



October 2, 2014

CEEPC and MWAQC Committees

## **Testimony on Need to Set a Target for Reducing CO2 Emissions from Transportation**

My name is Stewart Schwartz, and I am the 17-year Executive Director of the Coalition for Smarter Growth. I may be from a different generation from Kelly, but I am every bit as concerned. I served at the President's Council for Sustainable Development in 1995/96 when the Council highlighted the IPCC reports on climate change and I cannot believe we have seen so little action in the nearly 20 years since. I am also a 24-year Navy veteran, and like today's military leadership, I see climate change as a national security threat.

Recent reports show sea level rise will contribute to flooding of our Monumental Core. Reports on the impacts of climate change are increasingly dire. We are the nation's capital, the capital of the most powerful nation the world has ever known, and this region is collectively wealthier than 99% of the rest of the world. If we don't lead on this issue from this region, who will? What will it take to get the leadership we need?

This joint meeting offers hope and an opportunity. COG's commitments in its Climate Report and Region Forward are in place and call for an 80% reduction in CO2 emissions below 2005 levels by 2050. But in a region without major manufacturing, where transportation represents a significant share of our emissions, we have no specific target for this sector. In fact, CO2 emissions from transportation are shown to be continuing to rise under the current Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP). That's why we are urging you to set a matching reduction target of 80% below 2005 levels by 2050 for the transportation sector and to commit to meeting that target, taking the steps necessary to reduce VMT and vehicle trips.

I have asked the MWAQC/CEEPC staff to share with you the TPB staff briefing on the performance of the CLRP because there are some stunning statistics in the report that show how we can make progress on reducing emissions from transportation. For example, the commute mode share for the Regional Core of DC, Arlington and Alexandria shows 70% of commute trips today are transit, walking and biking. This is a direct result of mixed-use, walkable, bikeable and transit-oriented community development. Smart growth works. For the Inner Suburbs of Montgomery, Fairfax and Prince George's, 37% of commute trips are non-Single Occupant Vehicle, but they don't show much progress by 2040. For the outer suburbs its 21% today and 28% in 2040. What this tells us is that the very populous Inner Suburbs could do much more to shift mode shares and they could do so by accelerating what they are already planning -- a combination of TOD at existing transit stations and transformation of their commercial strip corridors into mixed-use, walkable, transit-oriented communities. The Outer Suburbs would also benefit from more mixed-use centers and for both the Inner and Outer Suburbs, much greater investment in dedicated lane transit service between centers would make a difference.

Finally, the fact that adding another 1200 lane miles of major roadway and 25 major interchanges doesn't move the dime on congestion, indicates that we need to provide more of our future population the opportunity to live in a mixed-use TOD to maximize the mode shifts, VMT reductions, and greenhouse gas reductions.

Creating these communities is a win-win for the region. Already, there is far more demand than supply of these walkable, transit neighborhoods. 84% of new office development in the pipeline is within 1/4 mile of Metro. Millennials, empty nesters, the creative/knowledge economy workers and lower-income households needing lower combined transportation and housing costs would all take advantage of an aggressive implementation strategy for TOD with a range of housing affordability. This is where the workforce wants to be and where corporate leaders are increasingly headed. It's fiscally more efficient than spread-out development, saves land and natural resources, and reduces green house gas emissions -- doubly so when you combine green building with transit-efficient locations.

So we urge every committee at COG including the TPB to vote to adopt a target and a commitment to reduce CO2 emissions from transportation 80% below 2005 levels by 2050. Thank you.

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