University

The Secretary of the Environment serves as the Chair of the Commission. Two co-chairs have been appointed by the Chair to assist in the leadership of the MCCC. Additionally, a Steering Committee appointed by the Chair meets monthly to plan and define the work of the Commission. Steering Committee decisions are made by consensus.

Working Groups

The Commission has four Working Groups: Adaptation & Response; Education, Communication, & Outreach; Mitigation; and Scientific & Technology. These working groups are required to develop work plans that are updated annually. There are Chairs of these working groups that set the meeting schedule and meeting agendas. Working Group Chairs, members, and technical advisors are named by the Chair of the Commission with advice from staff and commissioners. Every effort is made to have a balance of stakeholder perspectives represented on the Working Groups.

Information flows from the Working Groups to the Steering Committee for review. Chairs for the Working Groups report to the Steering Committee and then to the full Commission. Working Group Chairs give reports at each Steering Committee meeting and in turn share information from other Working Groups with their own membership.

Commission's Charge

The Commission is required to report to the Governor and the Legislature annually. The State agencies are required to review plans, regulations, and fiscal programs to identify and recommend opportunities to fully integrate climate change considerations into State government.

The Commission should also address the following:

- Strengthen the Climate Change Action Plan;
- Develop private-public partnerships with local, State, and federal government;
- Communicate and educate citizens about the urgency of acting to reduce the impact of climate change;
- Conduct an inventory of GHG emission sources;
- Address the impacts of climate change on low income and vulnerable communities;
- Assess impacts that climate change may have on the State's economy, as well as specific sectors such as agriculture; and
- Develop strategies for adaptation and mitigation.

Responsibilities

Commission members are expected to attend the full Commission meetings and to participate in any Working Groups to which they were appointed. Commissioners are welcome to attend any Working Group that is of interest; however, they may not vote on a decision-making vote unless the member has been appointed to the Working Group. All meetings of the full Commission and Working Groups are public meetings and operate under the Open Meetings Act. Every effort is made to share information about meeting dates, agendas, and supporting information well in advance of the meeting. Although it is necessary to work on Commission-related items between meetings, typically less than one hour per week of time is necessary.

State agency staff who attend Working Group or full Commission meetings are expected to relay relevant information to the appropriate staff at the agency.

Voting Procedures

The Commission's process is consensus driven and all efforts should be made to strive towards a consensus position that enjoys unanimous support on any particular issue. Voting rights are limited to Commission members only. Commissioners may vote by phone or designate a proxy. A proxy must be named in email prior to the start of the meeting.

Any Commission member has the right to make a motion for a vote. The Commission may vote if a quorum of members is present. This means:

- (1) Fourteen members of the Commission are a quorum.
- (2) Except as provided in items 3 and 4, the affirmative vote of a majority of Commission members present at a meeting having a quorum is required for the Commission to take any action.
- (3) An affirmative vote of at least 16 members is needed to support the Commission Report, a recommendation contained in the Commission Report, or other high-profile action items.
- (4) The Chair of the Commission has the authority to determine whether an action item before the Commission is a high-profile action item.

When a vote is taken on an action or recommendation, dissenting members may wish to write a minority report to highlight the opposing view. If a minority report is written, it will be included in the annual Commission report. Any minority report must be shared with the full Commission as part of the final draft of the annual report before the Commission votes on the report in its entirety.

Public Comment

The Commission is committed to assuring public participation and stakeholder involvement in all the Commission's activities through numerous programs that encourage public participation and public responsibility in order to achieve Maryland's public health and environmental protection goals. Time is allotted during each meeting for attendees to address members of the Commission with comments, and written comments will be collected at the conclusion of each meeting. Those wishing to address climate changes issues by e-mail may submit comments or recommendations to climate.change@maryland.gov.