

March 27, 2025

Memorandum #2025-46

TO: Regional Environmental Committee Members

BY: Whitney Katchmark, HRPDC Principal Water Resources Engineer

RE: Regional Environmental Committee (REC) Meeting - April 3, 2025

The next meeting of the HRPDC Regional Environmental Committee will be held on Thursday, April 3, 2025, at 10:00 AM. The agenda and related materials are attached. This meeting will be held virtually using Zoom. Please use the following information to join the meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82562806906?pwd=8pN4f1XEhp5TsAl32UXHKImho0QbEy.1>

Meeting ID: 825 6280 6906

Passcode: 481670

One tap mobile:

+13092053325,,82562806906#,,,*481670# US

+13126266799,,82562806906#,,,*481670# US (Chicago)

If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

EC/se

Attachments

AGENDA
MEETING OF THE
HAMPTON ROADS REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
APRIL 3, 2025 at 10:00 A.M.
Virtual Meeting on Zoom

1. Summary of the March 6, 2025, Meeting of the Hampton Roads Regional Environmental Committee (REC)

The summary and attendance sheets of the March 2025 meeting are attached.

ACTION: Accept the Meeting Summary and Attendance

Attachments: 1A Meeting Summary March
 1B Meeting Attendance March

2. Proactive Planning for Resilience

In 2024 the University of Virginia Environmental Institute published [Proactive Planning for Resilience](#), an online tool to help communities understand climate risks, explore options for adaptation, and develop implementation plans. The website includes a user guide, step-by-step process, and other information such as legal considerations, case studies, and links to other resources. Ms. Elizabeth Andrews, University of Virginia Institute for Engagement and Negotiation, will provide an overview of the project.

3. Designing Living Shorelines

In January 2025 Wetlands Watch, with funding from the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program, released a new resource for shoreline professionals, [Designing Living Shorelines for Sea Level Rise in Virginia](#). The manual includes strategies for designing living shorelines that will adapt in response to sea level rise and provide continued protection from coastal hazards, along with more than two dozen examples of permitted and installed shoreline projects that utilize these strategies. Ms. Mary-Carson Stiff and Ms. Stacie McGraw, Wetlands Watch, will brief the Committee on the project.

4. Aberdeen Gardens

In December 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency awarded \$20M to Wetlands Watch and the City of Hampton to mitigate flooding and reduce pollution in the historic Aberdeen Gardens neighborhood. Mr. Scott Smith, Hampton's Coastal Resilience Engineer, will provide an overview of the planned neighborhood-scale resilience projects and the community's involvement in helping to identify those projects.

5. Coastal Zone Management Update

Every five years the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program works with state agencies, local governments, and other stakeholders to assess the status of Virginia's coastal resources and management efforts to identify coastal enhancement areas of high priority need. This assessment results in a five-year grant strategy for developing new enforceable policies that address the identified high-priority issues. The process for developing FY2026-2030 strategies is currently underway. Mr. Ben McFarlane, HRPDC, will provide an update on the CZM Section 309 Process and other matters related to the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program.

**SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE
HRPDC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
MARCH 6, 2025
THE REGIONAL BUILDING, 723 WOODLAKE DRIVE, CHESAPEAKE VA 23320**

1. Summary of the February 6, 2025, Meeting of the Hampton Roads Regional Environmental Committee (REC)

The summary of the Regional Environmental Committee meeting held on February 6, 2025 was included with the agenda. There were no edits.

2. Microplastics

Dr. Meredith Sealey, VIMS, presented an overview of global plastic pollution, the sources of microplastic pollution in Hampton Roads, and the environmental effects of plastics and related stressors.

The origin of plastic pollution is closely tied to single-use plastics and waste mismanagement. The mismanagement of waste is overflowing garbage, debris lost in transit, and in the case of some poorer countries, no waste management systems at all. As plastics persist in the environment, they become fragmented and break into tiny pieces. This is caused by UV weathering, physical abrasion, wave action, ingestion and egestion by organisms, and microbial degradation. Microplastics are plastics less than 5mm in diameter. The sources of microplastics include clothing fibers, microbeads, paint abrasion, and tire wear. Microplastics are transported to waterways through stormwater systems and wastewater treatment effluent. It is often the additives to plastic that cause the biggest impacts to marine systems.

Dr. Sealey's lab combines environmental chemistry and biogeochemistry, ecosystem health, and public engagement to study marine pollution. They are looking at how environmental processes (i.e., weathering) and ecosystem stressors (i.e., ocean warming) cause contaminants and synthetic compounds to impact ecosystem health. They are studying how microplastics affect microbes in marine sediments and the fate and effects of tire wear particles in Hampton Roads. Dr. Sealey is interested in partnering with the localities for sample collection to better evaluate these sources.

The Committee members asked several questions of Dr. Sealey. The first question was whether plastic manufacturers provide funding for fate and transport research. She said they sometimes do; however, they prioritize funding recycling programs.

Another question was whether manufacturers are working on developing plastics that will degrade faster. Dr. Sealey answered that there is continuing research on engineering the next generation of polymers, and she questioned whether promoting faster degradation would be good for the environment.

A question was asked about alternatives to single-use plastics. Dr. Sealey said that there are compostable polymers, such as the material for bamboo cutlery, that can be composted but not in your backyard. They require high temperature and high pressure to break down. Some of the university dining halls in VA have these systems onsite.

Another question was raised about the potential for policy changes to manage the retread tire waste that is often seen on interstate highways. Dr. Sealey said that several west coast states are looking into legislative solutions.

One Committee member noted that it was frustrating that some countries, primarily China, are not managing their plastic waste, which causes problems on a global scale.

And the final question was whether traditional street sweepers are effective in collecting tire wear particles. Dr. Sealey answered yes, and the amount would depend on the type of roadway.

3. Coastal VA Offshore Wind Update

Mr. John Larson, Dominion Energy, began with an overview of Dominion Energy and their 2024 Integrated Resource Plan. The Plan illustrates their need for diversified sources of energy to keep pace with demand, which is significantly increasing. Alternative sources of energy, including: 1) solar, 2) offshore wind, 3) biomass, 4) natural gas, and 5) nuclear, all have strengths and weaknesses. Dominion Energy is pursuing all of them in the years to come.

While solar and wind generated 7 percent of Dominion's energy in 2024, by 2039, they will generate 35 percent. The Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind (CVOW) pilot project was the first offshore wind project installed in federal waters and the first owned by an electric utility. The two turbines generate 12 MW and began producing power in October 2020. The commercial scale project will generate 2,640 MW with 176 turbines and will cost \$10.7B. The project is under construction and is expected to be finished at the end of 2026.

Mr. Larson highlighted a few other renewable energy projects Dominion has underway, including the Dulles Solar and Storage Project, which includes installing solar on Dulles property that is not slated for other uses. In 2026, it will generate 100 MW and store 50 MW. The Chesterfield Energy Reliability Center, which will provide reliable service during peak electric demand, will provide 1,000 MW using natural gas and fuel oil. It is anticipated to be in service in late 2028 or 2029. And finally, in 2027, there will be a liquid natural gas storage facility in Brunswick County at the Greenville Power Station that will be capable of powering more than 700,000 homes for four days.

Mr. Larson was asked if Dominion plans to expand the offshore lease area. The President recently signed an Executive Order that prevents new leases from begin signed; however, Dominion has already secured leases for other areas that are expected to move forward.

Another Committee member asked if local government should slow their approvals of data centers to allow Dominion more time to meet the requirements of the VA Clean Economy Act (VCEA). Mr. Larson noted that Dominion is well-positioned to meet the VCEA, however, he also stressed the importance of Americans being more conscience of their energy usage. He also suspects that over time hydrogen will become a more prominent source of energy.

There have been some challenges with respect to supply chain constraints, and one Committee member asked if the tariffs that are coming at the federal level will exacerbate

those challenges. Mr. Larson replied that they would, but he also noted that many of the parts come from Japan and South Korea, which have not yet been hit as hard by tariffs.

When asked if Dominion is interested in working with localities who are generating their own power, Mr. Larson said there is already a microgrid project underway in Suffolk. He stated that it was a solid option.

4. Legislative Update

HRPDC staff provided an overview of the bills that have passed the General Assembly and are waiting for action by the Governor. A handful of resilience bills were passed, including bills to: 1) create the Hampton Roads Coastal Resilience Program and Fund, 2) direct JLARC to study nonfederal match costs for coastal storm risk management studies, and 3) reestablish the Joint Subcommittee on Coastal Flooding. A few drinking water and wastewater bills were passed, including the companion bills for same day reporting of Waterworks anomalies and the Senate bill for updating local ordinance for rainwater harvesting. Amendments to the Dam Safety Act, which give authority to DCR and change some of the responsibilities of dam owners, were passed. The companion bills requiring certain projects have at least 8 percent of the labor hours performed by apprentices passed, and several local government associations are asking for exemptions for public projects. Both tree bills under consideration this session passed the General Assembly. The bill requiring wetlands be included in the VA Flood Protection Master Plan and the Coastal Resilience Master Plan and directing the creation of a policy task force passed. And finally, there are several planning bills that will be sent to the Governor's desk, including those considering accessory dwelling units and shortening the timeline for site plan review.

5. Regional Building Parking Lot Retrofit

Ms. Sunderland presented a summary of the retrofit of the HRPDC/HRTPO parking lot at the Regional Building. The features include traditional concrete instead of asphalt, Stormcrete porous concrete panels, sediment pretreatment, a bioretention basin, native plants, and recycled materials. Without losing any parking spaces, the parking lot now treats stormwater runoff, prevents downstream flooding, reduces the urban heat island effect, and provides pollinator habitat. Ms. Sunderland noted that the treatment train of permeable concrete and the bioretention basin have the storage capacity equivalent to over 600 rain barrels. If the retrofit design had included a stormwater retention pond instead, the size of the parking lot would have been reduced by at least 20 percent to accommodate a traditional stormwater BMP. While the construction is mostly complete, there are additional features that will be added, including four Level 2 electric vehicle charging stations, a customized bike rack, and educational signage. Ms. Sunderland said that while it is not practical to retrofit all urban parking lots, it does make sense to incorporate some stormwater practices to take better advantage of acres dedicated to parking especially when you consider that Hampton Roads has approximately 64,000 acres of "other impervious area" and needs about \$10B in flood mitigation projects. Ms. Sunderland thanked several project partners, particularly DEQ for providing grant funds. After showing a time lapse video of the construction of the project, Ms. Sunderland shared a demonstration of the Stormcrete porous concrete panels and provided a walk-around tour for interested Committee members.

Locality/Agency	Representative	Representative	Representative	Representative	Representative	Representative	Representative	Representative	Representative	Representative	Representative	Representative
Chesapeake	David Mergen											
Franklin												
Gloucester												
Hampton	Hisham Al Masraf											
Isle of Wight												
James City												
Newport News	Angela Hopkins											
Norfolk	Christina VanLear	Gina Shaw										
Poquoson	Caleb Kewitch											
Portsmouth	Brittany Collins											
Smithfield												
Southampton												
Suffolk	Sadiq Omer											
Surry												
Virginia Beach	Diana St. John	Tim Egan										
Williamsburg												
Windsor												
York	Kent Henkel	Charles White										
Nansemond Indian Nation												
HRPDC	Ivy Ozmon	Eric Walberg	KC Filippino	Jill Sunderland	Tho Tran	Whitney Katchmar	Emma Corbitt	Sara Kidd	Nikki Johnson			
HRSD												
HRTPO												
DCR												
DEQ	Grace Holmes											
DWR												
DHCD												
SWCD												
VDEM												
VDOF	Mary Bennett											
VISH												
VDOT												
VMRC												
Fort Monroe Authority												
Virginia Port Authority	Scott Whitehurst											
Jefferson Lab												
VACO												
NASA												
U.S. Navy												
U.S. Air Force												
NRCS												
USACE												
USGS												
USFWs												
NOAA												
ODU												
UVA												
VIMS	Meredith Seeley											
W&M												
Virginia Sea Grant												
VT Tech Center												
CBF	Lisa Renee Jennings											
CCAN												
Ducks Unlimited												
Elizabeth River Project												
Great Dismal Swamp Coll.												
James River Association												
Living River Trust												
Lynnhaven River Now												
SELC												
Wetlands Watch												
AECOM												
AES												
AMT Engineering												
Arcadis												
Bay Environmental												
Brown & Caldwell												
Cardno												
Chesapeake Conservancy												
Clark Nexsen												
Contech ES												
Dewberry												
F&R												
Geosyntec												
GKY												
Fernleaf												
Hazen & Sawyer												
Jackson												
Kinder Environmental												
Kimball-Horn												
Louis Berger												
Michael Baker												
Opti RTC												
Parsons Brinckerhoff												
RK&K												
Timmons Group												
SGA												
Stantech												
Woolpert												
WPL Site	Brad Martin											
Whitman Requardt												
Jefferson Lab												
AMT Engineering												
Public												
NNPDC												
Navy												
Langley												
VML												
Hazen & Sawyer												
EDF												
Guests	John Larson, Dominion Energy											