

**Virginia Energy Plan Advisory Group Meeting Minutes**  
**September 25, 2006, 2:00 p.m.**  
**Northern Virginia Community College**

Secretary L. Preston Bryant Jr. Secretary of Natural Resources & Technology opened the meeting.

**Introductions**

Mr. Bryant performed meeting introductions and reviewed schedule of upcoming meetings. This was followed by attendees introducing themselves followed by a review of the agenda.

**Background**

Steve Walz from DMME reviewed the statute calling for the Energy Plan, the eight primary plan objectives, and plan outline.

**Energy and the Environment Presentations**

Dick Spellman from GDS Associates Inc. provided a presentation and general overview of energy and the environment in Virginia.

Click [here](#) for presentation

Judy Dunscomb from the Nature Conservancy provided a presentation and general overview of environmental issues related to energy and energy diversity.

Click [here](#) for presentation

Al Christopher from Virginia Clean Cities provided a presentation and general overview of alternative fuels in its current context as to national level policies and alternative fuel controversies.

Click [here](#) for presentation

Annette Osso from Virginia Sustainable Building Network provided a presentation and general overview of sustainable building efforts in Virginia.

Click [here](#) for presentation

**Advisory Group Open Discussion**

After the break, Mr. Bryant introduced discussion questions on energy and the environment issues.

**Discussion Question 1**

*Senate Bill 262, besides setting out the Virginia Energy Plan, directed the Secretary of Natural Resources and the State Corporation Commission to develop a proposal for a coordinated review of environmental permits and certificates issued for a project by both natural resource agencies and the Commission. There was some discussion of this at the last Advisory Group meeting in Abingdon.*

*We have had initial discussions with the Commission staff and have been looking at use of a pre-application review panel to review topics covered by the permits and certificates. We are also*

*developing a comparison of permit and certificate process timeframes and public participation requirements to compare how well they do or do not match.*

*What do you see as the benefits or problems with establishing a coordinated review of permits and certificates? If a process is developed, what are some critical components that must be put in place?*

### **Question 1 Discussion**

Mark Tubbs, Columbia Gas of Virginia

There are conflicts between SCC and local government bodies on permitting process. Streamlining of process between the parties would be helpful.

Steve Walz, DMME

Noted that SB262 addressed conflicts between local land use approvals and state level approvals.

Mike Town, Sierra Club

Explained difference between coordinating process and streamlining process and adequate public involvement is needed in the process.

Mark Tubbs:

VDOT used coordination meetings to streamline the permitting process and these might be useful in permitting of energy projects.

Judy Dunscomb, The Nature Conservancy

Is a tiered structure depending on the size of potential impact and complexity being suggested?

Steve Waltz

Legislation directs the coordinated program proposal to be for those projects that require an SCC certificate.

Andrew Smith, Virginia Farm Bureau

Need to look at what emanates from power plant research programs.

Dan Holmes, Piedmont Environmental Council

Localities should be granted the right by the state to create zoning.

Irene Leech, Virginia Citizens Consumer Council

Individual homeowners should receive information and be treated respectfully.

Diana Dascalu, Chesapeake Climate Action Network

In many jurisdictions the one stop shop kind of approach has not worked for permitting.

### **Discussion Question 2**

*Electric generation is a primary source of energy. We have seen a brief presentation of environmental impacts of electric generation. Virginia Utilities are making substantial investments in air pollution controls on electric generating plants.*

*How do we provide adequate generating capacity into the future while minimizing environmental impact of electrical generation? Are there new technologies that might reduce the environmental impact of electric generation? Is additional state regulation needed? How should improvements be paid for?*

## **Question 2 Discussion**

Terry Hall, Appalachian Power

Discussed different technologies. Discussed using waste coal piles to power a generating plant. Noted that it is sometimes better to build a new plant rather than retrofit an existing plant. Company is investing as much as 5 billion dollars in the next 5 years to put new state of the art technologies on plants.

Herbert Wheary, Dominion Resources

Discussed extending nuclear operating permits.

Mitch King, MDV Solar Energy Industries Association

Discussed that utilities are making substantial investments in air pollution controls on electric generating plants.

Mr. Mason

Discussed plant upgrades, scrubbers, in West Virginia, regulated, and Pennsylvania, deregulated, and who bears the cost stockholders or ratepayers.

Andrew Smith:

With co-op's expenses are passed on to members.

Brad Holloman, Institute for Defense and Homeland Security

There should be more focus on energy conservation.

Scott McGearry, Washington Gas

New power plants to meet 1.8% growth will be built outside of Capped Rates.

Irene Leech:

Discussed restructuring and the impact on consumers and the electric utilities.

Annette Osso, Virginia Sustainable Building Network

Discussed regulated versus deregulated utility environment.

## **Discussion Question 3**

*Transporting people and goods across Virginia result in emissions. These come from refining and shipping transportation fuels and from using them for moving vehicles.*

*Recognizing the General Assembly is looking broadly at transportation issues this week, what are energy-related items that Virginia can implement to reduce the environmental impact from transportation activities?*

## **Question 3 Discussion**

Mike Ward, Virginia Petroleum Council

Discussed clean fuels and ethanol fuel for vehicles.

Rick Taube, Northern Virginia Transportation District Commission

Discussed reducing consumption of fuel and reducing emissions to eliminate the trips in the first place, which you can do through telecommuting policies and also proper mixed-use development.

Al Christopher, Virginia Clean Cities / Virginia Hydrogen Roundtable

Touched on whether HOV exemption of clean fuels vehicles should be renewed.

Dan Holmes, Piedmont Environmental Council

Need to look at local government and determine what tools they need and how to provide them.

#### **Discussion Question 4**

*Infrastructure and facility siting issues and the need for new facilities will increase as our population grows. The Virginia Energy Plan is to include an analysis of siting energy resource development, refining, or transmission facilities to identify any disproportionate adverse impact on economically disadvantaged or minority communities.*

*How do we develop the necessary energy facilities and infrastructure to generate the energy and move it to where it is needed with minimum impact to the quality of life our citizens, including economically disadvantaged and minority communities?*

#### **Question 4 Discussion**

Herbert Wheary:

Siting of energy infrastructure is not always in economically depressed communities and exploitive of that community.

Mr. Mason

Early communication is needed to determine the best place for energy infrastructure to go.

Irene Leech:

Must be sure people getting the infrastructure; gain the benefit of the installation.

Terry Hall:

Virginia Resources Authority is in place to do investments in water and sewer, could they also be used for other utilities?

#### **Discussion Question 5**

*Alternate energy technologies can reduce the environmental footprint of energy activities.*

*How do we improve the business environment to increase the use and continued development of these technologies? What alternative energy sources can Virginia rely on in the next 5-10 years, and how much reduction in conventional energy uses is possible from these sources?*

#### **Question 5 Discussion**

Hugh Montgomery, Center for Innovative Technology

Discussed increased agriculture investment when using alternative energy like ethanol and biofuels. There are advanced technologies in three, well-established, landfills.

Annette Osso:

Using methane from plants can be done now.

Mitch King:

Commission on Electrical Utility Restructuring report estimates that approximately 930 megawatts of renewable energy generation could be economically developed in five to fifteen years. In Virginia there are three large municipal solid waste incinerators that produce electricity as a byproduct.

Peter Lowenthal, MDV SEIA

Pennsylvania and New Jersey are subsidizing the cost of solar for homeowners making a long-term financial investment.

### **Discussion Question 6**

*There is ongoing debate over opening Virginia's offshore waters to natural gas and oil exploration and production and wind development. The federal Minerals Management Service has proposed an oil and gas lease sale, if the presidential and legislative moratoria are lifted, in 2011. There also may be opportunities for new ocean energy technologies using ocean thermal differences and wave technologies. Virginia completed a study of offshore gas and oil development in 2005 and enacted state policy on offshore energy development in Senate Bill 2005.*

*In light of these past actions, what new actions should Virginia take regarding its offshore natural gas and oil, wind, and other ocean energy resources?*

### **Question 6 Discussion**

Will be discussed at the next meeting

### **Discussion Question 7**

*Coal mining and natural gas production provide the economic foundation for Southwest Virginia and provides a substantial amount of indigenous energy supply to Virginia. Land reclamation and surface re-mining restores unreclaimed land, reduces water pollution, and reconnects habitat corridors. At the same time, surface mining often can conflict with other nearby land uses. There also is a substantial uranium deposit in Pittsylvania County. Current state law allows uranium exploration but prohibits uranium mining.*

*What actions do you recommend for managing energy resource extraction activities in Virginia?*

### **Question 7 Discussion**

Brad Holloman:

Of the coal that's produced in Virginia how much is actually burned here?

Herbert Wheary:

There is legislation that mandates Virginia coal be used in certain situations

Steve Walz:

Virginia produces about 33 million tons of coal per year. It has been as high as 40 million tons. I think, approximately 10 to 15 million tons of Virginia coal is burned in the state.

**Public Session**  
**6:00 p.m.**

Steve Walz performed introductions and provided a brief background on the Energy Plan process.

Debra Jacobson a Professorial Lecturer in Energy Law submitted a paper discussing environmental impacts of energy production and generation. She stated that as world oil production peaks we need to look at clean energy sources.

Brooks Preston, an engineer, spoke on the need for energy efficiency and conservation programs.

Ross Shearer, Jr. spoke of his environmental concerns and noted that the Commonwealth needs to consider environmental impacts and plan through the lens of the carbon footprint of energy sources.

Linda Birchsheim spoke on the dangers of elevated mercury levels.

Andrew De Vorzac spoke a need for Virginia support of a renewable energy standard; power from zero emission sources, energy incentives, and improved pollutant standards.

John Byrne spoke on the need for long term planning to protect the environment for our children. He suggests that we need laws to regulate the energy industry and laws for planning and zoning of our communities.

Roger Vehic spoke on the issue of CO2 emissions and waste management.

Unknown Speaker spoke on the need to reduce CO2 emissions.

Joe Owens spoke about the need for solar and wind power for generation to help reduce pollution.

Elaine O' Malley spoke on the need to protect our eco systems

Flint Webb spoke of the need to develop production and distribution for ethanol and biofuels.

Tom Tarcza stated that geothermal buildings reduce energy consumption and Virginia should encourage the use of geothermal and solar systems.

Bruce Parker is a member of several environmental organizations. He spoke about energy planning and on pollution reduction.

Constance Choe is a member of several environmental organizations and spoke of the need for leaders to take responsibility for the environment and set efficiency standards.

Terry Hill spoke of his desire to build a geothermal green house and asked about incentives.

Unknown Speaker spoke of the benefit of having a revolving fund for geothermal and solar projects for homeowners.

Herbert Child spoke of technology developments that could improve energy situation and the need for the state to encourage DOE to look at cold fusion.

Meeting adjourned.