
Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3) Financing Adaptation and Resilience MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: September 4, 2020

Meeting Time: 9:00 - 10:00am

Meeting Recording:

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ATTENDANCE

Working Group Member	Title	Organization	Present
Rebecca French, Co Chair	Director of the Office of Climate Planning	CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection	x
Andrew Mais, Co-Chair	Commissioner	CT Insurance Department	x
Deputy Commissioner Alexandra Daum, Co-Chair	Commissioner	CT Dept. of Economic and Community Development	x
Bryan Garcia, Co-Chair	President and CEO	CT Green Bank	x
Joseph MacDougald	Executive Director	UConn Law School Center for Energy and Environment	
Claire Coleman	Undersecretary for Legal Affairs	CT Office of Policy and Management	x
James O'Donnell	Executive Director	CT Institute for Resilience and	

Patrick Brown	Assistant Vice President and Chief Technology Architect	The Hartford	x
David Sutherland	Director of Government Relations	The Nature Conservancy	x
Curt Johnson	President	Save the Sound	x
Kathy Dorgan	Principal	Dorgan Architecture & Planning	x
Wayne Cobleigh	Vice President	GZA	x
Dean Audet	Senior Water Resources Engineer	Fuss & O'Neill	
Robert LaFrance	Policy Director	Audubon CT	x
Adrienne Farrar Houël	President and CEO	Greater Bridgeport Community Enterprises	x
Jennifer O'Brien	Program Director	Community Foundation for Eastern CT	
James Albis	Senior Advisor to Commissioner Katie Dykes	DEEP	x
George Bradner	Director, Property and Casualty filings	CT Insurance Department	x
Frograd Ryan	The Nature Conservancy		x
John Truscinski	Director of Resilience Planning	CT Institute for Resilience and Climate	x

Associated Staff & GC3 WG Members	Title	Organization	Present
Members of the Public			
Paul Hearn	PAULHEARN@BARALMARL LC.COM		x

AGENDA & NOTES

Welcome and Announcements - *Rebecca French*

Discussion of the FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities (BRIC) grant program for pre-disaster mitigation.

Group of state agencies had a briefing from DEMHS on next steps and how we could solicit more proposals from interested groups.

Financing members expressed interest in getting involved with the discussion on the grant.

Agenda Item(s)

1. Review comments from the presentation to the EEJ working group

EEJ Comment: Governor needs to convene the Presidents of the 5 or 6 largest community and private foundations and philanthropic organizations and have a conversation with them once he receives this report if we are to move this conversation forward with them.

Discussion:

- Decide to add it as a recommendation in the report
- Add family foundations to convening list
- Change wording to convene
- Discussion on role of foundations with providing matching funds to be more competitive for FEMA BRIC

EEJ Comment: All community foundations have an evaluation process that is based in public participation, and we can bring our influence towards democratizing this process and towards the needs of the poorest in our state and influence the leverage points created by the dollars raised by the foundations, which is worth more than the actual dollars available. – coming in as advisers

Discussion:

- Add to list of role of foundations
- Role of listening to foundations and their work, they can be advisers

EEJ Process: Can you walk through your thinking about what part of this process and what recommendations you hope to move in 2020 (this fall) and what you hope to move in 2021? For example, the pilot process might lead to a longer and funded process in 2021, with funding for community partners involved in the process?

Discussion:

- Use the FEMA BRIC program as a pilot and report to the legislature on how it went
- Suggestion of setting high level 2030 goals for adaptation groups and then the ramps for how to get there. Bold thinking is needed.
- Suggestion for participatory workshop for applications for the FEMA BRIC program
- Utilizing COGs for organizing FEMA BRIC projects in their region and having projects work at the state level too because FEMA BRIC funds are going to be available on a regular basis and we should have projects lined up and ready to go.

- Note that Connecticut meets the building codes requirements for FEMA BRIC and many other states do not.
- Stronger language around funding community groups to participate

EEJ Comment: Have you given any thought to offering training to communities ?

Discussion:

- Strengthen language in the capacity-building section

EEJ Comment: Given the minuscule funding that goes to EJ communities and EJ community groups from philanthropic sources, any approach to philanthropy should ensure that funding doesn't divert funding that would go to EJ groups and/or that the outreach funds go to EJ groups to lead the outreach.

Discussion: Note that philanthropic sources are small relative to the costs of some activities and that priority should remain on EJ groups. Note that large infrastructure projects are expensive, but aspects like participating in planting green infrastructure can be less expensive and funded by foundations.

EEJ Comment: How do you intend to connect with these EJ communities? They have a lack of technology, and a lack of access to information on climate and energy topics. There has been no outward facing materials that are easily understood. These people have serious energy burdens and other barriers. Foundation funding has been super helpful in identifying new projects and building community relationships and there is never any federal funding for that work.

Discussion: Equity lens group is following up with EEJ on how to do better engagement on this topic.

EEJ Comment: c1) can we decouple taxpayer responsibility from insuring high risk properties due to climate change or at least limit the risk that the public has to bail out this type of insurance coverage? 3) re general obligation bonds; are investors going to be put off by investing in vulnerable communities? How will the investment be structured to prioritize EJ communities; please give example. 3) why isn't the historical subsidization that EJ communities have paid into efficiency programs and renewable programs for the wealthier communities through the electrical company charge on our electrical bill? 4) why can't we couple renewable generation (solar) with conversion from oil to electric heat pumps in low income communities to avoid overstressing the grid, lower energy burden of LMI residents, provide cooling for LMI residents in the face of coming temperature rise, transitioning away from fossil fuel source for heating and cooling?

Discussion:

Part 1 – Not a lot of information from FEMA on how decoupling would impact Connecticut yet so any response should be general. Suggestion that FEMA should be rewarding states that are more proactive on resiliency for example by waiving the cost-share requirements if your state is doing more as one way to motivate change. Will look at insurance section to see if there is something to highlight here.

Part 2 – GO bonds are looking at the state's ability to pay back the loans and not looking at a specific community. Heard from Treasury that more up front disclosure on proactive on climate will help.

Part 3 – Flag for the electric sector report. Important issues for LMI communities.

Part 4 – Flag for mitigation working group.

EEJ Comment: If these big picture proposals are to move out in 2020, what would be the timing of the pilot community engagement and then the follow up rollout, even for prioritization?

On anything related to financing larger construction projects (especially in Opportunity Zone and other EEJ communities) can we require that they be designed and built to be able to immediately convert to emergency community shelters: electric generation, capacity for cold food storage and potable water, microgridding, etc

Discussion:

- Opportunity zone projects not likely to come in for state financing so little leverage to make these requirements.
- Could highlight need for these projects in EJ communities in the Isaias discussion section and tie them to community lifelines.

EEJ Comment: I do want to comment on the loan program the CT instituted after Sandy. Basically this was not available to folks whose home was destroyed because they had not equity until house was restored. Can't restore until house is elevated.

Discussion:

- Would need to address this issue if the loan program were going to be restarted in Connecticut.

EEJ Comment: CT has Flood and Erosion bond legislation that should be looked at.

Discussion:

- Side by side look at the Flood and Erosion Control Board authorization in Connecticut statute and provides some of the powers of a resilience authority as proposed by the group.
- Suggestion to talk to the DEEP Water Resources Division and look at the history.

General Discussion

- Need to put forward goals instead of only a laundry list of options for administration to consider
- Continue to push on the other working groups for 2030 goals similar to the goals outlined for nature-based solutions.
- Continue to push for strong funding for environmental justice
- Importance of working groups establishing relationships and working together in addition to what the Governor might do with recommendations from the Council

2. Public Comment

No public comments.
