

Environmental Justice Council (EJC)

Meeting #20

Thursday, June 12, 2025

Location: Berkshire Innovation Center, 45 Woodlawn Ave, Pittsfield MA, 01201
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 (In-person)
- Kalila Barnett - virtual
- Madeline Fraser Cook- virtual
- Melissa Ferretti- virtual
- Cheryll Holley- virtual
- Caroline Hon- virtual
- Lydia Lowe-virtual
- Marcos Luna- Not present
- Peter Maathey- virtual
- Sofia Owen- virtual
- Jen Salinetti- in-person
- Patricia Spence- virtual
- Ari Zorn- Not present
- Miles Gresham- virtual

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 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, Peter Maathey, Sofia Owen, Jen Salinetti, Patricia Spence, Miles Gresham, and Madeline Fraser Cook.

The following council members were not present: **Marcos Luna and Ari Zorn.**

María Belén opened the floor for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. **Lydia Lowe** motioned to approve. **Patricia Spence** seconded the motion. All present council members accepted the minutes.

4. First Public Question and Answer Session

A virtual public participant provided a comment:

- A participant inquired how cumulative impact analyses will evaluate the impacts of environmental and socioeconomic stressors on environmental justice populations and beyond.

Comments from the Q&A are listed below

#	Question	Asker Name	Answer
1	How will cumulative impact analysis evaluate effects of environmental/socioeconomic stressors on Environmental Justice populations and natural/capital and ecosystem services?	David Dow	

5. Presentation on the Cumulative Impact Analysis and Community Benefit Plan

Guest speaker **Undersecretary of Energy Michael Judge** from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs provided an overview of the 2024 Climate Act. The 2024 Climate Act established clean energy and climate action plans for 2025, 2030, and 2050. Massachusetts has taken steps to achieve emissions reductions targets, including increasing wind and solar energy capacity. Additionally, barriers to project implementation plans have been identified and addressed to further the goals within the 2024 Climate Act. **Michael Judge** reviewed the steps taken toward consolidated state permitting, community engagement plans, and additional reforms.

Council members inquired about the process behind community benefit plans, the timeline for the release of regulations, and the next steps needed by the EJC to discuss.

Guest speaker **Commissioner Staci Rubin** and **Director of Environmental Justice and Public Participation Veena Dharmaraj** from the **Department of Public Utilities** provided an overview of the Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB). **Staci Rubin** reviewed the cumulative impact analysis requirements set in the 2024 Climate Act and potential Cumulative Impact Analysis indicator categories. **Veena Dharmaraj** reviewed EFSB pre-filing requirements and the intervenor grant support program.

Speaker **Undersecretary of Environmental Justice and Equity María Belén Power** provided an overview on the Standards and Guidelines of a Cumulative Impact Analysis (CIA). **María Belén Power** reviewed what a CIA is, how to develop a CIA, identifying community baselines for comparison, understanding potential indicators and stressors, and the CIA process.

Guest speaker **Environmental Justice Liaison Syenna Mashmasarmi** provided an overview on the Standards and Guidelines on Community Benefits Plans (CBP). **Syenna Mashmasarmi** reviewed what a CBP is, how CBPs are turned into actionable items, provided examples of effective and meaningful commitments, and reviewed how CBPs engage in oversight and accountability.

Councilmembers inquired about the impacts of permitting on Tribal lands and Indigenous representation, the requirements on engaging with community-based organizations, and the effectiveness of CBPs and CIAs.

6. Second Public Question and Answer Session

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

- A public participant suggested spreading awareness on the availability of federal grant funding. Additionally, the participant acknowledged the continued impacts to the Berkshire County community due to urban renewal and the presence of electric facilities.
- A public participant acknowledged the life expectancy discrepancy present within the Berkshire County community and suggested aggregating data by census tracts.

Comments from the Q&A are listed below

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

1	I would recommend ecological economics and ecosystem-based environmental impact statements.	David Dow	
2	A good case study is the US EPA Headquarters Waquoit Bay Watershed Ecological Risk Assessment which considered climate change; fisheries depletion; nutrient pollution (Nitrogen and Phosphorus); toxic chemical contamination (microplastics and perfluorinated chemicals; cyanobacterial toxins; methyl mercury; etc.) plus affordable housing; environmental justice.	David Dow	
3	Bio4Climate offered an online course on Ecological Economics and Les Kaufman (Boston University) applies it to real world environmental challenges.	David Dow	
4	Just curious if slide decks from this meeting will be available for all attendees?	Angela Roell	Yes! The slides are available here: https://www.mass.gov/doc/june-12-2025-ejc-meeting-20-slides-english/download

7. Next Steps and Adjourn

María Belén reminded council members of the next meeting in August in **North Adams, MA**.

María Belén requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Jen Salinetti** motioned to adjourn.

Melissa Ferretti seconded. Sophia Spungin conducted roll call and all present council members approved. The meeting adjourned at **8:08 pm**.