

Environmental Justice Council (EJC)

Meeting #18

Thursday, January 9, 2025

Location: University of Massachusetts Lowell (Coburn Hall), 850 Broadway St, Lowell,
MA 01854

6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting location: In-person

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

Council members present:

- María Belén Power, EEA Undersecretary of EJ & Equity (In-person)
- Kalila Barnett (remotely)
- Madeline Fraser Cook (absent)
- Melissa Ferretti (remotely)
- Cheryll Holley (remotely)
- Caroline Hon (in-person)
- Namrita Kapur (absent)
- Lydia Lowe (in-person)
- Marcos Luna (in-person)
- Peter Maathey (absent)
- Sofia Owen (remotely)
- Jen Salinetti (absent)
- Patricia Spence (absent)
- Ari Zorn (absent)
- Miles Gresham (absent)

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

- Caroline Lemoine, EEA Deputy Director
- Jonathan Guzman, EEA Director
- Martha Grover, Policy Advisor for Building Decarbonization'
- Deanna Moran, Chief Coastal Resilience Officer, MEEA

Others present:

- Shannon Ames, Executive Director of Low Impact Hydropower Institute

1. Welcome and Overview of Meeting Logistics

María Belén Power welcomed all attendees. María Belén introduced Representative Tara Hong, who provided remarks and thanked attendees.

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

María Belén acknowledged Representative Rodney Elliott, who joined the in-person meeting. Representative Elliott provided his background and thanked attendees for their participation.

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: **Kalila Barnett, Melissa Ferretti, Cheryll Holley, Caroline Hon, Lydia Lowe, Marcos Luna, and Sofia Owen.**

The following council members were not present: **Madeline Fraser Cook, Namrita Kapur, Peter Maathey, Jen Salinetti, Patricia Spence, Ari Zorn, and Miles Gresham.**

María Belén opened the floor for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. The EJC members discussed two amendments to the Meeting 17 minutes. **Marcos Luna** motioned to approve. **Caroline Hon** seconded the motion. All present council members accepted the minutes, with amendments made, except for **Kalila Barnett** who abstained due to not attending the previous meeting.

4. First Public Question and Answer Session

A virtual public participant provided a comment.

- A participant shared the availability of technical assistance from the EJ Grantmakers Fund for any interested.

Comments from the Q&A are listed below

#	Question	Asker Name	Answer
---	----------	------------	--------

1	What sources of state funding are available to support the Massachusetts Environmental Justice & Equity Program if the Federal Infrastructure Grant Funds are diminished?	David Dow	N/A
2	Hello, I am with the recently created New England EJ Federal Funding Hub, powered by the Grassroots fund. We want to help amplify the Grantmakers fund. There is plenty of technical assistance available for those interested.	Anonymous	N/A
3	Could someone please let us know how many participants there are in-person and remotely?	Sarah Freeman	Hi Sarah, there are about 16 people attending in-person, and 15 remotely.
4	Is it possible to put the agenda in the chat?	John Hayes	Hi John, I've added the text of the agenda to the chat. You can also find it on the EJC website here: https://www.mass.gov/event/public-meeting-notice-january-9-2025-hybrid-meeting-of-the-environmental-justice-council-ejc-01-09-2025

5. Presentation from the EEA, ResilientCoast initiative.

Guest speaker **Deanna Moran, Chief Coastal Resilience Officer** of the EEA, provided a presentation on the overarching goals of the ResilientCoast initiative. The initiative seeks to develop a comprehensive and equitable statewide framework for coastal communities to address coastal hazards and build resilient practices. **Deanna Moran** provided the 6 main goals, the proposed timeline, and briefed council members on the designated coastal resilience districts. This initiative will ultimately aim to develop strategies for coastal communities that can be shared amongst one another.

Council members inquired about the methods behind the organizational structure, the discrepancies in resources and wealth between communities, and emphasized the importance of developing resources that are targeted toward specific communities based on need.

6. Presentation from the Low Impact Hydropower Institute.

Guest speaker **Shannon Ames, Executive Director** of the **Low Impact Hydropower Institute (LIHI)**, provided a presentation on hydropower. **Shannon Ames** provided the background of the LIHI, historical context behind the organization, and discussed the purpose of hydropower, the environmental and social impacts, and the benefits of hydropower. LIHI is seeking to revise their handbook with the goal of incorporating Tribal recommendations. **Shannon Ames** reviewed the iterative process of the handbook revisions, the key changes regarding Indigenous knowledge, and next steps.

Council members inquired about regional hydropower certifications and the implementation of a compliance period post-handbook revisions.

7. Second Public Question and Answer Session

Both virtual and in-person public participants provided comments, inquiries, and suggestions.

- Multiple participants provided their experience with the environmental impacts and consequences of living near large hydropower facilities.
- Multiple participants inquired about the existence of regulations and solutions in regard to environmental and social consequences, including the development of equity metrics.
- A public participant inquired about standards for operation and management capacity.

Comments from the Q&A are listed below

#	Question	Asker Name	Answer
1	How will the coastal resilience zones interact with the Climate Change and Biodiversity restoration projects in coastal areas?	David Dow	N/A

2	In Cape Cod Towns, there are multiple MA Coastal Zone Management restoration projects with some EJ populations/Indigenous tribes that are not being engaged in the impacts of biodiversity restoration and their use of natural capital & ecosystem services (i.e. tribal hunting and fishing rights are impacted by wind farms & solar farms used to produce renewable energy)	David Dow	N/A
3	The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe is proposing a "Rights of Nature" campaign to restore the river herring breeding habitat in Upper Cape Cod watersheds which are negatively by dams and roadway obstructions to fish migration. How will the hydropower endeavor address this challenge?	David Dow	N/A
4	LIHI Staff here: This isn't a question, but for those joining online, if they'd like to see the updates, here is a PDF version of the proposed changes to LIHI's Handbook: https://lowimpacthydro.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2nd-Edition-Handbook-Rev.-2.06-Draft-for-Public-Comment-REVISED.pdf Thank you so much and hope this is helpful!	Surabhi Karambelkar	N/A
5	LIHI Staff: The list of LIHI Certified Facilities can be found here: https://lowimpacthydro.org/certified-facilities/	Surabhi Karambelkar	N/A

8. Next Steps and Adjourn

María Belén reminded council members of the next meeting date on **March 13th in Framingham**. **María Belén** inquired if council members were interested in particular topics. **Caroline Hon, Marcos Luna, and Sofia Owen** suggested topics for the upcoming meetings.

María Belén requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Caroline Hon** motioned to adjourn. **Melissa Ferretti** seconded. Sophia Spungin conducted roll call and all present council members approved. The meeting adjourned at **8:08 pm**.