



Virginia Petroleum and Convenience Marketers Association

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TO: Transportation Climate Initiative
FR: Mike O'Connor
RE: VPCMA Testimony on TCI-P

Virginia Petroleum and Convenience Marketers Association, VPCMA, is a non-profit trade association formed in 1948 representing approximately 350 companies in the petroleum and convenience marketing industries. The association is guided by a 15-member board of directors, and each board member is a Virginia resident. VPCMA members operate or supply the overwhelming majority of the 3,474 locations in the state that sell gasoline and diesel to consumers. The convenience store industry employs 67,560 Virginians. 13,957 additional Virginians are employed in the fuels sector including distribution, transportation and logistics, bulk storage, and home heating oil distributors.

VPCMA offers the following comments on the implementation plan. While we have many issues with the TCI-P program in general which we have articulated in past comments, today we would like to enthusiastically endorse the following TCI-P principals for public engagement that are included in draft Framework for Public Engagement (Guiding principles)

- Maintain respect, honesty and integrity in the process
- Use an open, two-way exchange of information to increase understanding among all stakeholders, and encourage active listening.
- Establish or maintain open communication channels that are consistently monitored and responded to
- Recognize community knowledge and expertise
- Document input received from community members, respond to it, and be transparent
- Regarding how input is reflected in decision making, make efforts to reconnect with the groups that originally provided the input to see that the input has been effectively integrated into the program

In keeping with your principals, we urge you to require that parties advocating for TCI-P's adoption in the Commonwealth of Virginia adhere to these principals. In 2018, many of these individuals were involved in the adoption of the Virginia Energy Plan, which they now claim is a **mandate** for various legislative and regulatory actions they support. In fact, this plan was developed with input from only one side

of the equation - theirs. While the net cast to invite stakeholders to watch the show was indeed extensive, comments submitted by the private sector, particularly from those representing petroleum and propane marketers, convenience stores and other energy providers were dismissed out of hand; and were neither included nor acknowledged in the report. VPCMA members believe that the best decisions on vexing public policy matters are achieved only thru an extensive discussion of all issues which includes all stakeholders. Our members are confident that TCI-P's recommendations for future open and inclusive public participation will be embraced by the next governor and his administration, whomever that may be.

Our second request is that TCI-P require your allies in the state of Virginia to embrace TCI-P's commitment to openness and transparency. We note that Virginia had intended to hold a stakeholder meeting in June to plan a Virginia-specific process expediting the elimination of fossil fuels in the Commonwealth. This meeting, which has now fallen off the radar screen, was to be held without consultation of other impacted state agencies or many business associations that depend on transportation funding for the free flow of commerce and safe roads and bridges in the Commonwealth. It was announced by the administration that their review would be facilitated by a no-bid out-of-state contractor with a market capitalization of over \$9 billion dollars. This type of regulating in secret is highly unusual and not in keeping your policy, nor with Virginia's open government laws.

Once again, we hope that the leadership of TCI will require participating public sector entities in Virginia to strictly adhere to your insightful Framework for Public Engagement.