

Environmental Justice Council (EJC)

Meeting #23

Thursday, December 4, 2025

Location: Virtual Only Meeting
6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting location: In-person

Meeting documents: Agenda, Slides

Council members:

- María Belén Power, EEA Undersecretary of EJ & Equity
- Caroline Hon
- Melissa Ferretti
- Lydia Lowe
- Patricia Spence
- Ari Zorn
- Peter Maathey
- Cheryll Holley (arrived later)

- Kalila Barnett – not present
- Madeline Fraser Cook- not present
- Miles Gresham- not present
- Jen Salinetti- not present
- Sofia Owen – not present
- Marcos Luna – not present

1. **Welcome and Overview of Meeting Logistics**

María Belén Power welcomed all attendees.

Kecil John provided an overview of the meeting logistics, including the use of the question and answer (Q&A) box and the availability of interpreters.

2. **Agenda Overview**

María Belén Power reviewed the meeting agenda.

3. **Roll Call/Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes**

María Belén conducted a roll call of the EJC members. At the start of the meeting, the following council members were present: Caroline Hon, Melissa Ferretti, Lydia Lowe, Peter Maathey, Patricia Spence, Ari Zorn

The following council members were not present: Kalila Barnett, Madeline Fraser Cook, Cheryl Holley, Marcos Luna, Sofia Owen, Jen Salinetti, Miles Gresham

María Belén postponed the motion to approve the minutes until a quorum was reached.

4. First Public Question and Answer Session

Virtual public participants provided comments and inquiries:

- A participant requested the EJC to discuss the EJ community designation process for communities that have petitioned the state upon losing their EJ designation status at the next meeting.
- A participant expressed concern over the high gas and electric bills experienced, particularly during the winter, and the burden that low-income communities and multilingual communities experience in understanding and affording their electric and gas bills. The participant requested support for low-income and multilingual communities in applying to receive government benefits.

5. Second Roll Call and Motion to Approve Minutes

María Belén opened the floor for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 30, 2025 EJC Meeting #22. **Caroline Hon** motioned to approve. **Peter Maathey** seconded the motion. All present council members accepted the minutes. **Lydia Lowe, Peter Maathey, Patricia Spence, and Ari Zorn** abstained. (4 approved and 4 abstained)

6. Presentation on the Energy Affordability Agenda

Speaker **Undersecretary Michael Judge** from the **Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs**, provided an overview of the energy affordable legislation filed in May, the Energy Affordability, Independent, and Innovation (EAI) Act. **Undersecretary Judge** provided an overview of the new initiatives as proposed by the legislation – including the expansion of clean energy, mitigating cost drivers, decreasing infrastructure spending with comprehensive planning and load management, and enabling efficient heating and cooling.

The House Committee advanced its' version of a bill on November 12th including many provisions from the governor's bill and will resume discussion upon return to formal sessions in January.

Councilmembers inquired about submetering in multifamily housing and the ability to ensure competitive supply for residential consumers.

Virtual participants inquired about the application of the energy affordability agenda to Municipal Light Plant Communities and state-supported encouragement of renewable energy sources.

7. Second Public Question and Answer Session

Virtual public participants provided comments, inquiries, and suggestions via the Q&A box.

Comments from the Q&A are listed below

#	Question	Asker Name	Answer
1	How does MA DEP plan to incorporate renewable electric energy from wind farms and onshore solar panels/wind turbines into the regional grid?	David Dow	Undersecretary Judge: At a high level, our clean energy and climate plan establishes targets. The energy standard is slightly broader and allows large hydrologic energy and new nuclear energy to qualify. Large new hydraulic resources would be eligible under the state’s clean energy standard. Solar and wind energy get counted in meeting clean energy and gas reduction targets.
2	Does MA DEP consider Hydro Quebec Dam renewable energy generation effects on the life of rivers and consequences on Indigenous tribes in eastern Canada for hunting and fishing? See Robert McFarlane’s book “Is a River Alive”	David Dow	Was not answered during the meeting.
3	How will the utility reform impact delivery fees?	Anonymous	Undersecretary Judge: The biggest impacts would be comprehensive utility planning and load management programs to optimize use of the grid. Anything that can reduce demand can put downward pressure on delivery costs. The cost of energy efficiency programs are recovered through delivery rates as well.

4	Will the supply reforms be retroactive for people who have been harmed?	Anonymous	Undersecretary Judge: The supply reforms would not be retroactive. Any future contacts would be protected by consumer protection provisions.
5	How is the council prioritizing EJ neighborhoods in resilience planning—such as cooling centers, backup power, microgrids, or flood-prepared infrastructure?	Anonymous	María Belén: This is a great topic. My colleague could come to the next EJC meeting to deliver a presentation on resilience in EJ communities.

8. Next Steps and Adjourn

María Belén reminded council members of the next meeting on **February 12 in Roxbury** and **April 9 in Orange**. **María Belén** proposed agenda topics of EJ designated communities and resilience planning for EJ communities. Councilmembers agreed.

María Belén requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Melissa Ferretti** motioned to adjourn. **Lydia Lowe** seconded. Kecil John conducted roll call and all present council members approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:01 pm.