
Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3) Equity & Environmental Justice MITIGATION WORKING GROUP MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: July 7, 2020

Meeting Time: 12
to 1pm

Location: Zoom

<https://ctdeep.zoom.us/j/98803715456>

ATTENDANCE

Working Group Member	Title	Organization	Present
Sena Wazer	Co-Director	Sunrise CT	X
Brenda Watson	Executive Director	Operation Fuel	X
Jon Slifka	Executive Assistant to the Commissioner	Office of Disability Services	X
Brian Basso	Intern	GC3	X
Lee Cruz	Community Outreach Director	Community Foundation	X
Ashley Ellman-Brown	Program Manager	American Institute of Architects (CT)	X
Bernard Pelletier	Vice President	People's Action for Climate Energy (PACE)	X
Denise Savageau	Director	CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation	X
Jeff Howard	Environmental Analyst	DEEP Office of Climate Change	X
Leticia Colon de Mejias	Founder, CEO	Energy Efficiencies Solutions (EES)	X
Charles Rothenberger	Climate and Energy Attorney	Save the Sound	X
John Humphries	Organizer	CT Roundtable on Climate & Jobs	X

Associated Staff	Title	Organization	Present
Edith Pestana	EJ Program: Director	DEEP	X
Max Teirstein	EJ Program: Intern	DEEP	X
Doris Johnson	EJ Program: Outreach & Education Coordinator	DEEP	X

AGENDA & NOTES

Welcome and Announcements

Introductions

Brief Review of Previous Meeting

Agenda Item(s)

Facilitated by Sena Wazer, Sunrise CT

- Going through Building Working Group's recommendations with an eye toward EJ

2018.1-2018.2: Outreach to LMI (Low & Moderate Income) Communities

- **Bernard Pelletier, PACE:** Not everyone in the state were invited to these webinars. They were held in different places, the details were unclear to the public, so in the future the word needs to get out to a broader group.
- **Brenda Watson, Operation Fuel:** Seems like the issue is a lack of awareness, not necessarily something done with mal intent.
- **Leticia Colon de Mejias, EES:** There were no webinars offered to low & moderate income folks pre-Covid. More generally, there has been very little statewide outreach to LMI (Low and Moderate Income populations) other than making contractors do *free* work in towns to tell people about the program. These people and orgs should be paid. Outreach should be done through schools, community centers, TV, and radio. Those outlets should reach the community to allow them access to the critical information they need.
 - In the past, Leticia and others have been helping people gain utilities access through setting up in public parks to offer support.
 - Ms. Colon de Mejias noted the barrier of accessibility to folks with disabilities, without phones and computers, and landlords barring residents from requesting basic support from utilities. Low-income people afraid of repercussions from landlords after requesting services.
 - Ms. Colon de Mejias also pointed out that most LMI people rent their houses, they don't buy, so in that case they can't access solar.
- **Charles Rothenberger, Save the Sound:** There is a shared solar pilot program on the books, but it's weak. A newer shared solar initiative will soon be online and will encourage broad participation from LMI populations.
 - **Denise Savageau:** In that case, we need to put it in the plan. Where would it fit?

- **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** EE LMI have several barriers to access. 1. Any indoor health barrier STOPS EE work, there is no fund to help LMI get barriers removed. 2. renters can lose access to EE if landlord stops them, 3. LMI don't know they pay into the program, and don't know they can use the program, the application process is cumbersome and requires a PC and fax or scanner, 5. Past incentives were too low, and now are better at this time 4. Renters can't access solar. They need a solar option through utilities,
- **Ms. Savageau:** When it comes to education, utility companies don't like to talk about energy generation vs. energy efficiency. But a lot of times these two things work hand in hand. If you have people doing education on only one aspect of what needs to get done, that's not productive. Utilities need to be able to talk about energy generation, not just energy efficiency.
- **Jeff Howard, DEEP:** One complication is that the discussion of electricity in the context of buildings doesn't fit with the way mitigation subgroup is structured. We have an electricity team and they're focusing on all the electricity concerns. Just because solar touches buildings does not make it relevant to this conversation.
 - **Mr. Pelletier:** Most of what Energize CT is doing is building-related. As long as we get a comment on electricity and energy in the report, why should it matter?
 - **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** All these things are deeply interconnected, especially when it comes to climate change. Lack of discussion of climate change and energy provides for weak energy policy.
 - **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** Mentioned plan for the state senate, which includes these recommendations (under "people for the planet" goals).
- **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** Recommendations on outreach to LMI communities: Set aside funds for local minority run nonprofits to complete outreach in those communities, ensure funds and materials are used in the LMI communities. Ensure education aligns with NGSS and CCC standards. Ensure the groups given the funds have measurable goals that align with the state plans, and that they report on those goals annually, bonuses will align with goals.
- **Ms. Savageau:** DEEP Environmental Ed has program that could be used. They are using PLT for energy conservation and could easily put in info on EnergizeCT.

Renewable Thermal Technologies

- **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** first step would be to assess the houses first. ABC—attic, basement, conditioned spaces. Assess thermal boundaries. Then upgrade to renewable resources and electrification.
 - **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** low income program includes a comprehensive bonus. If the contractor pays attention to the rules, they would follow the steps I outlined above, then they have to address the boundaries and a comprehensive bonus gets approved. But these are guidelines, not requirements. Guidelines should be changed at the utility program level to say that if you are to electrify, first you must meet building code. Order of operations: 1) look for health barriers, present in 35% in all households in CT and 50% of low-income houses. If they exist, nothing can happen, because there is no fund to support those people. Healthy Homes Fund doesn't get used for this. There should be a Healthy Homes Fund whereby they apply for the fund through the state portal, get

some of their own money back and use that to address the barriers in their home. 2) Upgrades to water. 3) Electrification and access to renewable resources (community solar or residential solar).

- Ms. Colon de Mejias wants to be sure that barriers are discussed. Not that there's not enough money, it's that there's a barrier in their home.
- **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** Ensure the programs align with the DOL platforms such as apprenticeship programs which goes through WIBs and the job funnel. Those programs specifically service at-risk communities. Provide free training for folks who are underemployed or underpaid. Energy efficiency and solar installations, until 2017, when the programs were ended and now only exist at private schools—at risk communities no access. Need a statewide version of these programs. Apprenticeship program for energy careers could allow us to access \$1.4 million in federal funds.
 - **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** Training on HP or any energy career path, i.e. EE, solar, HP, insulation. Should be run through WIBS and job funnel, CWP, and other local nonprofits that train. This approach had been successful. Thousands were trained and placed in EE and solar careers. Many of these people still work in these jobs today. These programs are accessible to LMI communities and complete specific outreach to LMI under and the under employees. DOL has been sitting on an apprenticeship program for three years, Todd Burch has it. Edith is the EJ lady at DEEP
 - **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** The Center For Latino Progress and EFA used to do training for these job funnel programs and I have so many success stories of folks who had been on subsidy and now are employed and own homes and cars and have great jobs. That funding was pulled in 2017. All programs ended. Also no one with any record even way back can work in the program that excludes many LMI.
 - **Doris Johnson, DEEP:** could that program be implemented through technical high schools?
 - **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** No, because low income folks can't access those. Instead, they should go back to the model that works—the jobs funnel. It worked better. Low attrition rate and easy to find people. Technical schools and colleges are already given that money, but they aren't using it, so we should allocate them any more funds.
 - **Ms. Johnson:** It sounds like we need a watchdog over funding to make sure that technical schools use the funds correctly.
 - **Edith Pestana, DEEP:** Would that be an issue discussed through finance work group?
 - **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** Yes. Funds for low-income communities should require reporting of how those funds were ultimately used.

Funds and Incentives

- **Mr. Pelletier:** Lockbox for energy efficiency funds. Transparent reporting is required.
 - **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** I wouldn't call it a watchdog.
 - **Ms. Johnson:** A tracking mechanism.

- **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** Anybody receiving funds from these funds should be required to provide an annual report of how the funds were acquired. Measurable goals for these monies should be clearly articulated at the outset, and you don't get more funds until you've met those goals.
- **Ms. Savageau:** Nothing is really addressing rental units. How do we address those buildings? If you're going to expand programs, we need to be able to look at that. We should have language in there that specifies that our recommendations apply to rental units.
 - **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** state programs and ratepayer-funded programs should include incentives for low income property owners to include uptake for clean energy and energy efficiency. Those programs already exist, but they aren't widely known. Should educate existing programs for people who own LMI housing (Section 8 housing, HUD housing, multifamily, etc.) The need really is that the property owners who house low income people don't know that they can take advantage of these programs. Outreach should be to property owner and property managers of low-income housing, then the incentives should be applicable to those houses.
- **Ms. Savageau:** Just a general message for buildings and/or electric sector. Some legislators are saying we no longer need incentives for renewables because the price has come down. We need to be clear that incentives are needed for conversions to take place. Also need to be able to put as much solar on your house as can fit, not just based on energy use. It does not anticipate converting to an all energy household for most houses.
- **Ms. Johnson:** What happens with energy efficiency when landlord includes utilities in rent?
 - **Mr. Pelletier:** If landlord is paying the utilities, then they're incentivized to electrify. If a tenant is paying the bill, the landlord doesn't care.
 - **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** In those cases where the bill is included in the rent, landlords will improve efficiency but will leave rent at the same price, so tenants don't see those savings. How we quantify savings is how low-income people end up without help.
 - **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** Cost-effective testing should be applied equally. Utility and Green Bank programs both have same assessments, but utility contractors are not paid for the assessments and GB contractors do. Recommendation: ratepayer funds should be used transparently, equitably, and cost-effective testing should be applied equitably and fairly to any ratepayer funds. Should be quantified, align with state goals. Where does the \$20,000 for the GB's assessments go?
 - **Ms. Johnson:** Can that 20,000\$ be used as an example to let people know that those monies are being awarded to the Green Bank but in the utility arena, no money is being awarded.

2020.7: Develop a transition plan for fossil fuels

- **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** Recommendation should quantify health of indoor air particulates. It's

okay if we're repeating this here, people need the point to be driven home to internalize a suggestion. In addition, we need to have something that says "ensure we follow the building science order of operations, which is: Assessment, Plan, and Thermal Boundary." Lots of advocates believe electrification is the key to stopping climate change, but you can't scale up the electrical grid without doing those assessments first, because low income folks won't be able to afford to electrify otherwise and will be left with the brunt of the cost impact. First have to scale down demand for heating and cooling.

- **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** Commercial programs are viewed as more valuable. Businesses are seen as special, but low-income work is seen as costly and burdensome. The idea is that we can implement programs for businesses to improve their energy efficiency, but we can't do the same for low-income folks because they're seen as too costly.

2020.8: set end date to fossil fuel expansion and to new installations

- **Mr. Pelletier:** Utilities did not sign off on this recommendation. Can't commit to an end date to fossil fuel expansion. Maybe it is, in fact, premature to set an end date before we've started the meat of our work.
- **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** Let's see where we can agree. Electrification of transportation and building heating is critical. To meet the goal of ending fossil fuel infrastructure, we could reallocate funds to achieving that goal. Ending fossil fuel expansion is actually a Green Bank goal because that is what they were created for: to expand access to clean energy resources. Green Bank should take up their goal and start expanding clean energy resources—use the money to educate people in the state on clean and renewable resources. Electrification is not a renewable resource, though. Electrification is not inherently renewable. Not everyone knows that.
 - **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** We have to have a plan, not a dream. Include goal with subsidiary objectives and plan.

2020.9: Path to Zero Energy Pilot

- **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** They did a ton of zero-energy homes through this program. It should definitely be resurrected. Paves the way, shows that it's possible.
 - **Ms. Colon de Mejias:** Add a suggestion for a monthly newsletter of successful zero-energy upgrades. Get the success stories out to the public!
- **Ms. Pestana:** This document is available for comment through Google Docs. We need to actually post this document at some point for public comment. When do you anticipate you'll be done? Timeline?
 - **Mr. Pelletier:** Should be up to bigger working group for July 22.