

**Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)  
Equity and Environmental Justice + Mitigation Strategies**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Meeting Date: November 14, 2022**

**Meeting Time: 4:30 - 6:00 PM**

**Zoom Recording: [EEJ + Mitigation Strategies Working Group](#)**

**ATTENDANCE:** GC3 Working Group Members in bold

Name:
Alanis Allen
<b>Kristin Barendregt-Ludwig, Co-chair</b>
<b>David Barkin, Co-chair</b>
Robert Bell
Ashley Benitez
<b>Thomas Bontly</b>
<b>Mary Buchanan</b>
<b>Lee Cruz, Co-chair</b>
<b>Hank Cullinane</b>
Anne Decker
<b>Samantha Dynowski</b>
<b>Garrett Eucalitto, Co-chair</b>
<b>Kathleen Fay</b>
<b>Cathy Fletcher</b>
Rebecca French
<b>Maebel Haynes</b>
<b>Alycia Jenkins</b>
Doris Johnson
<b>Melissa Kops</b>
<b>Cary Lynch</b>
<b>Robert Maddox</b>
Huan Ngo
Edith Pestana
<b>Chris Phelps</b>
<b>Francis Pickering</b>
<b>Allison Pilcher</b>
<b>Alan Poirier</b>
<b>Marc Richards</b>
<b>Alex Rodriguez</b>
<b>Nicholas Ross</b>
<b>Charles Rothenberger</b>
<b>Denise Savageau</b>
<b>Lyle Scruggs</b>
Hailey Simpson
<b>Margarita T. Alban</b>
<b>Max Teirstein</b>
<b>Maisa Tisdale, Co-chair</b>

<b>Becca Trietch, <i>Co-chair</i></b>
<b>Michael Uhl</b>
<b>Joanna Wozniak-Brown</b>

## AGENDA & NOTES

**Welcome:** Ashley Benitez Ou, DEEP Liaison and Rebecca French, Director, Office of Climate Planning

Ground Rules:

- Meeting is recorded and a link will be posted
- Announcement that the chat is public record, but may be used for questions and comments by working group members
- Working group members are asked to post their names and affiliation in the chat
- Reminder that the discussion portion is reserved for working group members
- Announcement that non-working group members should mute and turn video off until public comment
- Shared additional working group participation guidance and ground rules, which was informed by the EEJ working group
- Public comment guidance was also shared

**Welcome and Introductions:**

- Introductions by the Equity and Environmental Justice working group co-chairs, Kristin Barendregt-Ludwig and Lee Cruz
- Rebecca French presents charge for Equity and Environmental Justice working group
  - Completed: identifying members to serve on other GC3 working groups
  - In progress: Reviewing and providing comments on each working group presentation (throughout November)
  - In progress: Present to GC3 on EEJ findings (early December)
    - There are no new strategies being presented to GC3, rather the focus is on evaluating and monitoring

**Review of 4 Core Concepts of Equity:** *Kristin Barendregt-Ludwig, Yale Center for Environmental Justice*

- Kristin notes that she will present on concepts of equity, though there are many other definitions
- Provides definition for equity and notes how equity and climate change intersect
- 4 Core Concepts of Equity:
  - Distributive: Placing the most vulnerable communities at the forefront of any potential benefits a policy might create, ensuring that the distribution of the benefits and burdens of climate change mitigation and adaptation are equitably distributed

- Ex. Prioritizing underserved farmers for priority funding
- Procedural: Planning in partnership with low-income communities and BIPOC communities (“Nothing about us without us”)
  - Ex. Communities are engaged in a meaningful way to provide feedback
- Contextual: Assessing the vulnerabilities of communities across Connecticut to climate change, due to the legacy of racial and income inequality and other factors
  - Ex. Hiring people from communities to engage in programming in their communities
- Corrective: Providing communities with clear processes to hold the state accountable to its commitments to pursue equity
  - Ex. GC3 process should ensure that communities have mechanisms for holding public leaders accountable

**Review of Public Participation Guidance:** *Alex Rodriguez, Environmental Justice Specialist, Save the Sound*

- Presentation will expand on procedural equity points raised by Kristin
- 4 Principles for Public Participation:
  - Transparent and Accountable Decision Making
    - Communities need a clear definition of the problem and guidance in navigating systems of power
    - Developed a 9-point checklist aligned with this principle, which provides guidance from data usage, to working with community leaders, to media guidance
  - Accessible and Inclusive Decision Making
    - Consideration of this principle can look like greater attention to scheduling public hearings so that communities can readily participate
    - 5 points in the checklist are devoted to this principle
    - Checklist points include fair notice, interpretation services, meeting schedules, selection of congregation locations, and the inclusion of technology that makes in-person meetings more accessible
  - Equal Partnerships, Co-Production, and Self-Determination
    - 3 checklist points around ensuring meaningful community participation in meetings by limiting power dynamics and ensuring that next step actions and follow-ups are documented
  - Respect, Efficacy, and Non-Exploitation
    - 5 checklist points to guide relationships, follow ups, and resource identification

**CT Environmental Justice Communities as Defined by Statute, 22a-20a:** *Edith Pestana, Environmental Justice Admin, DEEP and Ashley Benitez, Climate Planning, DEEP*

- CGS DEEP State Policy Ch. 439: 22a-20a
  - Defines environmental justice communities
    - Economically distressed (DECD criteria)
  - Defines specific affected facilities
  - Requires permit applicants to engage with the public
  - May provide an opportunity to negotiate a community benefit agreement to reduce or mitigate pollution

**Mitigation Strategies Working Group Presentation:** *Commissioner Katie Dykes, DEEP, Co-chair (Designee: Becca Trietch), Deputy Commissioner Garrett Eucalitto, DOT, Co-chair, Aziz Dehkan, CT Roundtable on Climate and Jobs, Co-chair, David Barkin, Designee for Commissioner Gillman, DAS, Co-chair*

- Updates from DAS: *David Barkin*
  - Recently adopted 2022 building codes
  - First state in the country to adopt the latest version of the IgCC for state managed construction, which is the most stringent code available
  - Studying decarbonization projects and deployment of EV charging stations for DAS vehicles
  - Using Greener Gov. Funding to implement retrofitting and enforce carbon reductions while prioritizing air quality
- Summary of Energy Topics Covered: *Becca Trietch*
  - Work on buildings decarbonization
    - Overview of high-performance building standards
    - Becca noted several successes under Greener Gov.
    - Update on Connecticut Clean Energy Council
  - Federal funding and comment opportunities
    - Becca summarized relevant opportunities for federal funding and opportunities to provide feedback to federal agencies
  - Comprehensive Energy Strategy (CES)
    - Described the objectives and requirements of the CES
    - Highlighted DEEP's approach to the 2022 CES (lenses, strategies, key factors)
    - During each GC3 meeting, Becca provided updates about opportunities for public comment and/or for upcoming technical sessions
      - Technical sessions began in September and will continue through January (8 in total)
    - Sought feedback from GC3 working group members about how to better make the CES process more accessible and equitable
      - Technical sessions are usually an entire day, are online, and are highly technical, which limits opportunities to bring in other voices

- Becca would like feedback on how to make these sessions more accessible while building upon existing communication pathways
- Greener Gov. Updates and Project Updates from DOT: *Robert Bell*
  - Increased EV charging capacity for public and DOT fleet vehicles
  - Working with CT Green Bank to increase solar implementation through two different projects
  - DOT operates most of the Connecticut bus fleet and they are on track to convert the diesel operated buses to battery operated
  - DOT was also the recipient of federal funding to provide fast-charging stations along highways across the state for public vehicles

**Discussion:** *Facilitated by EEJ Co-Chairs; Full comments can be found on the Zoom recording and/or audio transcripts*

- *What successful applications of the equity and environmental justice lens did you hear in the presentation today?*
  - Notes that buses are especially important for environmental justice since many buses operate in areas that are priority areas for EJ initiatives
- *What are the rural environmental justice issues the Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry working group should consider as they apply the equity lens going forward?*
- *How might we break down the perceived siloes of urban versus rural environmental justice communities? What are the opportunities for cross-fertilization?*
  - In looking at building codes, are we ensuring that building code upgrades are being applied in the senior housing communities? Does the IcGG code apply to housing authorities?
    - David Barkin responds that the new codes have raised the bar across all new construction, including public housing. However, he is not sure if the new standards apply to other housing initiatives.
  - Affordability is being defined by direct costs, but there is encouragement to not only consider the short-term because environmental justice communities often get left out when the long-term is not the priority consideration.
  - Mitigation tools need to be brought to the affordable housing conversations. Clean and efficient energy are usually cut when affordability becomes the talking point. This eliminates access for lower-income communities.

**Public Comments:** *For full comments please see the Zoom recording and/or audio transcript*

Robert Maddox: Noting that presentations are focused on operational carbon. Wants to call the group's attention to embodied carbon, like low-carbon concrete. Important to save carbon now, rather than later. Perhaps DOT could use more favorable building materials.

Kathy Fay: Most vulnerable residents do not live in affordable housing, so she would like to see more emphasis on increasing capacity for increasing existing housing problem. Making housing more energy efficient could increase housing affordability.

## Adjourn and Next Steps:

Maisa Tisdale: Encourages the group to begin thinking about how to incorporate community input from EJ communities and stakeholders in order to address concerns about historical and systemic racism. For instance, energy infrastructure in urban areas is going to be used by suburban users where consumption is much higher. We don't know how EJ residents define this problem right now.

## Resources:

[EEJ Public Guidance Excerpt](#)

[Distressed Municipalities List](#)

[DEEP Environmental Justice Communities](#)

## Chat Record:

00:19:19 Denise Savageau: Denise Savageau, GC3 EJ Working Group, CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation

00:20:38 Maebel Haynes: Maebel Haynes (She/Her), Sunrise Movement CT, Litchfield Sustainability committee liaison to Litchfield High School Environmental Club, Student

00:21:19 Mary Buchanan, CIRCA, she/her: Mary Buchanan, CIRCA Community Resilience Planner

00:23:34 Melissa Kops | CTGBC: Melissa Kops, CT Green Building Council, Building Sector Working Group

00:23:35 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: All working group members feel free to introduce yourself in the chat.

00:24:04 Cathy Fletcher: Cathy Fletcher, planner for the City of Bridgeport

00:24:31 Allison Pilcher: Allison Pilcher (she/her), Policy Director with the Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs

00:24:39 Kathleen Fay: Kathy Fay, NHS of New Haven, Building Sector Mitigation Working Group/EEJ Working Group

00:25:13 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: Thanks to other members of the team at the Office of Climate Planning and Alanis Allen and Ashley Benitez Ou for helping run the meeting tonight and presenting.

00:35:10 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: Alex is summarizing the materials that can be found here: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/climatechange/GC3/GC3-2022-agendas-and-minutes/EEJ-Public-Guidance-Excerpt.pdf>

00:40:27 Ashley Benitez, Climate Planning, CTDEEP: Questions to presenters will follow after the next presentation. Feel free to post your questions on the chat as well.

00:42:24 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: Thank you Alex!

00:42:26 Alex Rodriguez: alexrodriguez@savethesound.org

00:47:25 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Environmental-Justice/Environmental-Justice-Communities>

00:51:17 Ashley Benitez, Climate Planning, CTDEEP: <https://ctdeep.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d04ec429d0a4477b9526689dc7809ffe>

00:51:50 Ashley Benitez, Climate Planning, CTDEEP: Affecting Facilities: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Environmental-Justice/Demographics-and-Affecting-Facilities-Web-Map>

00:52:15 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: We can take questions for all speakers

00:52:18 Kathleen Fay: Thank you so much, Edith.

00:53:49 Denise Savageau: NH is example of need to account for gentrification in this process.

00:55:52 Kristin Barendregt-Ludwig: Francis, please feel free to put your question in the chat if the audio doesn't resolve.

00:56:20 Francis Pickering: I was going to say that the distressed municipality formula is somewhat problematic for a couple reasons: 1. it disadvantages communities that are economically diverse, where the effects of poverty may be the greatest (low income households with high rent) and

00:57:20 Francis Pickering: 2. it does not align with federal definitions used in major funding programs such as under IIJA and IRA. Aligning definitions will make for more competitive grant applications and leveraging of state funds to access federal.

01:01:23 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: Doing a little acronym translation: DAS - Department of Administration Services

01:01:48 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: IgCC - International green construction code

01:02:13 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: CEPA - Connecticut Environmental Policy Act

01:07:04 Ashley Benitez, Climate Planning, CTDEEP: Thank you, David!

01:11:56 Ashley Benitez, Climate Planning, CTDEEP: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Climate-Change/GC3/Working-Group-Meetings-2022>  
Find related slides to CES under Mitigation Strategies meetings.

01:15:51 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: Here is a press release from the US EPA on their engagement efforts around the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund:  
<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-seeks-public-input-inflation-reduction-acts-greenhouse-gas>

01:17:37 Ashley Benitez, Climate Planning, CTDEEP: Thank you, Becca!

01:19:35 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: Wow it makes a big difference to have the federal government at the table now.

01:22:32 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: You can learn more about the federal Justice40 initiative here: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40/>

01:24:41 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: After Rob's presentation we will continue a working group discussion. If you want to provide public comment, send a message to Ashley Benitez

01:27:07 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: Feel free to come on camera everybody

01:27:19 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: everybody

01:28:25 Ashley Benitez, Climate Planning, CTDEEP: Follow the ground rules for respectful discussion attached to the agenda and keep this list in your mind.  
Focused, no-fault problem-solving.  
Step forward, step back.  
Open, honest, safe space.  
Listen with open minds, believe in everyone's best intentions.  
Action-oriented. Decide what we want, when we want it, and plan for its happening.  
Collaboration!  
Start, proceed, and end on time, honor the agenda.

01:28:27 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: Please use raise hand

01:28:39 Ashley Benitez, Climate Planning, CTDEEP: Discussion questions for today's working group meeting:  
-What successful applications of the equity and environmental justice lens did you hear in the presentation today?  
Looking at the diverse number of programs the Mitigation Strategies have discussed:  
- How could the plans and programs summarized in this working group presentation better improve the use of the EEJ lens and consider the input of diverse stakeholders? What approaches do you recommend, especially for the Comprehensive Energy Strategy?



01:33:23 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: If anyone knows more about the CHFA rating system for getting awarded tax credits, go ahead

01:33:27 Melissa Kops | CTGBC: CHFA has robust energy efficiency requirements, but everything can always go further.

01:33:35 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: thank you Melissa

01:37:04 Melissa Kops | CTGBC: I can address housing questions

01:37:11 Lyle Scruggs: These costs are really financeable... they save the resident money. Part of that can be spent on the higher mortgage payment.

01:38:35 Maisa Tisdale: I would actually make a comment when the time comes.

01:41:02 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: @robert could you provide your affiliation, if applicable?

01:41:30 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: Thank you

01:42:54 Kathleen Fay: For the record my comment was not on behalf of the EEB.

01:43:08 Rebecca French, CT DEEP: Thank you Kathy.

01:43:53 Alanis Allen, DEEP Office of Climate Planning: Thursday, November 17, 6:00-7:00 p.m.: "Energy Assistance Programs: Current and Future," with DEEP's Ashley Marshall, and possibly others.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://ctdeep.zoom.us/j/81096587546>

01:45:11 Ashley Benitez, Climate Planning, CTDEEP: dee.climatechange@ct.gov

01:45:20 Alanis Allen, DEEP Office of Climate Planning: \*DEEP

01:45:21 Ashley Benitez, Climate Planning, CTDEEP: deep.climatechange@ct.gov

01:45:26 Edith Pestana: Thank you for your comment Maisa!

01:46:06 Huan Ngo: Thank you!

01:46:15 Joanna Wozniak-Brown: Thanks everyone!