

Governor's Commission on Climate Change  
Transportation and Land Use Workgroup  
September 4, 2008

The Transportation and Land Use Workgroup of the Governor's Commission on Climate Change met for the second time on September 4, 2008. The purpose of the meeting was to continue identifying possible goals and strategies for transportation and land use that could contribute to Governor Kaine's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction goal. The meeting was a working session. The workgroup's discussion touched on the following issues:

- Lowering speed limits.
  - Cars emit less greenhouse gases when running above 30 and below 65 mph.
  - Increased enforcement of existing speed limits is another option. The cost would need to be considered.
  - Improving car and truck aerodynamics could also help lower GHG emissions.
  - A request to determine the effect of lower speeds on emissions of particulates, NO<sub>x</sub>, and other pollutants was made.
  - It would be important to know the impact of speed limits on highway safety and fuel efficiency.
- Increased funding for access management.
  - Improving traffic management via better, but fewer, access points could increase the traffic flow and decrease GHG emissions. This could be accomplished through corridor preservation measures as well as retrofitting of existing roads.
  - How would access management affect other pollutants?
- Improved signalization to maximize traffic flow.
  - Better signals would limit stop-and-go traffic via intelligent light functions.
  - Using more roundabouts is also an option. Perhaps roundabouts should be default option, rather than stoplights.
  - If there is a signal priority for transit, this could create a larger incentive to take mass transit instead of a personal vehicle.
- Providing more flexibility to regional planning organizations to determine which modes should receive transportation dollars.
  - The workgroup discussed whether recommendations should focus on reducing vehicle miles traveled, or rather on ensuring that citizens have more transportation choices. Either way, recommendations must have the effect of reducing GHG emissions.
  - If the Commonwealth wishes to increase the availability of public transportation, assisting localities with operational funding (in addition to capital needs) may be necessary.
- Efforts to transfer movement of freight from trucks to rail was also discussed.
  - Rail is 33% more efficient than truck travel and uses 13 times less fuel per ton mile.
  - Norfolk Southern has a carbon footprint calculator on its website called "The Green Machine." Other rail companies provide similar tools.

- When environmental reviews of road projects are completed under state and federal law, are rail alternatives required to be considered? There is a study of the I81 corridor nearing completion.
  - Expansion of Virginia's Rail Enhancement Fund was discussed.
- Pay-as-you-drive insurance was discussed. What is the state's role in encouraging the use of this mechanism by private insurance companies?
- The need to influence transportation authorization at the federal level was discussed, particularly with regard to the need for Congress to providing sufficient funding for modes other than roads and to authorize pricing mechanisms for highway use.
- Engine retrofits could decrease emissions.
  - Diesel idling is a problem that could be addressed by providing electrification at rest areas.
  - Retrofits could also be encouraged with incentives to upgrade vehicle fleets.
- Policies proposed by the workgroup should be evaluated not only with respect to their effect on GHG emissions, but also for their contribution to other measurable environmental goals.
- The possibility of enhancing coordination of land use and transportation decisions by requiring comprehensive plans to be updated on the same schedule as transportation plans was discussed.

Secretary of Transportation Pierce Homer shared some ideas via a PowerPoint presentation. (This presentation is available on the Climate Commission's website.) In addition to the topics listed in the presentation, the following points were raised during the discussion lead by Secretary Homer:

- The effects of telecommuting should be evaluated to ensure that trips back and forth to work are not being replaced by other discretionary trips.
- The effect of switching to biofuels should be compared to the effect of switching to alternative modes of transportation.
- The Commonwealth can reduce consumer trips by allowing more transactions with government to be conducted via the internet.
- Telebusiness, which can also reduce consumer trips, will increase when broadband internet access is expanded in rural areas.