

Environmental Justice Council (EJC)

Meeting #11

Thursday, November 30, 2023

6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting location: Zoom webinar

Meeting documents: [Agenda](#), [slides](#)

Council members present:

- Kalila Barnett
- Madeline Fraser Cook
- Melissa Ferretti
- Cheryll Holley
- Caroline Hon
- Lydia Lowe
- Marcos Luna
- Peter Maathey
- Sofia Owen
- Jen Salinetti
- Patricia Spence
- Ari Zorn
- Miles Gresham

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) staff present:

- María Belén Power, EJC Undersecretary
- Caroline Lemoine, Deputy Director of Environmental Justice for External Stakeholder Coordination

1. Welcome and Overview of Meeting Logistics

María Belén Power welcomed panelists and attendees. **Kecil John** provided an overview of the meeting logistics, including use of the question and answer (Q&A) box and the availability of interpreters.

2. 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: **Kalila Barnett, Madeline Fraser Cook, Melissa Ferretti, Cheryl Holley, Caroline Hon, Lydia Lowe, Marcos Luna, Peter Maathey, Sofia Owen, Jen Salinetti, Patricia Spence, Ari Zorn, and Miles Gresham.**
- The following council members were not present: **Namrita Kapur**
- **María Belén** opened the floor for a motion to adopt the minutes from the previous meeting. **Melissa Ferretti** motioned to adopt. **Marcos Luna** seconded the motion. All present council members accepted the minutes.

3. Welcoming Remarks by State Representative Michelle DuBois

María Belén introduced State Representative Michelle DuBois. Michelle DuBois welcomed everyone to her district and provided an overview of the environmental injustices the Brockton community is experiencing and her background in environmental justice initiatives.

4. First Public Question and Answer Session

There were no questions posed for the first public Q&A session.

5. Environmental Justice Council Level-Setting: Mission and Meetings

- **María Belén** reiterated the goal of the EJC, which is twofold: providing recommendations to the Environmental Justice Secretary as it relates to environmental justice and providing recommendations to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) for updating the definition of environmental justice.
- Council members agreed that they were interested in discussing proposed policies relating to permitting and citing and providing formal feedback.
- Council members requested consistent updates from the EOEEA Agencies regarding the recommendations made to improve their environmental justice initiatives. Council members would like to gather feedback from both agencies and practical feedback from community health groups and centers. EOEEA updates can be delivered to the EJC strategically, dependent on theme, with a singular theme per meeting.
- Council members agreed that they must balance holding agencies accountable for their environmental justice initiatives with holding space for communities to provide input. The EJC proposed listening sessions for communities, with an emphasis on impact beyond listening sessions, combined with on-the-ground outreach to reach relevant communities.

5. Update on Environmental Justice Strategy

María Belén provided an update on the Environmental Justice Strategy. It is in its final steps, with every agency working on incorporating environmental justice into their work. It should be accessible soon, with the goal to be available in the next month.

6. Environmental Justice Definition

Marcos Luna provided an overview of potential options to approach developing the environmental justice definition. The options Marcos provided were to (1) organize a subgroup to work individually on developing the definition or (2) to issue a resolution of the EJC affirming the current definition to move forward. Marcos Luna will share the definition with the council members during the next meeting to determine whether to adopt it.

7. Second Public Question and Answer Session

The public participants posed questions and the EJC discussed the following topics:

- Urging of council members to focus on community health impacts, particularly asthma;
- Focus on environmental justice mapping rather than the environmental justice definition; and
- The importance of on-the-ground community engagement.

Comments from the Q&A chat are listed below.

#	Question	Name
1	How does the EJC and Massachusetts EOEEA plan to create more housing units in a standard lot space determined by town government regulations so that affordable housing is available to our service workers and seniors?	David Dow
2	How does Massachusetts EOEEA and the EJC propose to address the joint effects of climate change and nutrient pollution on fresh and marine water quality, which are overseen by grassroots [organizations] and state and federal regulatory agencies; and [the] funding of community resilience directors/community nongovernmental organizations who implement grassroots solutions?	David Dow
3	I am concerned that conducting listening sessions, spread out over two-plus years, will only further delay meaningful environmental justice action.	Wendy Morrill
4	It seems to me that meaningful action on environmental justice should go beyond updating the definition, to incorporating a benchmark policy which will not permit risky or polluting businesses be established in environmental justice communities. Environmental justice communities have most likely been historically marginalized, exploited, polluted, and abused, therefore the designation should automatically protect [them] from any more of that going forward.	Wendy Morrill
5	How long has your committee been in existence? I'm curious since you're STILL deciding on a definition of environmental justice?	Grace Bennington

6	<p>Outreach and meaningful community engagement are important. Some of the comments made tonight by council members to clarify the process for environmental justice populations across the state, connecting environmental justice populations to their resources, and providing for accountability are very important in my opinion. The soon to be released Environmental Justice Strategy is an important part of this undertaking. Thank you all for your comments.</p>	Mary Ann Babinski
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8. Next Steps and Adjourn

María Belén reminded council members of the next meeting date, January 11th, in Mashpee, Massachusetts. **María Belén** motioned to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.