



**Draft Meeting Minutes
State House • Room 313**

In attendance: Janet Coit, DEM, Council Chair
Michelle Burnett (for Jamia McDonald, EMA)
Leonard Green (for Dr. Michael Fine DOH)
Jared Rhodes (for Kevin Flynn, DOA/Planning)
Grover Fugate, CRMC
Nick Ucci (for Marion Gold, OER),
Melissa Long (for Michael Lewis (DOT))
Richard Licht, DOA
Marcel Valois, Commerce RI

Others: See attached sign-in sheet

Director Coit called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

First order of business was the approval of the March 10, 2014 meeting minutes.

Director Coit then noted the following in her opening comments:

1. This meeting will be one hour in length so that participants can attend a 3:00 p.m. General Assembly climate change meeting with US Senator Whitehouse.
2. There will be time for public comment at the conclusion of the scheduled presentations and questions by council members.
3. The council was established by Governor Chafee. Its goals are to coordinate state agency activities related to climate change and, short-term, to issue a summary report by May 1 that provides an initial listing of agency activities (current and planned) and a preliminary assessment of needed information and goals.
4. Conversations are underway to create an Executive Climate Change Council ("EC3") web site to help communicate with a wider audience, including the business community, environmental groups, and the general public.

The next item on the agenda was a report on the Rhode Island Greenhouse Gas Inventory. In April of 2013, DEM contracted with NESCAUM to prepare a greenhouse gas emission inventory for Rhode Island. The project quantified greenhouse gas emissions from various sectors in the state for the years 1990, 2010 and 2020. These years were chosen because in August of 2001 all the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers signed a Climate Action Plan for New England and Eastern Canada that included the following regional GHG reduction targets:

- **Short-term Goal:** Reduce regional GHG emissions to 1990 emissions by 2010.
- **Mid-term Goal:** Reduce regional GHG emissions by at least 10% below 1990 emissions by 2020
- **Long-term Goal:** Reduce regional GHG emissions by 75-85% below current levels

Doug McVay, Chief of DEM's Office of Air Resources, presented Messrs. Leiran Biton and Paul Miller of the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM). They provided an overview of 1990 and 2010 greenhouse gas emission levels in the state, as well as projected levels for 2020. (A copy can be found at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/statewideplanning/climate/index.php>).

As part of its work, NESCAUM evaluated the electric power generation sector from two perspectives. One is the more traditional approach which quantifies the greenhouse gas emissions from RI's power plants. The other approach quantifies the greenhouse gas emissions due to RI's consumption of electricity. Using the traditional approach, RI did not meet the NEG-ECP greenhouse gas reduction target for 2010. However using the consumption based approach RI met the 2010 target and is projected to meet the 2020 target.

Given the regional nature of the power generation market in New England, it was suggested that the consumption based approach gives you the more accurate accounting of the greenhouse gas emissions Rhode Islanders are responsible for due to their electricity consumption. It was pointed out that in 1990, RI consumed much more electricity than its power plants produced whereas in 2010 RI was consuming about the same amount of power it was generating.

Council members inquired about various details of the report including how RI compares to other New England states on a per capita basis and what programs/policies may have resulted in the greenhouse gas emission reductions. Messrs. Biton and Miller pointed out that an emission inventory does not identify how/why reductions occurred it simply quantifies the emissions.

The next order of business was a presentation on the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative ("RGGI"). Director Coit introduced Frank Stevenson of DEM's Office of Air Resources. Mr. Stevenson provided an overview of the program (A copy can be found at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/statewideplanning/climate/index.php>). RI has been a part of RGGI, a regional initiative to reduce the emissions of CO₂ from electrical generating facilities in New England, New York, Maryland and Delaware, since its inception in 2008.

Mr. Stevenson stated that recent reductions in greenhouse gas emissions appear primarily to have resulted from a slowdown in economic activity, a regional switchover from coal to natural gas powered electricity, and energy efficiency programs (which are in part funded by RGGI).

Director Licht asked for clarification on how revenue from the program could increase in recent auctions when available credits were reduced because of a new cap. Mr. Stevenson explained that the market for credits was such that the price for credits went up and overall revenue increased. Council members requested additional information on the causes of recent decline in emissions. Mr. Stevenson noted that EPA is also requesting this information. An effort will be made to make more precise information available in the near future.

Director Coit thanked the presenters and commended her staff in the Office of Air Resources. She noted that her initial reaction to these presentations is that additional analysis and data are needed regarding the link between the economy and reduced greenhouse gas emissions and how cleaner technologies and green industries can spur economic growth and jobs for Rhode Islanders.

The next item on the agenda was public comments.

Eugenia Marks of the Audubon Society noted that a 1990 study, with which she assisted, may provide valuable emission benchmark and goal information.

Abel Collins of the RI Sierra Club urged the council to coordinate with legislative climate change efforts, in particular the bill sponsored by Representative Art Handy.

Director Coit stated that part of the rationale for the May 1 deadline is to inform the legislative process and the intent is to work closely with legislative leaders. At the same time, with the limited time available to develop an initial report, its focus will be on the executive branch, i.e., presenting an inventory of existing programs and activities as well as outlining next steps that state agencies can and should be taken. While there will be outreach to get input from, for example, the business and environmental communities and the general public, that broader engagement will be developed more fully once the preliminary report has been completed.

With all business concluded, Director Licht motioned to adjourn the meeting. Director Fugate seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 2:57 p.m.