



**Delaware River Basin Commission**  
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Kristen Bowman Kavanagh, P.E.  
Executive Director

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## **Advisory Committee on Climate Change**

*Virtually via Zoom*

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

Tuesday, September 11, 2024

10:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

### **MEETING ATTENDEES (65)**

#### **Members and Alternates (13):**

##### **Reserved:**

*Delaware* – Robert Scarborough, Ph.D.; Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control

*New Jersey* – Nicholas A. Procopio, Ph.D., GISP; New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

*New York* – Mark Lowery; New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

*United States Government* – Amanda L. Babson, Ph.D.; National Park Service

*United States Government* – Arthur DeGaetano, Ph.D.; NOAA Northeast Regional Climate Center, Cornell University

*New York City* – Alan Cohn, New York City Department of Environmental Protection

*City of Philadelphia* – Julia Rockwell, Philadelphia Water Department

*Partnership for the Delaware Estuary* – Martha Maxwell-Doyle

##### **Non-Reserved:**

William Brady III, P.E.; CCS Strategies LLC

Marjorie B. Kaplan, Dr.P.H.; Rutgers Climate and Energy Institute, Rutgers University

Christopher Linn, AICP; Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Howard Neukrug, P.E.; The Water Center at Penn, University of Pennsylvania

John Callahan, Ph.D.; Climate Scientist, Ocean Associates, NOAA National Ocean Service

##### **Not present:**

*Pennsylvania* – James Horton; Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

David Velinsky; Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, Drexel University

**DRBC Staff (22):**

Matthew Amato, Sarah Beganskas, Jacob Bransky, Fanghui Chen, Elba Deck, Eric Engle, Joseph Fogarty, Mike Heller, Kristen Bowman Kavanagh, Avery Lentini, Alyssa Lutgen, Chris McCann, Elaine Panuccio, Chad Pindar, Kevin Pregent, Patrick Rago, Kate Schmidt, Amy Shallcross, Namsoo Suk, Steve Tambini, Li Zheng, Lulin Zhong

**Other Attendees (30):**

Trevor Amestoy (Cornell U.), Barbara Arrindell (DCS), Stefanie Baxter (DGS), Tracy Carluccio (DRN), Carol Collier (ANSDU), Michael Dillon (MGKF), Carl DuPoldt (Green Building Solutions and Supplies, LLC), Joan Farb, Dalia Ghobrial (City of Trenton), Brent Gotsch (NYCDEP), Molly Hesson (Sage Services), Skelly Holmbeck (WRA), Matthew Konfirst (EPA), Hoss Liaghat (PADEP), Matthew Marchisello (Aqua), Christian Martinez (LVPC), Arlene McCoy (Merrill Creek Reservoir), Leslie McGeorge, Evan Pearce (GEI Consultants), Erika Pleczynski (Verdantas), Anthony Preucil (NOAA), Agung Putra (National Audubon Society), Paul Racette (PEC), Maggie Reilly (Aqua), Renee Reber (NPCA), Patrick Reed (Cornell U.), Ian Snook (NJDEP), Brenan Tarrier (NYSDEC), Anneke van Rossum (DRN), Laura Wilton (NJGO).

Reference acronyms: Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel U. (ANSDU), Aqua America (Aqua), Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN), Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC), Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox, LLC (MGKF), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA), New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), New Jersey Office of the Governor (NJGO), New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP), Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP), Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC), Water Resources Association of the Delaware River Basin (WRA), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**MEETING SUMMARY**

Prior to the Call to Order, K. B. Kavanagh read an opening statement on the purpose of advisory committees and the meeting format/housekeeping.

**Call to Order:**

Meeting was called to order at 10:03 am by H. Neukrug and held in a hybrid format with options for both in-person attendance at the DRBC Goddard Conference Room as well as virtually via Zoom webinar and its call-in capabilities. Neukrug called for a moment of silence to honor the victims of September 11.

**Member Roll Call:**

Attendance was taken by K. B. Kavanagh. Thirteen (13) members present. All committee members (and members of the public) who attended did so virtually.

## **Approve Meeting Summary:**

The 12/20/23 meeting summary was unanimously approved. No discussion. Motion to approve was made by M. Kaplan and seconded by N. Procopio.

## **Election of Officers:**

K. B. Kavanagh indicated that a new committee Chair and Vice Chair needed to be elected. Terms are for one year each, with no term limits. J. Rockwell moved to nominate H. Neukrug for another term as Chair and M. Kaplan for another term as Vice Chair. M. Maxwell-Doyle seconded the motion; no discussion, and the motion carried unanimously.

## **DRBC Announcements:**

K. B. Kavanagh made the following DRBC announcements:

1. Martha Maxwell-Doyle is the new reserved member of the ACCC representing the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary (and shared her biography).
2. The ACCC currently has three openings on the committee for non-reserved members, and applications will be accepted through January 21, 2025. See website for more details on who can apply and how to apply. [https://www.nj.gov/drbc/about/advisory/ACCC\\_index.html](https://www.nj.gov/drbc/about/advisory/ACCC_index.html)
3. The DRBC and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 3 will co-host a Climate Practitioners Workshop on Monday, October 28, 2024, from 10 am – 4 pm at The Discovery Center in Philadelphia. Attendance at this event is free. Information is available on EPA's website and with a link from DRBC's homepage. <https://www.epa.gov/climate-adaptation/2024-delaware-river-climate-practitioners-workshop>
4. The Delaware River Climate and Frack Ban Coalition (Coalition) sent a letter to the ACCC members last week, and copied DRBC, about the DRBC's Climate Resilience Plan. The letter contained several recommendations, or requests, of the ACCC related to the Committee's purpose, its means of communication with DRBC staff and stakeholders, and general DRBC advisory committee practices. It was noted that the DRBC would provide the Coalition with a written response to these items. In response to one request in the letter that the ACCC have input into DRBC's docket decisions and engage with DRBC staff about those dockets, K. B. Kavanagh did state that 1) having this advisory committee review dockets would not be consistent with the stated purposes of the committee and the charges to the ACCC in its 2019 establishing resolution, and 2) the DRBC's climate resilience planning activities will focus on water resources matters within the authority and jurisdiction of the Commission, and these do not include setting or implementing broad GHG reduction goals across sectors.

## **Presentations:**

“A Draft Framework for Developing DRBC's Climate Resilience Plan” by Kevin Pregent, Esq., Associate Counsel, and Sarah Beganskas, Ph.D., Senior Water Resource Scientist, of DRBC

This presentation included a discussion of the draft framework that DRBC is developing for its multi-phase Climate Resilience Plan. See [website](#) for presentation.

A. Cohn offered that he and J. Rockwell are part of the Water Utility Climate Alliance (<https://www.wucaonline.org/>) and can connect DRBC to resources from there if needed.

M. Lowery asked about DRBC’s specific process for conducting a gap analysis. NYS is planning their own gap analysis and considering how to do it. S. Beganskas responded that DRBC does not have a specific plan yet, can stay in touch on that, looking forward to hearing how NY’s progresses as well and will follow up with Mark on this as we progress in the planning process.

H. Neukrug suggested it is important to balance water/land issues. Land impacts water, include this in the gap analysis. He also asked about timing of the different phases and whether DRBC has looked at climate plans from other River Basin Commissions or similar organizations. K.B. Kavanagh and S. Beganskas responded that the rough estimate is 6–12 months for Phase 1 and additional Phases are still taking shape. DRBC took inspiration from others’ plans including states, water utilities, etc. and will continue to search for other climate plans that may be relevant to DRBC.

M. Kaplan shared that SWAT-C models how carbon moves through a watershed, parallel to hydrologic processes; may help with connection to land processes.

J. Callahan advised DRBC to bring in social scientists early, to help consider adaptation strategies and how communities/people will respond to different projections. Don’t wait until late in the game to consult with them, critical input.

A. Babson recommend defining resilience (distinguishing from adaptation, for example) in DRBC’s plan. S. Beganskas responded that is on our next internal agenda to workshop our vision statement, including our definition of resilience.

A. van Rossum noted that the DRBC referenced in its presentation there will be consultation with the ACCC on the CRP and asked whether there is any set process or idea of how that consultation will look and what that consultation means in terms of decision making for the DRBC? K.B. Kavanagh responded that DRBC staff are having discussions of ways to increase public engagement in addition to regular ACCC updates and will report more later.

A. Cohn shared that as far as strategies for advancing resiliency go, water recycling and water reuse have a lot of potential to help counter severe drought when total water supply is limited. However, it is very resource intensive to develop a plan; NYC is working on it still.

“Delaware’s Climate Action Plan; Focusing on Water-Related Actions and Projects” by Robert Scarborough, Ph.D., Environmental Scientist V, Resource Protection Section, Division of Water, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control

This presentation provided a summary of Delaware’s water-related climate action plan and planning. See [website](#) for presentation.

Delaware’s climate plan goals: (1) reduce GHG emissions, (2) maximize resilience. Resilience focuses on coastal impacts and sea-level rise. Governor requested DNREC to prepare a Climate Action Plan in 2019; the plan was released in November 2021. Led by Division of Climate, Coastal, and Energy. Mitigation focused on climate and energy. Resilience focused on coastal. Steps taken: established a technical advisory workgroup; held public workshops (what does the public want to see in a plan?); met with groups (how is climate/heat affecting your operations?); held public workshops again, presented progress, and got responses/input. Plan has resiliency categories, strategies, and actions; there are 19 strategies and 86 actions. They created a Coastal Dashboard of incremental flood inundation maps and an open Delaware Water Quality Portal, available to all. Takeaways: stakeholder buy-in is critical; set realistic/achievable targets and actions; living document; and leverage plan to support collaborative projects.

“Adaptation and Resilience Planning and Regulation for Water Resources in New York” by Mark Lowery, Assistant Director, Office of Climate Change, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

This presentation provided a summary of New York’s water resource related adaptation and resilience planning and regulation. See [website](#) for presentation.

New York does not have one comprehensive climate adaptation plan but has advanced ad hoc, via agency initiatives and executive orders. They released the NY State Climate Impacts Assessment in 2024 that indicates short term seasonal droughts are increasing but not long multi-year droughts; expecting spring/summer changes in precipitation patterns and more evapotranspiration. New York has a Climate Leadership Community Protection Act (CLCPA) that is focused on emissions and includes 90+ recommendations. The state also has a Community Risk and Resiliency Act (CRRRA, 2014). Flood risk management is based on executive order (13690). NYSDEC requires climate hazards to be considered for any permitted project. 2024 State of the State: funds allocated to support a climate adaptation and resilience plan. Several tools were also shared including model local laws and a drought early warning tool. Planning status/effort so far: interagency process, executive committee, staff steering committee, work group.

B. Arrindell asked, does a facility like a waste incinerator come under climate oversight in NY State (referring to one planned in Sullivan County that she stated would produce a lot of emissions)? M. Lowery responded that if the facility is subject to the CLCPA then it would fall under that and must be consistent with CRRRA.

## **Member Roundtable Updates:**

M. Maxwell-Doyle shared information and a link on PDE's upcoming Science and Environmental Summit in February 11-12, 2025. (<https://delawareestuary.org/delaware-estuary-science-and-environmental-summit/>)

C. Linn shared that DVRPC has multiple projects related to climate resilience landscape, needs, local government partners, and would be happy to share information with DRBC.

N. Procopio shared a link to New Jersey's climate change website at <https://dep.nj.gov/climatechange/resilience/>. He also shared that comments are being accepted on NJDEP's proposed Resilient Environments and Landscapes (REAL) rule to modernize land resource protection rules to better support New Jersey communities, residents, and businesses in building their resilience to sea-level rise, extreme weather, chronic flooding, and other impacts of changing climate. Details at : <https://dep.nj.gov/njreal/>

M. Kaplan shared that in June 2024, Rutgers released its annual State of Climate NJ that can be found at <https://njclimateresourcecenter.rutgers.edu/resources/state-of-the-climate-new-jersey/>

## **Public Remarks:**

B. Arrindell requested that the DRBC record meetings in full and provide to the public, at least for the presentations. K.B. Kavanagh responded that per a 2016 Resolution for the Minutes, audio and video recordings of advisory committee meetings are neither required nor encouraged.

C. DuPoldt share information on the Green Infrastructure, Climate, and Cities Seminar Series -- first Wednesday of the month - Sept. 11, 2024. University Action in the Climate Space: The role of higher education in advancing climate action. Join us next Wednesday at 4pm ET. Registration Link is: [https://drexel.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_1VJJaNjHRLqwAfwLe0j4Ag#/registration](https://drexel.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1VJJaNjHRLqwAfwLe0j4Ag#/registration)

## **Additional Links Shared in Chat:**

To sign up to receive via email periodic DRBC-related information and updates on one or more interest areas: <https://www.nj.gov/drbc/contact/interest/> . And all advisory committee openings can be found online: <https://www.nj.gov/drbc/about/advisory/committee-openings.html>

## **Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned by H. Neukrug at approximately 3:15 pm.

*Approved 12/17/2024.*