

December 16, 2014

The Honorable Patrick Wojahn, Chair & Members of the Committee
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
c/o Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capital Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002

The Transportation Planning Board must resolve to cut carbon emissions

Dear Chairman Wojahn and Members of the Transportation Planning Board:

The undersigned organizations call on the National Capital Transportation Planning Board (TPB) to strengthen the resolution before it to affirm COG's accepted long range CO₂ target of 80% reductions by 2050 in two ways: 1) Include a deadline of September 30, 2015 to complete committee work and the final report in time to inform the next CLRP process and 2) Ensure an outcome of the working group includes interim and long range targets for CO₂ reduction specifically for the transportation sector so local governments know where they need to aim with their land use and transportation policies.

We also write to provide our recommendations for the new multi-sectoral climate working group, and request seats at the table from our advocacy community to participate in this important study.

Strengthening the TPB Resolution

We wrote to you in April about this issue, and are writing again to reiterate our recommendations in the context of the recent resolution approved jointly by the CEEPC and MWAQC committees that urges TPB to adopt a CO₂ target for the transportation sector. The recently released 2014 CLRP performance assessment makes clear that while COG's regional climate goal is to reduce emissions 80% by 2050 below 2005 levels, that the list of regional transportation projects, if built, will cause emissions to rise rather than fall.

The draft TPB resolution as written fails to set out a timetable for tackling this crucial issue. We recommend September 30, 2015 as the deadline for completing studies and issuing recommendations in order to inform the 2016 CLRP call for proposals. With the What Would It Take report, and numerous resources from other regions available, we don't have to start from scratch and should be able to chart a course forward in that period of time.

We also call on TPB to include in its resolution the adoption of midterm and long-term CO₂ reduction targets specifically for the transportation sector, as well as a goal to reduce vehicle miles traveled. COG's 2008 climate report sets a 20% by 2020 midterm target and an 80% by 2050 long term target, and recommends a reduction in vehicle miles traveled in Table 1, Section ES-III of that report.

Recommendations for the multi-sectoral climate working group

While fuel efficiency and fuel types are improving and should be pursued, we know they are only part of the puzzle, and that to truly tackle CO₂ emissions from transportation, we must reduce vehicle miles traveled. With driving on the decline and business in walkable communities booming, we know there is real demand and important co-benefits to be achieved by pursuing an ambitious smart growth agenda that can achieve our climate goals, while also enhancing economic development and competitiveness, saving local governments on infrastructure costs, improving public health, and reducing congestion. We therefore urge the new multi-sectoral working group to model an ambitious smart growth agenda that would meet the following goals for the transportation sector:

- **Reduced carbon emissions from transportation:** What Would It Take failed to model a scenario ambitious enough to meet the goals agreed to in the 2008 Climate Report. We urge you to model what

we can do to achieve a decrease of transportation-related carbon emissions of 20% by 2020 below 2005 levels, and 80% by 2050 below 2005 levels.

- **Reduced vehicle miles traveled:** The 2008 Climate Report recommended setting a goal to reduce vehicle miles traveled as one of its top recommendations for the transportation sector. With vehicle miles traveled forecast to rise, we are calling for a scenario that leads to a decrease in overall, not per capita, VMT.
- **Increased mode share:** Today, the commute mode share for the Regional Core of DC, Arlington and Alexandria shows 70% of commute trips today are walking, cycling, transit, and carpooling. For the Inner Suburbs of Montgomery, Fairfax and Prince George's, 37% of commute trips are non-Single Occupant Vehicle today, but they don't show much progress by 2040. For the outer suburbs, it's 21% today and 28% in 2040. Please model land use, transportation and TDM measures necessary to achieve an increased non-SOV mode share for each tier of a minimum 80% in the core, 50% in the inner suburbs, and 35% in the outer suburbs.
- **A significant reduction in new road capacity:** ITDP's new report, A Global High Shift Scenario, models the impact of shifting public investments away from new road projects and auto-oriented infrastructure like parking garages to transit, walking, and cycling infrastructure. According to their research, if the United States directed funds away from new auto-oriented infrastructure to walking, cycling, and transit infrastructure, we could cut transportation emissions in half. The recent performance analysis of the CLRP reveals a planned 1200 new lane miles and 25 grade separated interchanges, compared to 44 miles of new transit service. With driving on the decline, we urge you to consider a scenario that shifts funding away from new highway projects to transit, walking, and cycling.
- **A significant increase in miles of high quality transit:** ITDP's High Shift report models an increase in capacity and size of high quality transit systems. Combined with a shift away from road investments, this strategy yielded major carbon reductions in their study. The region needs to commit to a significant increase in funding for high quality transit systems such as the Purple Line, Metro Momentum, and Route 1 transit in Virginia.
- **Increased percentage of new development within activity centers.** The Region Forward Compact commits to placing 50% of new households and 75% of the square footage of new commercial development within COG's defined Activity Centers. We urge you model an increase in the household goal to 75%.

When modeling each scenario, we ask you to calculate the following co-benefits for each strategy: public health, traffic management, infrastructure operating and life cycle costs, economic development, air pollution, water quality benefits such as helping to meet Chesapeake Bay pollution load reduction requirements, equity (transportation access), and avoided costs of inaction (damage to infrastructure due to extreme heat, weather). In a follow-up letter, we will include specific land use, transportation, demand management, financial and incentive-based tools that should be considered by the multi-sectoral working group.

Many thanks for your attention, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Stewart Schwartz, Coalition for Smarter Growth

Andy Fellows, Clean Water Action

Deron Lovaas, Natural Resources Defense Council

Bruce Wright, Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling

Lee Epstein, Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Timothy Ballo, Earthjustice

Virginia Sierra Club

Nick Brand, Action Committee for Transit

Dru Schmidt-Perkins, 1000 Friends of Maryland

Mike Tidwell, Chesapeake Climate Action Network