Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee
Meeting Summary

September 16, 2025, at 3:00 P.M.
Government Center Conference Room 11

Board of Supervisors Members Present:
Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay
Supervisor James N. Bierman, Jr., Dranesville District
Supervisor Patrick S. Herrity, Springfield District
Supervisor Andres F. Jimenez, Mason District (Acting 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

Others Present:
Bryan Hill, County Executive
Jennifer Miller, Deputy County Executive
Elizabeth Teare, County Attorney

Link to agenda and meeting materials: Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee Meeting: Sept. 16, 2025 | Board Of Supervisors

Item I: Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 P.M. by Supervisor Jimenez, Acting Chairman. The May 20, 2025, meeting summary was accepted.

Item II: The Impact of Federal Energy and Climate Policy Shifts on County Goals

John Morrill, Director, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC), outlined changes in federal energy and climate policy and the impacts on Fairfax County's climate programming. He reviewed the county's climate goals and key plans—the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP), Operational Energy Strategy (OES), and Resilient Fairfax—and highlighted how federal legislation, like the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), initially boosted clean energy efforts. However, the newer House Resolution 1 (HR1) legislation has curtailed funding and tax incentives, impacting energy efficiency, renewable energy, and electrification progress, with Mr. Morrill providing examples from each sector.

Mr. Morrill emphasized the significance of resilience work, reliance on local leadership, and ongoing program evaluation. OEEC plans a full assessment of progress and costs in 2026 to refine strategies and gauge the likelihood of meeting climate goals.

The Board discussed concerns over HR1's impact on climate and energy goals, particularly for vulnerable residents. Supervisor Jimenez criticized HR1 for increasing costs and challenges, with Mr. Morrill noting OEEC is conducting a quantitative analysis to assess the impacts. Chairman McKay emphasized completing funded projects, prioritizing cost-effective outcomes, and providing data to human service agencies to address emergency needs while maintaining ambitious climate goals despite losing federal support. Supervisor Palchik encouraged leveraging private partnerships, resource-sharing, and state investment in energy-efficient construction projects. Supervisor Lusk highlighted the success of the county's AC Rescue program, requesting data on its potential reach, with Mr. Morrill confirming its continued expansion. Supervisor Storck acknowledged challenges but urged innovative solutions and collaborations with private and nonprofit sectors to offset limitations and achieve climate objectives.

Item III: Introducing the Energy Compass Program

Maya Dhavale, Senior Community Specialist, and Dr. Maggie Beetstra, Community Specialist, OEEC, provided an update on Fairfax County's Energy Compass pilot program. The program aims to assist homeowners with energy-efficient upgrades by providing information and recommendations to reduce barriers. The pilot program is active as of September 2025 and will continue in its current phase through May 2026, focusing on evaluation, adjustments, and preparation for the full launch. The program’s goal is to assist 1,000 households, with 200 of those completing energy upgrade projects. Dr. Beetstra shared feedback collected from a survey of residents, highlighting barriers such as high costs and contractor concerns. Residents expressed interest in learning about insulation, windows, heating/cooling systems, water heating, solar energy, appliances, and lighting. Survey results will guide trained energy navigators in assisting homeowners. The program will offer evolving resources and personalized support for significant energy upgrades.

The Board discussed several aspects of the pilot program. Supervisor Jimenez inquired about the program's capacity to accommodate homeowners, with Ms. Dhavale noting evaluations during the pilot phase to assess appointment lengths, workloads, and capacity. Questions arose about participant outreach methods, program funding, and the environmental return on investment, with Mr. Morrill describing it as a limited investment with potentially high returns. Legal considerations about referrals to contractors were discussed, and Ms. Dhavale clarified the program's reliance on external criteria like certifications for recommendations. Chairman McKay raised ideas about expanding participant experiences to neighbors with similar concerns and including commercial owners of residential properties. Supervisor Storck suggested leveraging the Green Business Partners program and artificial intelligence technology to enhance the initiative. Supervisor Smith emphasized the importance of supporting lower-income homeowners while remaining mindful of budget constraints.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 P.M.