

Environmental Justice Council (EJC)

Meeting #15

Thursday, May 9, 2024

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

Meeting Minutes

Meeting location: In-person

Meeting documents: Agenda, Slides

Council members present:

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

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

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

DOER staff present:

- David Lutes, Renewables Program Coordinator
- Joanna Troy, Deputy Commissioner

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. Agenda Overview

María Belén Power reviewed the meeting agenda.

3. Roll Call/Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

Maria Belen 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, Pat Spence, Ari Zorn, Miles Gresham**

The following council members were not present: **Namrita Kapur**

María Belén opened the floor for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. **Jen Salinetti** motioned to approve. **Kalila Barnett** seconded the motion. All present council members accepted the minutes besides **Madeline Fraser Cook, Caroline Hon, Namrita Kapur,** and **Marcos Luna** who abstained due to not attending the previous meeting.

4. First Public Question and Answer Session

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

- A virtual participant recommended local speakers from residential EJ populations that relay grassroots EJ initiatives.
- An in-person participant recommended that elected officials work in coordination with the EJC and state agencies to connect EJ populations and improve outreach at the community-level.
- An in-person participant recommended advertising the agenda for EJC meetings on the meeting webpage.
- An in-person participant inquired about how the EJC can assist EJ communities in achieving permanent carbon neutrality, particularly with concerns of clean energy usage during seasonal changes.

Comments from the Q&A are listed below

#	Question	Name
1	Could the Council please share any insight they may have into energy storage proposals and the potential effects (fires for one) on already overburdened EJ neighborhoods? How do we balance the burdens and benefits of “clean” energy and chemical battery storage? “Streamfield” has been proposed to be built above the aquifer in Westfield, when that power would be stored for Eversource customers, none of whom reside in Westfield. So, our drinking water would carry all the risk, but others would get the power. Thank you in advance for any insight.	Kristen Mello

5. Briefing from DOER (Department of Energy Resources) on Hydrogen Roadmap

David Lutes, Renewable Energy Coordinator at DOER, provided a presentation on DOER’s roadmap to incorporate hydrogen energy as an alternative fuel. David provided

background information on hydrogen as a potential energy source alternative to carbon fuel. Afterward, David overviewed the Massachusetts hydrogen roadmap in Massachusetts's ongoing effort to decarbonize. The next steps regarding hydrogen fuel implementation in Massachusetts include drafting the roadmap, developing an EJ and equity strategy plan, incorporating the EJC input, and publicizing the roadmap as a document for recommendations and strategies for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to implement.

Councilmembers inquired about the status of green hydrogen investment, the potential impact on water supplies, the likelihood of hydrogen being combusted, and clarity on how hydrogen will be properly deployed. Councilmembers also provided feedback on the process of the development of the hydrogen roadmap, including recommending that education and outreach be prioritized in EJ communities and made accessible in multiple languages as well as suggesting an intentional deliberation of hydrogen deployment in EJ communities to avoid further environmental harms.

6. Second Public Question and Answer Session

Both virtual and in-person participants provided comments and suggestions. Both participants emphasized the importance of providing education that has easy-to-understand content. Participants also voiced their concerns over hydrogen deployment in historically underserved communities.

Comments from the Q&A are listed below

#	Question	Name
1	I had no idea about your speaker! I was just glad to have the chance to ask you about it because when I ask the "Streamfield" guys what's in the box (what could contaminate our water), they stop talking to me.	Kristen Mello
2	Do you have any thoughts on how the Offshore Wind Energy supply chain will benefit Holyoke?	Michael Sales
3	The presentation by MA DOER on the H2 Road Map is a perfect example of an inadequate approach discussed by the EPA National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) where state DOER staff develop the plan and seeks EJ population comments on a draft plan. This presentation was too long and technical for grassroots entities or folks to understand and comment.	David Dow
4	Quabbin feeds residents of Eastern MA. That was deeply insensitive to say to people with permanently PFAS contaminated drinking water, soil, and bodies. Is he going to connect US to the Quabbin?	Kristen Mello
5	As a retired marine scientist, the devil of the H2 Road Map is in the details. We need to see the big picture on how we reach carbon neutrality by 2050 where EJ populations receive the benefits without more burdens (a focus of EPA NEJAC).	David Dow

6	What's in the "Streamfield" box? What goes into the air when hydrogen lights on fire? What ends up in the water?	Kristen Mello
7	I used to work at the U.S. Dept. of Energy as an Environmental Engineer which required me to explain technical matters in language that the average person could understand and appreciate. That is the weakest link in the whole decision-making process, but it is possible to explain complex concepts in understandable language.	Stephen Buckley

8. Next Steps and Adjourn

María Belén Power reminded councilmembers to send agency recommendations for presentations to her via email. Additionally, she reminded the councilmembers of the next meeting date, July 11th, in Lynn, Massachusetts. **Kalila Barnett** inquired about the status of working groups. **María Belén** has reached out to the general counsel office to discuss options for working groups. An update will be provided in July.

María Belén Power requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Jen Salinetti** motioned to adjourn. **Kalila Barnett** seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.