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**Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)  
Public Health & Safety Extreme Heat/Air Quality  
BREAK OUT SESSION NOTES**

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**Meeting Date: 10/7/2020**  
**Meeting Time: 5:20-6**  
Zoom

## AGENDA & NOTES

**Moderators:** Paul Ferrell, DEEP, Director of air planning for bureau of air management  
With help from Laura Hayes, DPH

Extreme heat:

Recommendations-

- Establish evidence based standards for local heat and air quality response plans
  - More than just putting cooling centers.
- Policies to protect low-income residents and renters, particularly those in government supported housing, from indoor heat exposure.
  - Subpolicies:
    - expand cooling assistance
    - Require landlords to establish Min/max temperatures for winter and summer
    - Protection from power/water shutoff

Air Quality

Recommendations:

- Evaluate ozone alert education
  - Ozone is harsh air pollutant, caustic. Formed indirectly when combustion by-products mix in warm temps, AKA smog.
  - Let people know when we expect high ozone. Need to evaluate if we are reaching the right people.
- Increase Airborne Allergen monitoring
  - Natural air pollutants
  - Outside of DEEP (only looks at manmade pollutants)
  - Monitoring station by Waterbury hospital that is being examined as a model to be expanded to other parts of state.
- Estimate impacts of climate change on 2030 and 2050 ozone levels in CT and identify potential effects on the health of CT Residents
  - Looking at future impacts of ozone. Mitigation efforts drive down air pollution, but we don't know to what extent this will be offset by rising temp and increased fossil fuel emissions. This will take a look at what we can learn from existing reports that are out there.

QUESTION: ALLEN POIRIER – Most issues can be tackled through educations. What is the equivalent of ozone alerts for high temperatures, and telling people to hydrate and avoid sugary drinks?

Response: Laura Bozzi – One of the recommendations, establish evidence-based standards for local heat and air quality response plans, is what we have in mind. There are good best practices about how to do outreach and education effectively at local levels to account for variations across state and engage local residents. There is not a lot of specificity in the report, but that is what is in mind initially.

Question: BEN MARTIN – Monitoring and reporting doesn't seem to be getting to root causes of air quality problems, like pollution (industry, transportation). Any recommendations to deal with root causes, like methane plants built in bridgeport and proposed in killingly, to deal with bad air/extreme heat days?

Response: Paul – Comes down to what context. In this context talking about adaptation. No matter what we do, there will be impacts to CT and NE. Adaptation vs mitigation. Mitigation focus is on regulatory tools to reduce emissions, using policies and programs. Carrot vs Stick. Stick, like REGGY and control programs, or carrot, incentives to buy electric vehicles.

Ben – Using regulatory system to prevent emissions and lower ones currently there, means less adaptation. Not recognizing that in some of the documentation seems like we are accepting defeat.

Paul – Even if we stop everything, there will still be some impact to climate, and we need to plan for

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that and be ready for those consequences.

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Laura – focus of this group is on adaptation rather than mitigation, while recognizing that there are real health benefits to reducing use of fossil fuels. Having public perspective pointing to these health benefits is great. That is something that we have seen, but reduced the scope of this time. May expand it in 2021. Making that point is great and is the aim of this public process.

Paul – Has anyone read the report?

Allen – Yes. We are fortunate to have had the expertise that we have. The big challenge is what can the state do with the information? State has to sort out what it can/cannot do.

Paul – I Agree, it is overwhelming when you think of all the problems out there. How do you prioritize? Public input is helpful.

Allen– Interesting to think about how smaller scale electric vehicles can be helpful. Not 40-50k EVs. Lightweight, low cost EVs. To get to where we use them is a lot of work though.

Paul – Hard to get to that point. Getting even 100k EVs on road is hard, only about 12k now.

Allen – Rebates should be reweighted towards hybrids. Hybrids are more realistic to families. EVs are expensive.

Ben – Are any part of rebates going towards electrifying mass transport?

Paul – not that program, but others are working towards electric buses

Ben – people cant spend 40k on EV, especially low income. Providing better mass transport hubs makes it easier to meet the goals we need to meet. Also goes towards local air quality. Removing diesel bus exhaust and highway traffic exhaust reduces ozone/smog.

Allen– CT can only do so much for mitigation. Cant affect CO2 globally really, but can do tremendous amount towards local pollution.

Paul – Agree. DOT is on path to get to 30% transit buses by 2030.

Laura Hayes – Joined from another group. Asks everyone to introduce themselves.

Paul Ferrell, director of air planning at dept of energy and env. Protections bureau of air mgmt.

Ben Martin, wallingford, CT. Active in group: 350 CT, which is working to get us off of fossil fuels in CT and in nation.

ALLEN POIRIER, old lyme, CT. member of citizens climate lobby, also sierra club, also old lyme land trust.

Laura Hayes – Epidemiologist at department of ...[INAUDIBLE]... Co-lead on public health and safety working group report and has sat in with extreme heat and air quality teams. Currently a small group, but great that it has representation from DEEP, DPH, EPA, and Equity in environmental justice group.

Laura Bozzi – Center on climate change and health at Yale, part of extreme heat team. We just put out big report on climate change and health in CT. Covers a lot of the issues here, air quality, adaptation, local air quality issues. Posted in chat.

Ariel King – law student supporting equity in environmental justice working group

Katie Keyman – Adaptation planner with BSC group. Engineering and Env services group. Just joined them, spent most of career working in Mass. with public health and healthcare.

Ben – Curious if extreme heat part will deal with loss of effectiveness of power plants, since extreme heat can cause them to not be able to run.

Paul – no

Laura Bozzi – Focus is on public health aspects of extreme heat. May be another group that is working on that issue.

Katie Keyman – From scanning report as adaptation planner and previous work in public health, Report seems to be hitting main issues that we see all the time. Recently heard a lot about older adults and their vulnerabilities, and how do we keep them connected and outdoors and connected. We have been talking about green infrastructure and shade/parks located near senior housing areas. What can we do in urban areas to make sure people can be outside.

Laura Hayes – Some of those points have come up repeatedly in working groups with the concepts of community resilience and building social cohesion and where these overlap with protection of

individuals against certain health risks. Utilizing green spaces within urban communities. What you will see in reports is fair amount of overlap with recommendations. Urban tree planting talked about in sci and tech group.

Katie – How will implementation be coordinated between working group. Will that be Rebecca French’s group?

Laura Hayes – Not known. Template used is from another state, possibly Mass. Groups developing recommendations were state agencies, so easy for them to oversee implementation. Now it is a different construct with the working groups, and can see there are multiple stakeholders involved, not just state agencies. Universities might want funding. A lot of groups that could be involved in implementation. Sometimes it is clear who lead could be. For example with Dennis, one of the recommendations for extreme events was providing access and functional needs coordinators, and that would be in purview of Dennis if funding was allocated. In other cases it hasn’t been decided how to identify the leads. That is just part of the process. This is happening quickly. Expect that directives on how to identify those entities will be coming from Rebecca French’s office.

Paul – any other comments or questions?

NONE

Laura - Do any of the recommendations stand out as particularly strong? We have 32. At some point we will have to prioritize. Any feedback should be provided. We asked presenters to put forward those we thought were strongest from health equity perspective.

Paul – Help us decide what we should focus on first.

Katie – The recommendation around protecting low income residents/renters. This year especially, it seems like the importance of having good housing has come to the forefront for so many different reasons. Housing is how we start to build resilience for people. Cooling centers are great, but that work is already ongoing and at different stages. Important to include it and make sure shelters are accessible, but that seems like its being taken care of somewhere else. Housing just stands out to me as important.

Paul – that makes a lot of sense. Thinking of cooling shelters as mitigation for extreme heat, how do we approach that in the face of COVID-19 and a pandemic. This report has not gotten a handle on that. You think we are going to think about these things going forward, as they become more prevalent as well.

Laura – That’s an interesting point, and it has been recognized through this process that coordination around cooling centers is highly local. Our agency is working with CT institute for resilience and climate adaptation, along with support from Yale, to synthesize info about what’s going on with cooling centers around the state and coordinate local plan. In support of 2011 recommendations to establish best practices for cooling centers in CT. That is a separate active project right now. Interesting that you brought up COVID, because in state’s with more active cooling centers during summer, ex AZ, COVID was an issue. They had to take everyone’s temp coming in from outside, but they had homeless population, who may have been exposed to extreme heat, and that interfered with taking temperatures. It is a fast moving target on how to handle that.

Paul – take a look at report, submit any comments. Prioritization will be a critical aspect of implementation. There is too much to do on the report, so we have to be strategic about what we focus on. Help us make those hard choices.

END OF MEETING

**Chat Record**

- 17:44:26 From Laura Bozzi : [https://publichealth.yale.edu/climate/YCCCH\\_CCHC2020Report\\_395366\\_5\\_v1.pdf](https://publichealth.yale.edu/climate/YCCCH_CCHC2020Report_395366_5_v1.pdf)
- 17:53:27 From Ben Martin : I need to sign off, thanks for all your work
- 17:58:35 From Laura Hayes : Thank you, everyone, and thank you Paul!
- 17:58:39 From Laura Bozzi : Thanks!

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17:58:40 From Arielle King : Thank you!

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