Environmental Justice Council (EJC)

Meeting #26

Thursday, June 11, 2026

Location: Hitchcock Center for the Environment, 845 West St, Amherst MA 01002
6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting location: In-person

Meeting documents: Agenda, Slides

Council members:

- María Belén Power – in person
- Cheryll Holley – in person
- Lydia Lowe – in person
- Jen Salinetti – in person
- Sofia Owen – in person

- Melissa Ferretti – remote
- Madeline Fraser Cook – remote
- Harleen Marwah – remote
- Paula Garcia – remote
- Peter Maathey - remote

- Patricia Spence – absent
- Caroline Hon – absent
- Marcos Luna – absent
- Miles Gresham – absent

1. **Welcome and Overview of Meeting Logistics**
   María Belén Power welcomed all 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.

2. **Agenda Overview**

   María Belén 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: Cheryll Holley, Harleen Marwah, Jen Salinetti, Lydia Lowe, Melissa Ferretti, Paula Garcia, Peter Maathey, Sofia Owen

The following council members were not present: Caroline Hon, Madeline Fraser Cook, Marcos Luna, Miles Gresham, and Patricia Spence.

María Belén opened the floor for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 9, 2026 EJC Meeting #25. **Jen Salinetti** motioned to approve. **Sofia Owen** seconded the motion. All present council members accepted the minutes.

4. **First Public Question and Answer Session**

Virtual public participants provided comments and inquiries:

- A participant from Somerville requested a contact for regulatory improvements in regards to transportation-related particles and noise.
- A participant from the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts called attention to a new resource for Massachusetts residents, the Airwatch app, which collects neighborhood-level data of air quality.

Comments from the Q&A are listed below

#	Question	Asker Name	Answer
1	Last night I participated in a webinar on regenerative agriculture from a 15 acre site on Marthas Vineyard where they proposed small local farms to produce and reduce climate change effects. This webinar was organized by the Woods Hole Climate Research Center.	David Dow	N/A

5. **Presentation on the Executive Order on Energy Supply**

Speaker **Undersecretary Judge** provided an overview of the March 16 executive order which aims to expand and diversify Massachusetts' energy supply. Undersecretary Judge provided the current strategies that the Executive Office is taking to increase the energy supply.

Council members inquired about the forthcoming energy bill, the ability for outdated houses to be retrofitted for the new energy initiatives, barriers to prevent energy transition, metrics being used to measure success, and the overall equitable impact of larger institutions being prioritized for energy supply updates.

6. **Presentation on Microgrids**

Speaker **Syenna Mashmasarmi, EJ Program Manager of the Office of Environmental Justice and Equity,** provided an overview of how microgrids work and the conditions in which they operate in.

Speaker **Oleander Stone, Deputy Director of Climate Equity and Environmental Justice of the Executive Office of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs,** provided an overview of current microgrid climate engagement partnerships, barriers to microgrid deployment, and upcoming engagement opportunities.

Councilmembers inquired about funding resources for microgrid implementation, regulatory issues for microgrid deployment, the ownership of microgrid assets, targets for microgrid deployment, and the ability to provide a framework for communities for microgrid installation.

7. **Second Public Question and Answer Session**
    - A virtual participant….

Comments from the Q&A are listed below

#	Question	Asker Name	Answer
1	What is being done to be sure all Nipmuc voices are included in the EEA discussions? The Nipmuc Nation Hassanamisco Tribe has not been included in the conversations. Representation matters. Currently, many Nipmuc voices are not represented and this needs to be rectified by the State. We are recognized under executive order 126 and also NCAI. Thank you. Candia Flynn, Vice-Chairperson NN Hassanamisco Tribe.	Candia Flynn	María Belén will reach out to discuss the tribal EJ strategy.
2	What value does utility ownership bring to geothermal as opposed to other financing methods? Wouldn't it make more sense for the individual customer to take out a long-term loan with an entity like a green bank and own the equipment as opposed to third party ownership?	Sari Kayyali	Individual customers cannot acquire long-term loans. Utilities can and do advertise investments over time. We are looking into alternative pathways to provide this service to customers to make the transition easier.

3	Having worked on a community microgrid project in Chelsea, the interconnection review period was one of the most difficult hurdles that was largely the result of bureaucratic inefficiencies on the part of the utility. Is there a pathway to mandating utilities to improve their interconnection process?	Sari Kayyali	Part of this is in the Executive Order on Energy Supply. We are constantly trying to improve the interconnected process to make it more efficient. With respect to utility ownership,

8. Next Steps and Adjourn

María Belén reminded council members of the next meeting on **August 13, tentatively in Stockbridge.**

María Belén requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Jen Salinetti** motioned to adjourn. **Sofia Owen** seconded. Sophia Spungin conducted roll call and all present council members approved. The meeting adjourned at **8:11 pm**.