

Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee Meeting Summary

**May 14, 2024 at 3:00 P.M.
Government Center Conference Room 11**

Board of Supervisors Members Present:

Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay
Supervisor Walter L. Alcorn, Hunter Mill District
Supervisor James N. Bierman, Jr., Dranesville District
Supervisor Patrick S. Herrity, Springfield District
Supervisor Andres F. Jimenez, Mason District (Committee Vice-Chairman)
Supervisor Rodney L. Lusk, Franconia District
Supervisor Dalia A. Palchik, Providence District
Supervisor Kathy L. Smith, Sully District
Supervisor Daniel G. Storck, Mount Vernon District
Supervisor James R. Walkinshaw, Braddock District (Committee Chairman)

Others Present:

Bryan J. Hill, County Executive
Beth Teare, County Attorney

Link to agenda and meeting materials: [Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee Meeting: May 14, 2024 | Board Of Supervisors \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)

Item I: Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 P.M and the February 27, 2024, summary was accepted.

Item II: Solid Waste Management Plan Update

Matt Adams, Division Director, Eric Forbes, Deputy Director, and Chris Herrington, Director, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES), presented on the Solid Waste Management Plan Update and its associated Zero Waste Management Plan. The Plan is due to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) by April 2025.

Mr. Adams discussed the Zero Waste goal in the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) to divert 90% of all waste from incineration by 2040. The county's current waste diversion rate is 43.9%, as defined by DEQ. DPWES conducted a waste characterization study and found that about 83% of waste in the municipal solid waste stream is recoverable material. To meet the CECAP goal, 100% of the recyclables that go into the trash – approximately 500,000 tons of waste - must be captured. And the average resident, who generates about five pounds of waste a day, will need to generate half a pound of waste per day. Unless substantial changes are made, the county will generate an estimated 1.4 million tons of waste by 2040.

DPWES is evaluating transformational Zero Waste strategies that will help the county meet its CECAP goal. Strategies include scaling up outreach, education and enforcement programs,

moving to unified sanitation districts, mandating recycling and composting for all residents, implementing a pay as you throw system, implementing comprehensive commercial and multifamily programs, and establishing Zero Waste Centers. These strategies will require substantial investments in new and existing infrastructure.

Mr. Adams presented a timeline for delivery of the Solid Waste Management Plan, which includes public engagement milestones and check-ins with the Board. DPWES will conduct a Public Input campaign for all county residents starting in July; it is also conducting targeted outreach to highly impacted communities, commercial property owners, the hauling community, schools, non-vulnerable multi-family properties and homeowners' associations.

Supervisor Walkinshaw asked about other large jurisdictions moving toward Zero Waste. Mr. Adams stated that the county's waste diversion rate makes us a leader in the state of Virginia, but in the U.S., several communities, such as Seattle and San Diego, are reaching 70% diversion rates. Supervisor Walkinshaw asked about the impact state or federal legislative changes would have on this work. Mr. Adams noted that a consultant is helping DPWES identify potential legislative fixes and evaluate the impact on diversion. Mr. Herrington clarified that federal and state support would be helpful and that specific recommendations may be brought back to the Board's Legislative Committee.

Chairman McKay asked about activities other jurisdictions are doing and if we are constrained in replicating these. Mr. Adams noted that communities with higher diversion rates have state-driven diversion goals. The county is looking at implementing similar strategies and going beyond what these jurisdictions have done. Mr. Herrington noted that there are strategies that would be easier to implement with legislative assistance; existing impediments will be identified in the report. The Chairman noted that these constraints should be made clear as the county conducts its Public Input campaign and suggested that the campaign be extended, as needed.

Supervisor Herrity asked if glass was included in the diversion rates of other jurisdictions and where that glass is going. DPWES needs to investigate further. Supervisor Herrity asked about recycling vs. landfill rates at local Material Recovery Facilities. Mr. Forbes noted that DPWES has been working with a service provider to screen and evaluate the waste stream; the contamination rate is getting better, particularly for glass. There are not markets for every material in the waste stream, but there is a Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act (PPEA) proposal for the development of a mixed-waste sorting facility in Fairfax County.

Supervisor Alcorn commented on the county's role leading this effort. Supervisor Storck commented on the county operational goal to be Zero Waste by 2030 and how lessons learned can inform community efforts. Supervisor Palchik asked, and Mr. Forbes confirmed, that legislative analysis would include fees to reduce consumption. She asked about improving recycling in multi-family housing; Mr. Forbes confirmed that DPWES is working on this issue and will include it in the Plan. Supervisor Lusk asked that costs to reach the CECAP goal and resulting savings be shared with the Board. Supervisor Jimenez asked about regional collaboration. Mr. Forbes stated that the county participates on Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments committees and collaborates with jurisdictions looking into Zero Waste.

Item III: Residential Clean Energy Programming

John Morrill, Director, and John Silcox, Public Information Officer, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) presented on residential clean energy programming as part of the county's efforts to address climate change. Mr. Morrill identified three big strategies to meet the county's CECAP goals: Increased use of renewable energy, vehicle electrification, and increased energy efficiency in existing buildings. Mr. Morrill identified existing programs that address these strategies, including Solarize, Capital Area Solar Switch, and Charge Up Fairfax. In administering these programs, the county has learned that there is an untapped market for clean energy retrofits: Consumers and businesses are curious but wrestling with the technicalities of implementing projects. There is interest in developing a regional energy "help desk" to provide technical guidance to the public and identify qualified contractors for projects.

This kind of market development and assistance to residents and businesses was an essential part of the staff proposal for a green bank last year – a finance-first approach. Staff is proposing shifting to a strategy emphasizing clarity of technical information and market guidance. Significant federal funding may be available for projects, as they are identified. Mr. Silcox discussed expanding existing efforts on residential clean energy, including launching a pilot third-party referral service and a web-based application for friendly competition on climate action. Mr. Silcox addressed plans to increase promotion of existing programs and incentives. Funds originally directed to the green bank would be redirected to these proposed efforts.

Supervisor Walkinshaw commented on the challenges with CECAP implementation and the need to identify areas where the county can act. He reiterated that the community wants to implement energy projects but needs technical help. Chairman McKay would like staff to monitor green bank activity and expressed disappointment that there was not a simpler path to establishing a green bank but agreed with the new approach and redirection of funds.

Supervisor Bierman endorsed the approach and asked if expanded staffing was needed. Supervisor Walkinshaw said that there is no additional budgetary impact at this time. Supervisor Alcorn endorsed the approach and asked for a report on the Charge Up Fairfax pilot, with an update on why communities might not be proceeding and how existing legislation is coming into play. Mr. Morrill replied that a NIP could be prepared this summer. Supervisor Storck expressed his support; identifying certain builders or contractors doing energy saving work is an important component as are sector champions. Supervisor Smith favors this approach. She asked about the expected impact of the friendly competition application and about OEEC's public engagement. Mr. Morrill replied that this is a relatively new area for engagement. A few thousand participants would be considered a success. It's a way of raising the visibility of climate action. Supervisor Bierman said that friendly competition has been able to get people to save energy in the past. Supervisor Palchik expressed her support but noted that resource requirements should be reevaluated as needs arise. She said that understanding the equity piece is extremely important when it comes to sharing information and communicating the benefits; the wallet is the bottom line for many residents. Supervisor Walkinshaw said that the third-party can track resident engagement and outcomes and analyze progress at the end of the pilot. With the Committee's support, a Board Matter will come before the Board at its June meeting, authorizing the program.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:19 P.M.