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# **Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3) Equity and Environmental Justice MEETING MINUTES**

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**Meeting Date:** June 18, 2020

**Meeting Time:** 5 – 7 pm

**Meeting Location:**  
Zoom Conference

## **AGENDA & NOTES**

### **Welcome and Announcements**

Lee Cruz and Marianne Engelman-Lado Co-chairs

### **Introduction**

*Facilitated by Marianne Engelman-Lado, Yale School of Public Health*

- Marianne asked attending members to introduce themselves, identify their organizations, and identify their sub-groups.
- Marianne encouraged a format in which presenters would share a few minutes of opening comments, and then leave ample time for Q&A, rather than separating out public comments at the end of the meeting.

Next steps:

- Marianne is seeking to recruit new members for the working groups

### **Update on the Timeline for GC3 Recommendations**

*Rebecca French, CT Department of Housing*

- Rebecca French has been working with Commissioner Katie Dykes to streamline the adaptation & resilience process for the January 2021 report
  - Statewide strategic planning process will be pushed through December 2021 due to constraints presented by COVID-19
  - Allows for more time to incorporate public participation
- Ms. French described the timeline as follows: working group reports by August, public review and comment period in the fall, and then 2021 report compilation based on that feedback.

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## Public Comments

- **Marianne Engelman-Lado**, Yale School of Public Health
  - Wanted to know whether concrete deliverables will still be a part of the January report.
    - Ms. French confirmed that if those items are ready in January 2021, they should certainly be included. She emphasized that having a solid outreach plan by January to facilitate public participation would be critical.
  - Marianne emphasized that COVID-19 and the focus on police brutality doesn't leave a lot of space for outreach on this issue, so it will be complicated to move forward with incorporating an equity lens when people working on racial justice are organizing and doing COVID-related work.
    - Ms. French responded that the shift of much of the work to 2021 is intentional, to give people more time if they can't get involved this summer.
- **Mark Mitchell**, George Mason University
  - Wanted to know more about how the GC3 working groups will collaborate in this new timeline.
    - Ms. French emphasized the important role that the Equity & Environmental Justice working groups must play in providing other working groups with feedback to ensure that equity and EJ be incorporated across the board. She expressed her hope that at least one member of this working group serve on each of the other working groups as well.
    - Ms. French clarified that this working group would ideally perform a pre-review of the other groups' recommendations. This review would constitute a crucial deliverable to be formed in early August.
- **Edith Pestana**, CT DEEP
  - Asked clarifying question: when will the review process begin on other workgroup draft recommendations?
    - Ms. French responded that the groups are all in very different places and that not all of them are ready to share now.
    - Ms. French pointed out that there will be an extended period for public comment throughout the fall, and that in-person events may be possible.

## Next steps:

- Commissioner will be bringing timeline for strategic planning process to full GC3 once she has ironed out the details.
- Research and planning should begin at the local scale to act as evidence to support recommendations going into January 2021 report about planning at the statewide level.

- There have now been two meetings of this subcommittee, but this presentation occurred before the group's second meeting on 6/19.
- Alex emphasized the guiding principles of public participation
  - Transparent and accountable decision-making
  - Accessible and inclusive decision-making (accessible to and inclusive to diverse populations, especially BIPOC and folks with disabilities, targeting racial justice and equity organizations)
  - Equal partnerships, coproduction, and self-determination (community members equal partners, looking for equal input in order to create policy with, not for, them)
  - Non-exploitation and efficiency (outreach and work with sensitive data should be respectful and streamlined to ensure the time and energy of participants are valued)
- Alex described the three goals of the subcommittee:
  - Identify barriers to public participation
  - Outreach to groups not currently represented in GC3
  - Reviewing policy recommendations

#### Public Comments

- **Mark Mitchell**, George Mason University
  - Emphasized that for community members to meaningfully participate in the GC3 process, there must be education. Mark also pointed out that it is difficult to find EJ groups with capacity to support our work because their funding tends to be limited.
    - Alex responded that many environmental NGOs have expressed a commitment to racial justice, those NGOs can and should play an education role.
- **David Bingham**, Salem Land Trust
  - Commented that our electoral system is a barrier to the effectiveness of environmental organizations in CT because third parties tend to siphon votes from the progressive side, to the benefit of conservatives working against environmental justice.
- **Brenda Watson**, Operation Fuel
  - Added that there exists resistance among environmental groups to incorporating environmental justice, which is often seen as an afterthought.

#### Progress on Adaptation Working Group

*Mark Mitchell, George Mason University*

- Group is the result of the combination of the healthy equity subtopic group of public health and safety subgroup of adaptation with the adaptation subgroup of the equity &

- Primary functions:
  - Proposing overall strategies to address equity across other adaptation subgroups
  - Responding to what other groups are proposing to support equity in their planning processes
- Identified gaps, needs, and recommended actions
  - 2011 plan in area of vulnerable populations only said that vulnerable populations must be included in strategic planning
  - 3 gaps:
    - Need to map locations populations at high risk of health harms from climate change
    - Need for linguistically and culturally appropriate resilience plans
    - Need for indicators for health equity and adaptation plans
  - Recommendations:
    - Instead of a statewide adaptation plan, state should fund each municipality to provide their own plans
    - GIS Mapping as an aid to municipal planning to incorporate social, economic, climate, institutional climate vulnerability factors
    - Develop guidance for inclusion in equity and local adaptation plans so they have a toolkit to create an equity-oriented plan
  - Caveat: These recommendations were created before the reconstruction of this working group

### **Progress on Mitigation Working Group**

*Sena Wazer, Sunrise Movement*

- Last meeting focused on trying to engage EJ communities
  - Asking communities what they need and what resources we can provide them
  - Asking them to provide feedback on the Mitigation group's recommendations
- Trying to determine best method of providing recommendations

Public Comments:

- **Marianne Engelman-Lado**, Yale School of Public Health
  - Asked group how they all can engage people in the concrete proposals coming out of working groups like mitigation and adaptation in the present context. Noted that some can be pushed off into the future, but also timely feedback is necessary for the GC3 to meet the moment adequately.
  - Suggested that grants can be given to community-based organizations so that they

can deepen their involvement in communities and come out of that work with concrete recommendations for us.

- **Denise Savageau**
  - Noted that outreach and development can happen simultaneously by taking information from public hearings and comparing it with the critical feedback we've already generated internally.
- **Lee Cruz**, Community Foundation for a Greater New Haven
  - Stated that the ability for the plans of the GC3 to succeed depends on the degree to which low income residents and residents of color feel that the plans belong to them.
  - Referenced article today in NYT (<https://nyti.ms/37EGcLb>) about connections between climate change and reproductive health outcomes among black women. Now is not the time to be building the relationships we need, but to take advantage of the relationships that have already been built. Models like the urban resources initiative-finding and embracing those organizations with extensive relationships already.
- **Rebecca French**, DOH
  - Emphasized importance of reaching out to local legislators.
- **Brenda Watson**, Operation Fuel
  - Named the Black and Puerto Rican caucus as a particular group of legislators who may be receptive. Also encouraged outreach to the Urban League and other small nonprofits.

### **Progress on Mapping Tool Subcommittee**

*Marianne Engelman-Lado, Yale School of Public Health*

- Marianne provided a presentation on the work of their working group and on how that work intersects with issues of equity. (See slide presentation.)

### Public Comments

- **Mark Mitchell**, George Mason University
  - Wants to get started on a mapping tool now where people can add local climate vulnerabilities to their map
    - Marianne Engelman-Lado: any of these maps will be iterative. Start with a version one, refine data, end up with a version two or three.
- **Denise Savageau**
  - There's a lot of mapping out there (esp. done through COGs). This working group should touch base with the council of governance and CIRCA, CIRCA should touch base with CLEAR (does GIS mapping). 2 or 3 of largest communities (e.g., Hartford, New Haven) can be pilots, have robust GIS layers already. Gaps in data in rural communities.
    - Marianne: We're in the process of working with UCONN CLEAR to conduct GIS mapping of all the land use within our public drinking water supplies to

make sure that water is clean and accessible. Mapping will be done within the next two or so years.

- **Kathy Fay**, Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven
  - GC3 recs are at this point just recs to the governor. Some of them might end up as legislation, but not all. It's important that we tie what we're doing to other efforts to make sure they get put into action somehow. Not good to pull communities into this work if nothing will ever come of it.
- **Lee Cruz**, Community Foundation for a Greater New Haven
  - Important to loop in COGs. seek to raise level of knowledge across the state to a new, higher standard. For example, due to the Urban Resources Initiative, New Haven now has a map of every tree planted since 1995 and the condition of that tree— what if we had that across the entire state of CT?

### Links Shared in Meeting:

- Climate change Tied to Pregnancy Risk, most affected black mothers: <https://nyti.ms/37EGcLb>
- NOAA Sea Level Rise Viewer includes a Social Vulnerability Index that uses census data to look at the intersection of socioeconomic data and sea level rise. The sea level data is not as refined as CIRCA's SLR viewer for Connecticut, but the SOVI index is a helpful screening tool. <https://coast.noaa.gov/slr/>
- This is the reality that we must confront, it is the lived experience of a segment of our community that we have not traditionally engage but who have a vested interest in the planning and changes we seek: <https://karmaimpact.com/climate-change-may-fuel-the-no-1-cause-of-infant-deaths-in-the-u-s-preterm-births/>

**NOTE:** Presentation slides and video and audio recordings of the meeting are available on GC3 web

### Page: [http ATTENDANCE](#)

Working Group Member	Title	Organization	Present
Lee Cruz	Co-Chair	The Community Foundation for a Greater New Haven	X
Marianne Engelman-Lado	Co-Chair	Yale School of Public Health	X
Alex Rodriguez		CT League of Conservation Voters	X
Brenda Geer		Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation	
Emily Basham		CT Green Bank	
Gina Calabro		AIA CT	

## Equity and Environmental Justice

6/18/2020

John Humphries		CT Roundtable on Climate and Jobs	
Julie Jones		NAACP	
Kathleen Donovan		PSE&G	X
Leticia Colon		Energy Efficiency for All	
Lynne Bonnett		Greater New Haven Green Fund	X
Michael Piscatelli		City of New Haven	
Orlando Velazco		CT Department of Public Health	X
Stanley Lord		NAACP	
Sena Wazer		Sunrise Movement	X
Sharon Lewis		CT Coalition for Environmental Justice	
Shubhada Kambli		City of Hartford	
Stephanye Clark		Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut	
Tyra Penn		Town of Thompson	
Steve Schrag		Western CT Central Labor Coalition	
Deborah Thomas-Sims		Bridgeport Office of Neighborhood	
Maisa Tisdale		Freeman Center	
Cynthia Jennings		CCEJ	
Marissa Rivera		Disability Rights Connecticut	X
Mark Mitchell		George Mason University	X
Maryam Elahi		Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut	
Kenny Foscue		North Haven Clean Energy Task Force	
Rebecca French		CTDEEP	X
David Bingham		Salem Land Trust	X
Brenda Watson		Operation Fuel	X
Denise Savegeau		Self-Employed	X
Sue Quincy		CTDEEP	X

## Equity and Environmental Justice

6/18/2020

Leslie Kane		National Audubon Society	X
Kathy Fay		Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven	X
Aicha Wood		City of New Haven	X
Laura Cahn		Department of Public Health	X
Brian Basso		Yale School of the Environment	X
David Sutherland		Nature Conservancy	X

Associated Staff	Title	Organization	Present
Edith Pestana	Administrator	DEEP	X
James Albis	Senior Advisor to the Commissioner	DEEP	X
Doris Johnson	Outreach and Program Coordinator	DEEP	X
Max Teirstein	EJ Intern	DEEP	X



