

Jun 16, 2026

Green and Healthy Task Force quarterly meeting

Summary

Task Force concludes with program updates and funding strategy discussions for future affordable housing energy initiatives.

Program Funding and Planning

Department of Housing and Community Development is developing a 3-year Empower program plan with greenhouse gas emission goals. Funding for electrification and solar projects is now live for affordable housing properties.

Regulatory and Compliance Updates

Building Energy Performance Standards reporting deadlines were extended to June 30. Maryland is modifying Inflation Reduction Act rebate applications to align with new Department of Energy guidelines prohibiting fuel switching.

Task Force Finalization

Members are finalizing a comprehensive 3-year status report due July 1. Participants emphasized that affordability currently drives energy program priorities over long-term efficiency upgrades.

Decisions

Aligned

- **Report terminology regarding barriers updated** The task force report will use the phrasing "reducing barriers" rather than "eliminating barriers" to reflect program reality.

Next steps

[Task force members] Review Task Force Report: Submit revisions, comments, or additional items for the final status report by Thursday, June 25th.

[Nicola Tran] Update Report Data: Refresh funding and cost figures in the report to current levels to account for inflation and recent changes.

[Robyne Chaconas] Publish Meeting Notes: Upload the meeting notes to the designated website after the session concludes.

Details

- **Meeting Introductions:** Nicola Tran (DHCD) convened the final meeting of the Green and Healthy Task Force, which is set to sunset after a three-year term. Attendees included representatives from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), the Office of People's Counsel (OPC), the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative (GHI), the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA), the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), the Maryland Affordable Housing Coalition, the Maryland Affordable Housing Trust, and a legislative aid for Senator Alonzo Washington.
- **DHCD Empower Program Planning:** Nicola Tran stated that DHCD is currently developing the Empower program plan for the next three-year cycle, beginning in January 2027, with a submission deadline of September 1st to the Public Service Commission. The plan, which has been developed with stakeholder input from the Empower low-income working group, focuses on establishing numerical greenhouse gas emission goals ([00:04:19](#)). Additionally, the current Empower program has achieved a production volume four times greater than it was three years ago, a trajectory DHCD intends to maintain ([00:05:50](#)).
- **DHCD Multifamily and Electrification Funding:** The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Program (GHGP) is scheduled to end this month; however, DHCD has secured replacement funding from MEA through the Governor's climate down payment to continue electrification work for affordable housing ([00:05:50](#)). DHCD received \$10 million for electrification, \$10 million for solar projects, and \$1 million for EV chargers, all of which are now live and available for affordable housing properties in the pipeline ([00:07:35](#)).
- **DHCD Single Family and Repair Programs:** DHCD continues to operate the MEEP program for non-functioning HVAC systems, though demand consistently exceeds funding, resulting in a customer waitlist ([00:07:35](#)). Customers are being directed to alternative funding sources, such as Empower or special loans, where possible. The BS Smart program remains active for market-rate customers, despite recent impacts from the sunset of federal tax credits. Furthermore, DHCD has launched two new federal programs, the Lead Hazard Reduction grant program and the Healthy Homes Production grant program, which are now integrated into their existing repair program suite ([00:08:57](#)).

- Lead Abatement Awareness Campaign:** DHCD is currently experiencing a lack of customer applications across its three lead abatement funding sources. Consequently, the department has initiated a statewide lead awareness campaign in collaboration with its outreach division and the Lead Abatement Commission to improve public understanding of lead hazards and available remediation resources ([00:10:27](#)).
- Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS) Updates:** Christopher A Mentzer (MDE) announced that the deadline for this year's BEPS data reporting was extended from June 1st to June 30th to accommodate third-party verification requirements ([00:11:59](#)). Over 6,000 buildings have submitted data, and MDE expects to collect 2025 calendar year data in the coming cycle ([00:13:21](#)). Additionally, DHCD and MDE will launch a BEPS roadmap for affordable housing in July to assist properties with compliance and the alternative compliance pathway ([00:11:59](#)).
- IRA Home Energy Rebate Programs:** Ryan Trauley (MEA) provided an update on the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) home energy rebate programs following new guidance issued by the Department of Energy on June 1st ([00:14:47](#)). Maryland holds conditional awards for both the Homeowners Managing Energy Savings efficiency rebates and the Home Electrification Rebates (HER) programs ([00:16:22](#)). Maryland is required to modify its applications to align with new DOE guidelines; notably, the HER program now prohibits fuel switching, which will necessitate more significant application revisions compared to the efficiency program ([00:17:47](#)).
- Utility Relief Act and Empower Program:** Regarding the recent Utility Relief Act, Nicola Tran clarified that while utility Empower goals were reduced, the statute governing DHCD's Empower program remains unchanged ([00:21:06](#)). DHCD has voluntarily stopped incentivizing new gas systems and instead prioritizes electrification; however, they will continue to provide building shell upgrades for gas-heated homes via electric surcharges ([00:22:54](#)). It is anticipated that the multifamily sector will see an increased shift toward electrification for existing central gas systems ([00:24:53](#)).
- Task Force Status Report:** The Task Force is finalizing a comprehensive status report that summarizes three years of work, covering topics such as strategic retrofit plans, barrier reduction, resource mapping, and workforce capacity. The draft report was circulated to members, and feedback or revisions must be submitted by June 25th to ensure the document is ready for the July 1st submission deadline ([00:26:35](#)) ([00:32:48](#)).

- **Strategic Environment and Future Outlook:** During a discussion on the final report, Cliff Mitchell (MDH) and other participants highlighted the significant changes in the economic and environmental landscape since the task force began, specifically noting that affordability has become the primary driver for energy programs, sometimes displacing momentum for long-term energy upgrades ([00:34:18](#)). Robyne Chaconas (DHCD) stressed the need for ongoing engagement with elected officials to keep resource requests visible ([00:39:29](#)). Participants also discussed the importance of continuing to explore creative funding sources, such as general funds or state-level programs, due to the potential vulnerability of programs funded solely via utility surcharges ([00:42:17](#)).