



Verbal Comments to OCED MACH2 Listening Session April 10, 2024

Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director

The Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED) is supposed to be ensuring that the hydrogen hubs follow the community engagement principles set out by the Biden Administration. MACH2 is required to engage communities and advance “diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility” and prioritize this “to ensure people impacted by energy development have a role in the decisions that affect their lives”. [See: [OCED Community Benefits Fact Sheet](#) and “[Guidance for Creating a Community Benefits Plan for Regional Direct Air Capture Hubs](#)”]

It is clear from how the MACH2 leadership has carried out their program that they have ignored these principles. MACH2 has demonstrated no awareness about Delaware River Watershed communities, the current state of peoples’ health and environment, the struggles people and our ecosystems are engaged in, nor the legacy and ongoing air and water pollution from polluting industries.

Proof of this is that they are mapping MACH2 projects that would emit pollution such as nitrogen oxides when hydrogen is burned and pose grave dangers to public safety in the very same places where these problems already exist and for some, for generations. If you understood this, why would you even consider laying further burdens here, in this extremely densely populated 3-state region where people cannot escape environmental oppression? In the entire Delaware River Valley, we don’t even meet minimum federal clean air standards for ozone – remember - nitrogen dioxide is a precursor of ozone, a nightmare for human health and it exacerbates the climate crisis. This is the opposite of the “climate solution” MACH2 and all hydrogen hubs are supposed to provide; the result will be to accelerate the climate emergency.

There’s no place in this region that can tolerate even one more molecule of burden. We here in the DR Watershed are struggling to restore healthy living and habitats but MACH2 is jeopardizing all of these community efforts without any recognition. The community guidance says we are supposed to have a role in the decisions being made? Tell me this: Will you cancel plans to build MACH2 if communities say they do not want it? If not, your environmental benefits and engagement planning is fiction and you should stop pretending.

Additionally, this meeting itself is evidence that there is a lack of interest in the community because many people who signed up were arbitrarily crossed off the speaker list without explanation or even notification. If OCED wants to hold a “listening session” you cannot cover your ears because you think there are too many voices.

And the excuse that the check off box on the registration form was used to identify frontline community members is not valid – the fact is people do not know if they are in a “host” community or not because MACH2 has not disclosed enough information about the location of the purported 17 projects that would comprise MACH2 – without knowing where and what MACH2 is going to build, how would the public know if they are a “host” or not? That question on your form was simply unfair and led to many people missing out.

What we do know from the MACH2 website and maps is that all of southeastern PA, all of Delaware, and all of South and up to Central New Jersey are in the enormous and oppressive footprint of MACH2 and are expected to bear its burdens. Every voice in our communities must be heard or these sessions are more confirmation that community engagement is nonexistent and MACH2’s intention is to ram its projects through, no matter what people say or do. But fair warning tonight, OCED, MACH2, Suzy Baker - you should know people are not going to sit by and let this happen.

[Finally, when 32 organizations complained in a letter to MACH2 about the lack of community inclusion in MACH2’s so-called public meeting March 11, they received a response stating: “when MACH2 starts breaking ground on individual projects” community outreach would occur locally. When projects are “breaking ground” is TOO LATE for MACH2 to “reach out”! This stance is baldly unjust and exclusionary. How can any community have meaningful input when the hydrogen projects that would impact them are already on the maps and/or already “breaking ground”?]*

We call on OCED to acknowledge that MACH2 has failed to engage communities and is not eligible for the federal funding they are bidding for. MACH2 has not passed this all-important test and the just decision is to cancel it.

Tracy Carluccio
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Delaware Riverkeeper Network
April 10, 2024
OCED “Listening Session” 6pm – 7:30pm

*Note [___] indicates words that were not spoken due to running out of the 4-minute allotted time.