

**PUBLIC ROUNDTABLE ON THE
DIRECTOR OF THE
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT
CHRISTOPHE A.G. TULOU
CONFIRMATION RESOLUTION OF 2010**

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**THE HONORABLE COUNCILMEMBER MARY CHEH, CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & THE ENVIRONMENT**



**CHRISTOPHE A. G. TULOU
ACTING DIRECTOR, DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

**TUESDAY, JULY 6, 2010 AT 11:00 A.M.
THE HISTORIC WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE NW, ROOM 500**

Good morning Chairperson Cheh and members of the Committee on Government Operations and the Environment. My name is Christophe Tulou and I am the Acting Director of the District Department of the Environment.

I am privileged to be sitting before you today to discuss the prospect of leading DDOE and working with you, other Councilmembers, and the dedicated team Mayor Fenty has assembled to make DC our nation's greenest city.

There are many paths to any destination, but I'm here today largely because I was a disappointment to my parents. I foiled their plans for all six of their children to follow in their footsteps and become medical doctors. I was mesmerized by Jacques Cousteau and absolutely committed to a life of underwater exploration—an unusual obsession for a kid growing up in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. I have carried a love of ocean and environment with me through my academic and professional life, learning above all else how interconnected our environment is and the profound influence we humans have on it. The ongoing Gulf oil spill is a heartbreaking illustration of that influence.

Through my studies in biology, marine science, policy and law, I was drawn to the connection between science and policy, which led to a decade of involvement with ocean, coastal, environmental, scientific, agricultural, transportation, foreign affairs and defense issues in the U.S. House of Representatives—working with then-Congressman Tom Carper from Delaware. I also served as executive director of the Pew Oceans Commission, whose mission was to define a federal policy for the protection of living marine resources off our shores.

I joined Governor Carper as his cabinet secretary for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, where I learned that states and localities often do not perceive environmental policy priorities and needs the same way federal officials do. I managed the State through the painful implementation of the federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. It was, to say the least, not a trust-building exercise between levels of government.

I returned to DC as a consultant, often bringing together diverse interests to reach consensus on public and private sector policy issues. In a recent collaboration with the Heinz Center on Science, Economics and the Environment, I worked with insurance companies, environmental

groups, developers, academics, and government officials at all levels to help our coasts and communities become more resilient. Cities are the hubs of this activity—assessing their vulnerabilities and planning themselves out of harm’s way. It turns out that cities are where our nation is finding much-needed leadership not only on these resilience and climate adaptation issues, but also most of the other critical issues of our day—from energy policy, to air and water quality, and public health.

And so it is in the District of Columbia. While Congress is unable to move an energy and climate agenda, the DC Council and Mayor Fenty have enacted several bills articulating an aggressive energy strategy. After years of tilting at federal and state windmills, I am exactly where I want to be, delighted and honored to join with my home city’s leaders and citizens to help design its future.

While preparing my statement, I read the excellent words of George Hawkins when he appeared before this Committee in September 2007. DDOE was newly formed and DC’s leaders, with great wisdom, placed George at its helm. Under his leadership and the subsequent stewardship of Keith Anderson, the agency has achieved astounding success on issues George raised nearly three years ago. George cultivated a corps of professionals who are paving the way on innovative and effective environmental and energy management. While visiting with DDOE staff, one agency veteran remarked there are few other places where he could work within fifty feet of nine Ph.D.s. I cannot emphasize enough how impressed I have been with the commitment, know-how, and “get-it-done” attitude of the DDOE team. What I have learned through all my years of affecting change and achieving results is that it is the people—above all else—who make that change and those results happen.

The bottom line is this: DDOE is the first-in-class department that George envisioned, and in some important ways, DC is on its way to having the first-in-class environment we all desire.

Of course, this city still has challenges, and based on my experience over the past two months—informed by my life’s work—here are my DC top five:

- 1) Cleaning up the Anacostia, Rock Creek and the Potomac watersheds, and by so doing, contributing to the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay

- 2) Improving energy performance, reducing carbon emissions, and combating climate change
- 3) Growing smarter
- 4) Protecting our kids
- 5) Securing the resources to succeed

I'd like to address each of these in turn.

Cleaning up the Anacostia, Rock Creek, and the Potomac watersheds (and the Chesapeake Bay)

Success depends on continued progress in two specific areas—managing stormwater and the pollution it transports into our waterways, and cleaning up contaminated sites, particularly along the Anacostia River.

DDOE is in the process of finalizing with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) what all parties would like to become a model for stormwater management—the so-called MS4 permit. Closely linked to that effort is the development of DC stormwater regulations. The department has worked hard on the regulations to make them responsive to the needs and concerns of DC citizens. As you well know, they have been a long time coming. One thing we are taking a look at is whether it would make sense to hold off on DC's regulations, since they must be consistent with the final MS4 permit. We would use that time to explore cutting-edge technologies, pilot opportunities, and develop—with input from all affected parties—a stormwater guidebook to facilitate compliance by developers, building managers, DDOT and others. We are working with the development community, our sister agencies, and environmental groups to advance these ideas and to plan a workshop with local, national and (if necessary, global) leaders on urban stormwater management to take stock of the best technologies and practices.

We are strategizing with EPA and responsible parties the best options for achieving quick cleanup of the three major contaminated sites along the Anacostia. I have reached out to our neighbors in Maryland, many of whom I have worked with in the past, to ensure a collaborative, watershed-wide approach to cleaning up the river—building on water quality monitoring efforts jointly underway on the Northeast and Northwest Branches of the Anacostia.

A bright sign of progress on this front: data obtained during the recent 22nd Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup showed a 66 percent reduction of plastic bags collected in DC—an anecdotal but potentially significant harbinger of the Bag Bill’s beneficial impact. I would like to extend my congratulations and appreciation to Councilmember Tommy Wells and the Committee on the initiative and its apparent success.

Improving energy performance, reducing carbon emissions and combating climate change

There is a certain relevance to discussing this issue today, which will likely be a record-setting, 100°-plus scorcher. Our current weather woes notwithstanding, I’m very optimistic about the city’s energy and climate prospects, for the following reasons:

- a. DC has some of the most progressive energy policies on the books—from green building (LEED) standards, to energy benchmarking, to the establishment of sustainable, renewable and affordable energy funds—which owe their existence and success to your efforts.
- b. DC is poised to assume a leading position in sustainable energy planning and implementation through the establishment of its Sustainable Energy Utility. I’m pleased to say that the RFP to engage an administrator for the SEU went out this past week.
- c. DC is committed to define the new wave of energy-efficiency financing through its Property-Assisted Clean Energy (PACE) financing initiative. The RFP to find an administrator for this critical component of our strategy also went out last week.

- d. DC is a green city that is getting greener—literally. One year ago, Mayor Fenty pledged the District to achieve a 40 percent tree canopy by 2035. That means we need to get least 8,600 new trees in the ground—and keep them healthy—every year. We look forward to working with DDOT, Casey Trees, and the host of tree-loving DC citizens to make that happen. Those trees, along with green roofs and a growing number of school and community gardens will help cool our city while providing much-needed water retention, water cleansing, and a tangible connection between DC residents—wherever they live—and their environment. And where feasible, I would like to see these green spaces become a source of good nutrition in areas where fresh produce is not available.

Growing smarter

It is very difficult to teach on old city new tricks. Retrofitting existing buildings to be more energy efficient or more effective stormwater managers is an expensive but vital proposition. The city's most efficient path is ensuring that planners, architects, engineers and builders embrace environmental and energy objectives as a design challenge up front, building-by-building, for entire developments, and for the infrastructure that connects them. DDOE will also ensure that in meeting these objectives, we promote the kind of high-density, transit-oriented development that is the hallmark of smart growth.

Protecting our kids

DC has one of the best lead laws in the nation and DDOE has one of the most knowledgeable teams of experts—led by Pierre Erville, Harrison Newton, and Gian Cossa—of any city in the nation. Mayor Fenty has designated DDOE as the lead DC agency in the fight against high blood levels in our children and lead hazards in their homes, schools, and daycare centers. While we have made great progress in concert with our sister agencies and a strong advocacy community, we are intent on building on those successes to get children and their families out of harm's way more quickly and to remediate those risks faster.

Finding resources to succeed

I know I am in good company when I say I am daunted by our budgetary situation and the prospect of ebbing stimulus funds. In order to attract more federal support, I intend to build on relationships I have with leaders in the Obama Administration, develop new ones with key partners, and play up our role as the Nation's capital at every opportunity. As the federal city, we deserve special attention. I plan to capitalize on the fact that urban issues are a particular priority in the Obama Administration, and sustainability is its key theme. We will work with the DC Office of Planning, other DC agencies, and our partners at EPA, HUD and DOT to fund projects under their Sustainable Communities Initiative. We will tap into the Administration's energy and climate priorities to support DC's energy agenda, and are highly optimistic about PACE-enabled energy investments.

Conclusion

While I got off to a rough start with my parents, I am comforted that my career has been of my own choosing, feeding my passions and leading me to this opportunity. Along the way, I've learned much about many of the issues we aspire to address, but more important, I've become awed by the power of commitment, hard work, and common cause. This awareness would have served me well as a doctor or underwater adventurer, but I can't think of a greater purpose than to fulfill the trust placed in me by Mayor Fenty and the environmental aspirations of this city's citizens.

Through my years of service in the legislative branch, I understand well and value greatly the unique role of the City Council. I would be honored to join you through all our respective roles, resources and strengths to make your Wards and our city the greenest, cleanest, and healthiest places we could call home.

I need not tell you that there is an environment worth protecting and enhancing in every Ward of this city. And as often as I can, I want to join you in celebrating our mutual environmental efforts and successes. And my walking shoes are always with me whenever you would like to show me around your neighborhoods.

I thank you again for the opportunity to testify and look forward to answering any questions the Committee may have.