Update on the Governor’s Climate Change Commission

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Update on the Governor’s Climate Change Commission *

• 43-member Commission formed December 2007

• Comprised of representatives from the General Assembly, state government, local government and private sector

• Key goal - Identify actions needed to reduce greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions by 30% below business as usual levels by 2025 (equivalent to 2000 levels)

• Full Commission has met on seven occasions and heard testimony from numerous federal, state, local, private sector experts and the public

*The findings/recommendations contained in this document result from the Commission’s deliberations.
Update on the Governor’s Climate Change Commission

- Commission has developed preliminary findings/principles that include but not limited to:
  - Because the effects of climate change on Virginia are real, we cannot wait for the federal government to act; state actions can have a significant effect on global GHG levels
  - Sea level rise is a major concern for coastal Virginia
  - Climate change will have a significant impact on Virginia’s ecosystems, possibly causing some species to become extinct.
  - Climate change has potential impacts on human health and quality of life, including more frequent hurricanes, water-borne diseases, etc.

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Update on the Governor’s Climate Change Commission

• Commission’s preliminary findings/principles cont’d
  
  – It is not possible to address the impacts of climate change without significant public and private investment
  
  – The three largest sources of GHG emissions in Virginia are electricity generation, transportation, and non-utility fuel used in industrial and commercial facilities
  
  – Energy efficiency and conservation provide the least costly energy resource options
  
  – Transportation GHG emissions will continue to grow over time; however, recently enacted CAFÉ standards and increased fuel costs can significantly reduce emissions that result from VMT
Update on the Governor’s Climate Change Commission

- Commission has been divided into four workgroups,
  - Electricity Generation/Other Stationary Sources
  - Adaptation/Sequestration
  - Built Environment
  - Transportation and Land-Use

- Interim Draft Report available: http://www.deq.state.va.us/info/climatechange.html
Transportation and Land Use Working Group

- Chaired by former Lt. Governor Don Byers
- Deputy Secretary Davis represents the Secretary
- Working Group is vetting initiatives to reduce transportation greenhouse gas emissions through:
  - Improved fuel economy
  - Low carbon (alternative) fuels
  - Transportation and Land Use Efficiency Measures
Transportation and Land Use Working Group
Preliminary Recommendations

• Improved Fuel Economy
  – Advocate the establishment of CAFE standards for heavy trucks
  – Set minimum standards for fleet mpg for all Commonwealth fleets
  – Create state tax incentives for the purchase of high mpg vehicles
  – Renew dormant “Cash-For-Clunker” program
  – Amend the current vehicle titling tax to weight the taxation based on fuel efficiency
  – Support Pay-As-You-Drive insurance
Transportation and Land Use Working Group
Preliminary Recommendations

• Low Carbon (alternative) Fuels
  – Establish a regional diesel biofuel standard
  – Support university research to describe the GHG impact of sugar-based ethanol, and of other biofuels
  – Allow VDOT rights-of-way to be used for solar and wind farm connections to the power grid
  – Make and market Virginia as “hybrid friendly”
Transportation and Land Use Working Group
Preliminary Recommendations

- Transportation and Land Use Efficiency Measures
  - Target available state funds towards compact, walkable, transit-oriented development areas
  - Increase funding for the Access Management Fund to preserve new transportation corridors and to retrofit existing corridors
  - Change the state transit funding formulas to include state funding for operations
  - Amend VDOT landscaping standards to minimize mowing and increase carbon retention
Transportation and Land Use Working Group
Preliminary Recommendations

• Transportation and Land Use Efficiency Measures Cont’d
  – Create new or added benefits for state workers who take transit, walk, or bike to work
  – Provide funding and technical assistance to local governments to amend zoning codes that currently establish excessive minimum parking space standards
  – Establish roundabouts as the default design new intersections and for intersection improvements
  – Increase State Police funding for more consistent enforcement of existing speed limits
Transportation and Land Use Working Group
Preliminary Recommendations

Transportation and Land Use Efficiency Measures Cont’d

- Expand the Virginia Rail Enhancement Fund, from $24 million to $200 million per year, to develop the potential for North-South freight rail (especially along the I-81 corridor)

- Develop plans for a statewide bicycle network

- Create Parking Pricing Research Fund, to stimulate the emerging strategies connected to parking pricing

- Establish “tree banking” program to expand our carbon sinks
Next Steps

• **September** - Preliminary recommendations will be vetted by Working Groups, develop cost/ton of emissions

• **October** - Full Commission will meet to finalize findings and review Working Groups’ recommendations

• **November** – Finalize recommendations

• **December 2008** – Review and approve final report