



**Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC)
Air & Transportation Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2024 5:30 – 7:30 PM ET**

[Link to the recording](#)

This is a public meeting and will be recorded and posted on the [Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council](#) website.

Disclaimer: Please note this is not a word for word translation

CEEJAC Subcommittee Members Present: (full list of registrants is below)

Alex Rodriguez
Dr. Mark Mitchell
Sharon Lewis
Ryan Boggio
Daphne Dixon
Sharmin Akter
Karen Kitsis
Jay Stange
Robbie Goodrich

CEEJAC Members Present:

Yaw Darko
Maritza Bond

1. Welcome, Ground Rules, Agenda Overview

Alex Rodriguez opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He conducted roll call, went over the ground rules for the meeting, and read through the agenda.

2. History of EJ and Transportation Efforts

Dr. Mark Mitchell set the context for what the main issue is that we are trying to address. We have really high asthma rates and air pollution in CT. It's the highest air pollution of any state east of the Mississippi – definitely in New England. Pollution is produced in the state and comes down wind from power plants, and from NYC. In several of our counties, 70% of air pollution comes from transportation – auto, trucks,

buses. Historic policies have allowed for urban renewal in the 1960s which developed highways that were placed in communities of color. This drove the transportation-related pollution to CT's cities.

Dr. Mitchell continued with the **History of EJ Organizing around Transportation and Air Pollution**. In the late 1990's Connecticut Coalition on Environmental Justice (CCEJ, now known as CCEEJ) was started and they decided to address asthma as a main issue. In Hartford – 20% of the population had asthma. The group started educating the community about asthma. They engaged with Capitol Region Council of Government (CRCOG) who established an environmental justice (EJ) position on their transportation committee. CCEJ engaged the Greater Hartford transit authority, who developed a diesel emission reduction strategy.

CCEJ trained residents on the 3-minute idling law and talked to transit authority about how to get transit buses to stop idling downtown Hartford. Residents reported to the transit districts and to DEEP about idling buses. And eventually they were able to get City of Hartford to convert all diesel powered school buses – replaced with 90% cleaner buses than the 2007 model year buses. School districts replaced all the buses with more fuel efficient school buses. City of Hartford was contracting with DATCO and heard that they were buying new buses and then a year or so later, they were substituting older buses for the newer and cleaner buses. They didn't want the old buses – wanted them to be closer to the DATCO garage. Also, able to get hybrid electric transit buses in Hartford and in Bridgeport on a pilot basis. Bus drivers liked the hybrid buses – they had more power and they were quieter. This was the history between 2004-2011.

Dr. Mitchell noted that he would like to get the legislature to implement identification for electric buses.

Alex Rodriguez provided a more **recent history**. He credited CCEJ for doing the advocacy work so that Clean Buses for Healthy Ninos could run. This campaign was about electric school buses to address asthma as an issue. In 2017 the campaign was launched. 1 in 8 children in CT reported being absent from school because of their exhaustion from traffic pollution. Environmental advocates were ecstatic about the effort because the dialogue on the electric vehicles were changing – mileage range of vehicles was improving. The idea of electric school buses to move children from point A to point B was challenged. There was opposition from concerned parents and fossil fuel lobby – people were scared of the new technology. There were successful pilot programs in CA, NY, MA. They advocated for use of “Volkswagen use mitigation funds” to go towards school bus infrastructure. That was a multi-pronged campaign. It required us to gather petitions, give community presentations, dialogue with DEEP EJ Office & Air Bureau, involved talking to parents and legislators.

Congresswoman Johanna Hayes introduced clean school bus act with Senator Kamala Harris at the Federal Level in 2018. This was gaining momentum. The team Alex worked with met with DATCO and made the case for electric school buses – maintenance costs was improving, electric infrastructure was improving. The estimated alleviation it would bring public health wise was big. They were rewarded and the first electric school bus was deployed in Middletown in 2021. Later that year, Department of Transportation (DOT) introduced the first electric transit bus. 1 electric school bus removes 1474 tons of CO2 over its 12-year lifespan. As society advances and new technology comes, we should do better.

A. Questions/Answers

- I. Sharon Lewis – Since becoming director of CCEEJ, we continue to fight for clean transportation. I live next to a school bus depot and none of those buses were electric or hybrid. So we pushed under the radar to get several buses. We were party to a lawsuit dealing with buses in NHV that violated the anti-idling law and the settlement was close to a \$1 million. We're still fighting and we're hoping that this lawsuit will send a message to those who are violating the law. We ran into trouble in our push for electric school buses in 2021 – when an electric bus lit on fire. Prior to that, people were on board with electric school buses, but when it caught on fire, we continue to get pushback for electric buses.
 1. Karen Kitsis – Understand that issue, can follow up on it.
- II. Doris Johnson – Which school districts are getting the 50 electric school buses?
 1. Hartford Public Schools, CT Careers Schools
- III. Maritza Bond – Asthma is prevalent in underserved communities, particularly in NHV. Have concerns about the infrastructure support with the state not being ready for electric vehicles, particularly in cold weather and vehicles not working. Ways that infrastructure can be thought through so that we can have this state-wide effort. There are concerns in our city to be able to charge these vehicles. What infrastructure proposals are being accompanied with these recommendations?
 1. Alex responded that the DEEP presentation might help answer these questions.

3. DEEP Presentation – Advanced Clean Cars II and Advanced Clean Trucks

Paul Farrell, from CT DEEP, answered the previous question - CT was awarded \$14.6 million for charging infrastructure in urban/rural EJ areas (Bridgeport, East Hartford, Stamford, etc). DEEP knows that this is important and we're looking across all sectors, Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) is looking at a medium/heavy

duty sector incentive program. Med/Heavy duty (ie. school buses) will be depot charging in concentrated areas.

Link to press release about the \$14M federal grant that Paul is referring to:
<https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2024/01-2024/Governor-Lamont-Announces-CT-Awarded-14M-Federal-Grant-To-Expand-Electric-Vehicle-Charging-Stations>

A. Regulations for Passenger Vehicles

CT has adopted California (CA) tailpipe emissions standards. There are only two options for emissions standards, you either adopt the federal or CA option. CA recently updated their light duty standards in 2022.

Internal combustion vehicles create smog from tailpipe. There are greenhouse gas (GHG) emission standards – from tailpipe or leakage from a car through AC. Fleet hemorrhaging – overall fleet for sale must not have ozone precursors like NOx (Nitrous Oxide).

Electric Vehicle (EV) definitions – full battery, plug in hybrid vehicles (works in cold weather)

Electric Vehicle Deployment targets and compliance paths – if vehicles maximize their ability to generate and use credit to apply to the rule. Two graphs. Second scenario where you don't use as many credits.

EV sales in CT – starting in 2021, it has shot up dramatically. 2023 to 2027 (when rules start). If we continue, business as usual, it will get us to the standards if they were to be adopted.

Showed a slide on the definition of “Med/Heavy Duty vehicles (MHD)”, which includes everything from pick up trucks to tractor trailers.

MHD rules – only 6% of on road fleet, but 25% transportation related GHG and 53% on road NOx which is an ozone precursor. Advanced Clean Trucks rule allows a certain percentage of vehicles. School buses aren't covered under this rule – there is a state statute that mandates electrification of school buses.

Progress in other states – including these surrounding states: MA, RI, NY, VT

If we adopt these stricter standards, then states are able to signal to the EPA These standards show EPA that we can make these mandates stronger at a national level. 50% of light duty vehicles on the market are subject to these standards. Pushes national policy further than it would go on its own.

Affordability – The rule makes vehicles more affordable and allows for policies that make the vehicles more affordable. More EV's produced = cost goes down for batteries, cars.

Total cost of ownership/operation – electric is less expensive, maintenance costs are less (no oil changes, brakes last longer). Manufacturers can offer vehicles at a discount or put vehicles in a community car share. Outside of the regulations, we want to expand CHEAPR incentive for used vehicles. And maintain off lease vehicles to have a presence in that area which would result in a compliance credit for the manufacturer.

History – CT adopted CA standards in 1994, amended in 1998 and then came back in 2004, 2005 adopted additional amendments.

Current Status – clean vehicle regs were withdrawn. Air pollution reduction is a zero sum game – if we don't get it from mobile sector then we need to get it from other sectors.

Emma Cimino from CT DEEP shared that we are looking into financial incentives – rebates; build out of EV home chargers; and grid readiness for electric demand. We've been educating folks about how the program currently works and changes we can make to CHEAPR and charging efforts to improve them and improve access to rural/urban EJ communities. Continuing to work with legislature.

4. Questions/Answers –

- A. Alex – Yesterday there was a Black and Puerto Rican Caucus (BPRC), Commissioner, Dr. Mitchell and myself testified. Caucus was impressed with Dr. Mitchell's piece and now they are on board with increased health benefits for reduced car emissions. Caucus is concerned about capacity of rural communities to take on this increased infrastructure and ability to install in buildings. Want to community with constituents that electric rates will not go because of increased battery demand. Want to ask Emma/Paul, what is being done to create a briefing paper to address the rural concern and the cost of living concern?
 - I. Emma – Price of electric is a huge concern regardless of electric vehicles. PURA and DEEP are working to reduce that cost because we know the impact on communities. In conversation with Speaker Ritter and responding to questions from BPRC. DEEP is trying to address concerns, but some is out of our hands like electric rates can't be done today. CFI (Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program) grant that we received is for charger buildout in rural/urban area.
 - II. Paul – Also want to point out the volatility of gasoline/diesel. There's a study in CA where they looked at super users of gasoline, folks at lower end running to 2-3 jobs in their older vehicles and spending almost as much on gasoline as they are on rent.
- B. Sharon Lewis – CCEEJ has been holding listening sessions and we know about the issue of affordability, but issue with charging the vehicles and a lot of people are not in favor of the charging depots because it's far from where you live. If you don't have a lot of police protection, then you're setting yourself up

for your car to get stolen. Dealers said that they get their business from people servicing their vehicles, so they are worried.

- I. Paul – dealers make money from servicing; average lifespan is 12-15 years for a car. Shouldn't be an impact to dealer's revenue streams, but long term it could impact their bottom line.
- C. Alex – as demand for electric vehicles increase, can we expect more public posting of signs that indicate an electric volt/car emblem on the side of the highway to show where charging stations are located?
 - I. Emma – there are a lot of things that are going to change. But that is something that down the line we will look at.
- D. Karen – DOT has a program to provide chargers around the interstate system. There's a federal program looking to build out the charging network, alternate fuel corridors (major interstate). The first round for chargers within a mile from the fuel corridors – signage will be an important element of that. In Fall, DOT released a Letter of Intent for third party entities, DOT provide capital, and they would build and maintain those charging networks. Moving forward with a RFP for folks to apply. How much of this is about setting policy and move forward in infrastructure realm? It's more iterative than we would like to see. We're looking at 12 locations where the chargers will be placed, but it will be on the interstates where CT residents travel for major traffic ways (these will be the fast chargers).
- E. Dr. Mitchell – at home charging, you can charge your vehicle at home but you can't fill your internal combustion car at home. What are the efforts for infrastructure in condos, apartment buildings, multifamily?
 - I. Paul - Anything that distributes electricity will work, but it depends on how long it will take. A plug in hybrid, a 110 v will charge the vehicle over night. If you look back 10 years ago, the gold standard was 80-100 miles in range. 10 years later, you're looking at 300-400 miles. Pace of technological development is incomprehensible. Charging infrastructure for multi-unit households – promise is light pole chargers that retract down from the light poles. Vehicles are getting greater range, so you won't need to charge all the time. PURA program for multi-unit dwelling incentive programs. (have this program give an update)
- F. Halle Lisette Pierce – what is the percentage of EJ communities in CT where we live that currently have EV charging stations?
 - I. Paul/Emma – can look into that
 - 1. <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Air/Mobile-Sources/EVConnecticut/EVConnecticut---Home>
 - II. Dr. Mitchell – can look on the internet to see where the charging stations are, but the question is who are they accessible to.

5. Reasons to support proposed regulations

- A. Public health – cleaner air, reduced rates of asthma, lung cancer, premature birth

- B.** Rural/Urban infrastructure – need to make sure that the infrastructure is in place, particularly in BIPOC communities.
- C.** Affordability – there are incentives. Hartford, Bridgeport, Waterbury have lowest car ownership in the country because people can't buy a car and are definitely buying used cars.
 - I.** Incentives need to be for used EVs

Questions/Comments:

- A.** Anstress Farwell – would it be possible to find ways for industry to pay for EV chargers? Hope to look at transportation issues – work has focused on EV's, but these have issues with getting precious metals and have significant costs in the communities that they operate because it is demanding roadway space, parking garages. Issues of traffic safety and noise will still exist in communities. Decisions was made to put all salt piles in NHV without consultation with citizens here. Need to find a way for the public to be a part of the decision-making of huge movements of materials.
 - II.** Dr. Mitchell – need investment in making streets safer for walking, biking, crossing the street and electrifying the fleets.
 - III.** Karen Kitsis – DOT and CT Transit were fortunate to get more money for expansion of bus service. Looking at rail network is important, but need to expand the bus network and look at electrifying the bus system to reach the populations that don't have access to a car is important.
 - IV.** Dr. Mitchell – Jay Stange and I were part of a group doing research on transportation and reducing pollution. Conclusion was that even if we electrify all transit buses, it wouldn't do as much as increasing the hours of public transportation. Getting more people to ride public transit would do more to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- B.** Terry Adams – is there an incentive to put charging stations in community centers and schools?
 - V.** Emma – Federal dollars will be distributed by the municipalities. We hope to see some of that for facilities like you mentioned. PURA also has a workplace charging program where there are incentives to install chargers at their workplaces.
 - VI.** Karen – once we bring along corridors, the second phase will be within towns and towns can apply for the federal funds directly. Also looking at our own facilities and how we will be looking to supply chargers for state employees and then coordinate access to the public. Working with DEEP and DAS.

- C. Lori Mathieu – is there another state/region where this has really worked and in practice? People are wondering how this will impact their daily life – is it affordable? What is the future of electric rates? If I have to drive 250 miles, am I sure I can recharge or make my round trip?

- VII. Emma – many states have adopted these standards, including CA. One of the benefits that we see to adopting these regs will allow us to plan for the adoption of EVs, like making sure that we are ready for charging infrastructure and having these goals. EVs are still a small share of the overall market, don't know there is a perfect example but there are states that are further along than CT.

6. Addressing EJ Concerns with Proposed Regulations

- A. Why would you build charging stations if there aren't enough cars? So setting a goal and having this and making it 10 years out is important. There are concerns that the regulations will be 100% EV cars by 2035, but it's a 100% new cars have to be electric/plug in. There is no mandate to buy a car. Price of maintenance for EVs will be much lower than price for running and maintaining internal combustion engines.
- B. Strain on the electric grid – PURA is addressing grid issues
- C. Affordability – CHEAPR are rebates for new and used EV purchases; CHEAPR+ is for lower income folks.
 - I. Should have an emphasis on used vehicles
- D. Rare earth minerals – there are investments in battery technology and also investing onshoring the mining of minerals

Questions/Comments:

- A. Paul – CA programs offers warranties and consumer protections – more robust than federal levels. For a vehicle to be certified, the manufacturer has to prove that the battery lasts for a certain amount of time.
- B. Karen Kitsis – range concerns? One great thing about the federal program is that all states are working on a network of chargers along major corridors.

7. What can you do? Advocacy

- A. Share your clean air story with the media
- B. Sign on letter from CEEJAC members
- C. Meeting with Black and Puerto Rican Caucus or individual members

Questions/Comments:

- A. Aaron Goode – Recommend that DEEP convene a focus group of EV drivers from New Haven and other urban areas to name challenges. NHV has an EV group. Check with Electric Vehicle Club of CT to see what other cities have.
<https://evclubct.com/>

- B. Lynne Bonnett – have a plug in hybrid and there is confusion because some charging stations require a card and some don't. Confused about electrifying trucks: semis have 30 year lifetime.
 - a. Paul – regs has a one time reporting requirement, requires any company to tell us what vehicles they are driving. This will tell us where to focus our efforts, vehicles last a long time. This would give us information on where to focus our charging incentive programs to get fleet owners to replace their vehicles.
- C. Jay Stange – Omar Green from Hartford purchased a Chevy Volt with state incentives program and he talks about how his lifestyle works in an urban area.
- D. Dr. Mitchell – let him know if you are interested in writing an op-ed.
- E. Robbie Goodrich offered to be a second set of eyes on an op-ed. Robbie can help set up a mass text message to get letter signatures.
- F. Lori Mathieu – maybe a mini youtube video of how this works in reality, maybe the club in NHV so that people can see little clips of how a car works.
 - a. <https://evclubct.com/evownervideos/>

Full List of Registrants

Terry Adams	Teresa Eickel
Doris Johnson	Mark Mitchell MD
Michael Davis	Alycia Jenkins
Tyler Carey	Yaw Darko
Lidia Ruppert	Jacob Felton
Tracy Babbidge	Karen Kitsis
Jaimeson Sinclair	Daphne Dixon
Allison Pilcher	Hailey Greene
Ashley Benitez	Maritza Bond
Emma Cimino	Pete Babich
Paul Farrell	Anstress Farwell
Sharmin Akter	Robbie Goodrich, He/Him/His, RACCE
Ryan Boggio	Lynne Bonnett
Aaron Goode	Lori Mathieu
Halle Lisette Pierce	
Chris Schweitzer	
Gabriela Campos	
Eric Hammerling	
Andrew Hoskins	
Annie Decker	
Jay Stange	
Sarah Huang	
Sharon Lewis	
Alex Rodriguez	