

3/3/2020 NY Climate Council, First meeting – notes from Joanne Coons

Jared Snyder, Deputy Commissioner of NYDEC introduced the first meeting of NYS Climate Council at 1:00 in the Albany NY DEC conference room. Half of the room was filled by a “U” shaped table arrangement where the 22 council members sat, the other half were public, press and organization representatives. There was an overflow room set up with a video feed of the meeting in another room.

Alicia Barton, CEO of NYSERDA and Basil Seggos, Commissioner of NYSDEC were introduced as co chairs of the council.



Alicia Barton started off the meeting with a strong statement that climate change is based on undeniable science, poses an existential threat to our citizens. and is a top priority according to Governor Cuomo. She emphasized that in order to deal with climate change it is imperative that we embrace change and reach all age and economic levels. She instructed the council that a collaborative team spirit approach is important for a successful council working group.

Basil Seggos welcomed the council and stressed that what they will be doing is cutting edge, charting paths and must be focused on actions, not words. He stated that 20 million people from other states and countries will be watching and learning from what we do so it is the utmost importance that we get this

right. He mentioned that council members are all equal and have one goal: to get out of the climate mess while considering the environment and economy.

Dr. Radley Horton, Associate Research Professor, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory was asked to start the meeting off with an overview of scientific data that accurately assessed how the climate has changed over time and the trajectory path it is on. He documented flooding, increased precipitation and temperature. Based on research, he stated that we need to recalculate the 20 year global warming potential as not all factors have been accurately accounted for. If we don't have accurate calculations we cannot correctly target our goals. This recalculation is necessary due to human interference with the environment and the acceleration rate is greater than we thought. Another consequence of climate change is that biological response to this acceleration is more sensitive than previously understood. We also need to change the way measure emissions. It is currently expressed as a percent and it would be better measured as tonnage. When measuring CO2 we need to look upstream to carbon production and consider these emissions in our measurements as well as include 20 year potential emissions of NO2, methane and other green house gases. It is essential that we look at the social cost of carbon and give it a value based on damage that carbon does and the cost of mitigation and abatement.

After the presentation by Dr. Horton, the 22 council members introduced themselves and stated their intent for the council. (I have copious notes on what each said and will be writing that up as well) The attorney's for NYDEC and NYSERDA will be assisting the group and they went through some of the ground rules. Then the council was instructed on how there will be six sub groups made up of council members and transition working groups comprised of 13-17 members made up of agency and subjective experts. There is a website where public meetings will be announced and people will be kept informed on progress. The next meeting was set for April 2nd and time and place yet to be determined but it will be located downstate.

In conclusion, Commissioner Seggos asked, "How do we set up success? Not by installing old infrastructure"