

Environmental Justice Council
Meeting #4
Thursday, October 27, 2022
6:00 PM
Meeting Minutes

Meeting location: Zoom webinar

Meeting documents: [Agenda, slides, meeting minutes \(9/27/2022\)](#)

Council Members present:

- Kalila Barnett
- Cheryll Holley
- Caroline Hon
- Lydia Lowe
- Marcos Luna
- Peter Maathey
- Ari Zorn

EOEAA Staff present: Rishi Reddi, Vallery Cardoso, Carline Lemoine

Meeting began at 6:00pm.

Welcome and Overview of Meeting Logistics

Rishi Reddi, Chair of the EJ Council and EJ Director at EEA introduced herself and Deputy Director for Internal Coordination, Vallery Cardoso, and Carline Lemoine, Deputy Director for External Stakeholder Coordination. Rishi noted the availability of interpreters in Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, Cape Verdean Creole, and American Sign Language (ASL). She ran through logistics for asking questions and using the interpretation channels.

Roll call; Approval of prior meeting minutes

Rishi asked Council Members to put their names in the chat for the record. She presented the agenda and asked if Council Members had additional issues that fit into these topic areas that they wanted to add. No Council Members had additions.

Rishi did a roll call to confirm quorum. The list of Council Members in attendance is listed above under “Council Members present”.

Rishi asked Council Members if they had any additions to the meeting minutes. Council members did not have additions. Rishi opened the floor for a motion to adopt the minutes as is. Caroline Hon motioned to adopt and Peter Maathey seconded. Rishi then did a roll call vote. All members in attendance approved the minutes as is.

Announcements

Rishi made the following announcements:

- EEA’s EJ Strategy is expected to come out in mid-November. Public comment period will be open for approximately 2 months. More information to come.
- The draft MA Climate Assessment is available on November 2nd with public comments due November 16th. More information can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/ma-climate-change-assessment>

Debrief of Presentation by Environmental Justice Task Force

Rishi referred to the presentations made by six of EEA's EJ Task Force (EJTF) members at the October 27th EJ Council meeting. She opened the floor for any comments or impressions from Council Members about what was presented at the last meeting.

The following are comments from EJ Council Members and Chair in a summarized form:

Kalila Barnett commented that it was helpful to hear an overview, but it was a lot of information and it was difficult to retain it all. How can the EJ Council follow up with the EJTF and is there an opportunity to do that in the future? *Rishi responded that we could ask representatives from any agency to come in and speak. Is there anything that would be specifically helpful?*

Lydia Lowe felt similarly to Kalila's comment. Lydia commented that it was great to hear, but was overwhelming. Each agency has its own plans. Is there a summary of how it all works and the plans involved?

Cheryll Holley asked if there is an overall plan that the state is working towards? It wasn't clear if they are all leading to the same place, and what that place might be.

Kalila Barnett commented that it is helpful to have context, but it is still unclear how it fits together. It may become clearer as the EJ Council gets deeper into the work.

Ari Zorn responded that he is learning as he goes.

Caroline Hon asked if the thought is that we can use a particular agency as a resource when working on aspects of the definition, or will there be a more formal approach? *Rishi Reddi responded that both are possibilities.*

Marcos Luna commented that he appreciated the last meeting. He was left with more questions on how EJ is getting integrated across agencies. He recommended that each EJ plan gets posted with a description of how they are working towards the goals of the plan. This will help with accountability. *Rishi responded that EEA's EJ Strategy is coming out in mid-November. The document is a road map for how the agencies will move forward.*

EJC Comments on the CECP

Hanh Chu provided a quick reminder of her Clean Energy and Climate Plan presentation from a previous EJ Council meeting. She then asked for comments from the EJ Council, when be voted on using a straw poll to approve as official comments from the EJ Council on the CECP. After discussion, Rishi asked if the comments shared on the screen reflect the EJ Council Members' comments and if they would like to submit the comments to EEA. Kalila Barnett commented that she is in agreement with most of the comments and wants more time to do this exercise because this wasn't the best way to provide comments. Council members who were present at the meeting all voted yes to submit the comments. Comments discussed and voted on by the EJ Council are as follows:

Environmental Justice Council's Feedback on 2050 CECP

- Equitable distribution of benefits
 - Need to look at where investments are happening re: clean energy projects and infrastructure
 - Expand tree planting into EJ communities
 - Where is the decarbonization happening geographically? (avoid leaving communities stranded with emitting infrastructure)
 - Emissions should not continue in EJ communities while other communities are experiencing cleaner air
- More details in the Plan
 - More details to promote alternatives to personal vehicles: clearer targets and metrics
 - More clarity on how state investments will advance good quality jobs for EJ communities

- Increase access, get rid of barriers
 - Increase access to energy efficiency resources, to what extent these resources are being made to renters
 - Look at who are accessing the incentives, EJ residents access incentives equitably, remove systemic obstacles (cost for older buildings, programmatic designs, coordinate with building codes) to access incentives
- Cost
 - Cost of EVs for LMI consumers and EJ residents: not many people can afford to buy EVs from dealers (e.g. credit issues) or live near public transportation so they tend to drive older cars. The state should have a plan to help these folks and not just people who can afford EVs.
- Industries
 - Carbon footprint of industries (old and new) – energy intensive industries be regulated or required to reduce energy consumption and emissions profile
- Energy Siting
 - Need careful consideration of EJ concerns but make sure they don't override the need for timely siting of renewable energy projects.

Continued discussion of EJC work product, process, and operation regarding Comprehensive Analysis of Definition of “EJ Population” (Continued from Meeting #2 on Sept 15, 2022)

Rishi presented 3 work product options that were discussed at a previous EJ Council meeting. She then asked Council Members which of the options were preferred. These options were:

1. Oral Report to the Secretary of Energy and Environment and EEA Senior Staff in EJC Meeting under Open Meeting Law
2. Written Report to the Secretary of Energy and Environment, available as a public document.
3. Written Report, to be accompanied by EJC meeting with the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs and EEA Senior Staff

6 of the present Council Members preferred option 3, and one person preferred option 2.

Discussion: Who and what is missing from current definition of EJ Population?

Rishi opened the discussion, asking “Who and what is missing from current definition of EJ Population?”. The following are comments from Council Members, in summarized form:

Marcos Luna: The policy has a provision for communities to petition to be designated if not captured. It is still fuzzy how they would do that and how it would be implemented. For example, a smaller area that is diluted by the overall block group. As a process, it is important to spell out how exactly to do this. Should also consider indigenous communities who don't have large enough numbers.

Peter Maathey: What is the definition for minorities? (*Rishi Reddi provided definition as stated in EEA's Environmental Justice Strategy*).

Cheryll Holley: Boundaries of indigenous homelands don't match census data. Census block groups don't capture rural areas. This is a problem for low income people in Central and Western MA.

Questions / comments from the public

Rishi opened the floor for questions from the public.

Marian Belen Power voiced concerns about the siting of clean energy infrastructure in EJ communities.

Vallery Cardoso then read questions from the Q&A box. The following are the questions sent through the Q&A.

#	Question	Asker Name	Answer
1	Jen Salinetti, Woven Roots Farm & Education Center, in the Berkshires. How will these energy efficient measures work for renters?	Jennifer Salinetti	AS part of the mAssSAve program there are speical programs that can benefit renters, but there is a disconnect because landlords will have to latch on. This is an issue that is being recognized and the Commison on Clean Heat has discussed this and plan to address this issue in their more detailed recommendations.
2	Will those plantings be centered in EJ places? How will the plantings be determined?	Jennifer Salinetti	
3	Will there be a carbon market? And since most forest is owned by white people in non-EJ communities, will there be a requirement that a percentage of carbon credits go to EJ communities?	Jennifer Salinetti	Those are not in our proposal for the 2050 CECP.
4	How does the sequestering on working lands relate to the state's Healthy Soil Plan?	Jennifer Salinetti	GWSA team has reviewed the Healthy Soils Action Plan. Proposal in 2050 CECP is to continue to incentivize healthy soil practices such as low tillage on agricultural land and use of cover crops. Seeking funding to provide financial incentives to farmers engaging in these practices.
5	What investments will the state be making in developing more green space beyond the greening the gateway cities program?	Jennifer Salinetti	In the 2025/2030 CECP that came out in June, GWSA committed to conserving 30% of Massachusetts lands and water by 2030. By conserving these lands, theybcan be available for public access. Propose in 2050 CECP to increase to 40%.
6	Are there targets in the plan for the deployment of solutions to directly reach and benefit EJ communities? For example, in terms of energy efficiency services, distributed resources like rooftop and community solar, electric vehicles, tree planting?	Paula García	In the proposal for the 2050 CECP, we want to make sure we set a goal for having a certain level of investment of clean energy and climate nvestments into EJ communities or benefitting EJ populations. We want to propose and commit to a process. We don't have a good metric/good goal without first consulting with the EJ Council and stakeholders.

7	What considerations are being made around affordable housing as it relates to land conservation? How will the state address the historical racism that is imbedded in the land conservation? How will the state support EJ communities relocating to rural spaces to manage those working lands?	Jennifer Salinetti	
8	Will there be fines for people who drive old cars? Where will the electricity be sourced from and how will the rising costs of electricity be addressed?	Jennifer Salinetti	There will be no fines. This is not in our proposal for the 2050 CECP. Our policies for increasing usage of EVs are targeting manufacturers. We are providing incentives for consumers to buy these vehicles. The electricity will be powered by the electricity grid. If you charge at home, you will be paying as part of your electric bill, but there are other places throughout the state, such as at work and businesses like IKEA, where you can charge.
9	Will the questions posted in the chat be included in the comments?	Jennifer Salinetti	Questions posted in the chat will not be included in the public comments for the CECP. In addition to Hanh's response, questions asked in the chat box and not addressed during the meeting will be posted to our EJ Council webpage under the specific meeting date (https://www.mass.gov/orgs/environmental-justice-council). We will do our best to provide answers to the questions asked.
10	Is the EJ Council the only EJ accountability for the CECP? What long-term accountability structures are in place for CECP?	Jennifer Salinetti	
12	That definition of minorities relates to the global majority.	Jennifer Salinetti	Thank you for your comment.

13	While there are centralized areas of housing and industry, most of the population does not live in close proximity to centers of commerce. The northern Berkshires is a rural area that has high unemployment and extensive poverty, which is often magnified in the communities that are marginalized. I believe there is a 13.8% percent poverty level (MA=10%), but this does not indicate the vast disparities according to race, immigration and/or disability. The lack of employment opportunities and low-wage jobs, paired with the exhaustion of navigating poverty, racism, anti-immigrant sentiment, and other factors often results in fracturing and isolation within the community. This isolation is amplified by institutional racism in the housing sector, school, and workplace. The lack of accountability and restitution leads to hopelessness and despair.	Jennifer Salinetti	Thank you for your comment. Rishi answered that she doesn't think the definition has fully taken into account the way that MA communities are structured out west from the way they are structured in the eastern part of the state. I see this as a recurring theme and something we will have to discuss in the course of these discussions. This comment captures some of those issues.
14	You're welcome! I don't know how to make a verbal comment in this forum! Thank you for reading that Val!	Jennifer Salinetti	If you raise your hand I can give you speaking privileges.

Next Steps and Adjourn

Rishi announced that the next EJ Council meeting will be held on November 9, 2022 at 6:00pm. She then asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kalila Barnett motioned to adjourn, and Ari Zorn seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.