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

GC3 Equity and Environmental Justice Working Group
Meeting #1 Notes
February 25, 2020

Attendance: 59

HIGH-LEVEL TAKEAWAYS

- Attendees emphasized the need to recognize existing inequities in Connecticut – particularly around (a) who is able to access (and benefit from) renewable electricity and (b) who would benefit from improvements in transportation infrastructure.
- Attendees emphasized the need for community meetings to have procedures and mechanisms that make them accessible to all (e.g., providing childcare, providing language interpretation services, being centrally located, providing dial-in numbers, promoting on social media, etc.), and to have multiple ways in which people can engage (e.g. open meetings, online opportunities for comment, etc.)

I. INTRODUCTION BY MARIANNE ENGELMAN-LADO AND LEE CRUZ

II. OVERVIEW OF THE GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (GC3)

1. James Albis, from DEEP, provided an overview on the GC3. See full presentation for details.
2. After James' presentation, questions and comments included the following:
 - a. Question/Comment 1
 - i. Question/Comment: How is the GC3 embedding equity into its decisions? Having a separate equity working group can isolate that issue.
 - ii. Response: The GC3 is doing the following:
 1. Ensuring that people from the WG and EJ community attend other meetings
 2. Utilizing a shared set of equity considerations and definition across all of its work.
 3. Providing recommendations on how other working groups can go into communities.
 4. Having the equity working group provide feedback to any plans that come out of other groups on an ongoing basis.

III. OVERVIEW OF THE GC3 REPORT FROM 2018

1. Jeremy Hunt, from DEEP, provided a presentation on the GC3's 2018 report. See full presentation for details.
2. After Jeremy's presentation, questions and comments included:
 - a. Question/Comment 1
 - a. Collaborate with them.
 - b. Public schools could be good partners in disseminating important information.
 - c. Minority-run enterprises and businesses should be engaged in this work.
 2. Tailoring engagement practices to each community's respective needs
 - a. Engagement should include accommodations such as:
 - i. Language interpretation.
 - ii. Childcare
 - iii. Etc.

Breakout Group B

Facilitator: Marianne Engelman-Lado

This working group's comments fit into the following topics:

1. Defining equity.
 - a. Substantive and Distributive
 - i. Fairly distributing resources, benefits, and harms across populations, species, and time (including the current and future generation).
 - ii. Substantively, everyone has a right to clean water, clean air, etc.
 - b. Contextual
 - i. Remediating past injustices. Need to pay attention to the legacy of inequality that exists today. Need to take into account these inequalities and apply an equity lens to the work of the GC3.
 - c. Procedural
 - i. Allowing communities who are most affected to participate in decision-making and implementation.
 - ii. Allowing for equal involvement in decisions that affect people.
2. Identifying ways to effectively engage the public
 - a. Potential services include translation, food at meetings, child care, remote access to meetings (e.g., phone call line).
 - b. Mechanisms to get the message to the community include:
 - i. Door-to-door visits
 - ii. Social media
 - iii. Public access television

- i. Question/Comment: Are there any available analyses of which communities are most vulnerable to climate change issues in CT?
- ii. Answer: All available reports right now do not incorporate an equity-based lens. This Equity and Environmental Justice Working Group should recommend for such a report to exist.
- b. Question/Comment 2: The GC3's reports need to include weatherization as a topic and the vulnerability of many communities to weatherization.
- c. Question/Comment 3: The GC3's report should emphasize how to deal with affordable housing, trees, and green spaces in vulnerable communities.
- d. Question/Comment 4: In the 2018 report, improvements in building efficiency appear to have a lower effect on GHG emissions than some in the attendance would have thought.

IV. DEFINITION OF EQUITY

- 1. Leticia Colon de Mejias provided a presentation that defined "equity."
- 2. After Leticia's presentation, comments included the following:
 - a. Vulnerable populations should include those people with disabilities and who are migrants. Issues of race and class matter but we should not lose sight of other vulnerable populations.
 - b. Technical regulations and laws prevent equity in environmental matters. (e.g., Regulations prevent renters from benefitting from solar and renewable electricity.)

V. BREAKOUT DISCUSSIONS

Breakout Group A

Facilitator: Leticia Colon de Mejias

This working group's comments fit into the following topics:

- 3. Emphasizing local control and input from communities.
 - a. Community Choice Aggregation is a technical mechanism that some states use to give local communities more power.
 - b. "Climate action plans" should be meaningful to individual communities.
 - c. Communities should be given space to provide input on what they need; they know what they need.
- 4. Developing strategies to adequately inform and education communities on climate issues.
 - a. People need to be informed of how their health and environmental problems intersect with pollution and climate change.
 - b. Education materials on climate issues need to be accessible.
 - c. Information should be comprehensible, culturally accessible, and digestible (and should not overload people).
- 5. Strategically partnering with community-based organizations and leaders
 - a. Other CT-based climate organizations may already be engaging communities, and DEEP should collaborate with them.

- b. Public schools could be good partners in disseminating important information.
- c. Minority-run enterprises and businesses should be engaged in this work.
- 6. Tailoring engagement practices to each community's respective needs
 - a. Engagement should include accommodations such as:
 - i. Language interpretation.
 - ii. Childcare
 - iii. Etc.

Breakout Group B

Facilitator: Marianne Engelman-Lado

This working group's comments fit into the following topics:

- 3. Defining equity.
 - a. Substantive and Distributive
 - i. Fairly distributing resources, benefits, and harms across populations, species, and time (including the current and future generation).
 - ii. Substantively, everyone has a right to clean water, clean air, etc.
 - b. Contextual
 - i. Remedying past injustices. Need to pay attention to the legacy of inequality and that everyone is not on an equal playing field today. Need to take into account these inequalities to apply an equity lens to the work of the GC3.
 - c. Procedural
 - i. Allowing communities who are most affected to participate in decision-making and implementation.
 - ii. Allowing for equal involvement in decisions that affect people.
- 4. Identifying ways to effectively engage the public
 - a. Potential services include translation, food at meetings, and childcare, remote access to meetings (e.g., phone call line).
 - b. Mechanisms to get the message to the community include:
 - i. Door-to-door visits
 - ii. Social media
 - iii. Public access television
 - iv. Advertising in community spaces
 - v. Involving parents and students from environmentally oriented programs and schools
 - vi. Surveys
 - vii. Multiple mechanisms: no one method of outreach is sufficient; various methods (including, for example, more meetings and online commenting opportunities, are complementary)
 - c. Note that some communities may not trust that their views will be considered. They may not be willing to come to meetings given past experience.

- d. Engagement should include mechanisms pursuant to the 2008 Connecticut Environmental Justice statute.

Breakout Group C

Facilitator: Angie Liao

This working group's comments fit into the following topics:

1. Substantive needs of vulnerable communities.
 - a. Low-income people currently struggle to pay energy bills.
 - b. Renting sector in New Haven pays into energy efficiency programs and receives no benefits.
 - c. In transportation, infrastructure investments (e.g., EV) only benefit wealthier residents.
 - d. Energy efficiency barriers exist in substandard housing stock that have the presence of asbestos and or lead paint.
2. Procedural ways that the working group can engage communities.
 - a. Provide accommodations at meetings (e.g., childcare).
 - b. Meaningful participation does not just mean "participation":
 - i. Community members should have leadership roles and be compensated for involvement.
 - ii. Recommendations should be incorporated not just considered.
 - c. Meetings should take place regularly in neighborhoods settings