

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

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: October 17, 2022

Meeting Time: 4:30 - 6:00 PM

Zoom Recording: [Equity and Environmental Justice Working Group Meeting Minutes](#)

ATTENDANCE: GC3 Working Group Members in bold

Name:
Margarita Alban
Alanis Allen
Kristin Barendregt-Ludwig, Co-chair
Ashley Benitez
Mary Buchanan, Liaison, Climate Smart Agriculture & Forestry
Kevin Cini
Lee Cruz (he/him/el), Co-chair
Kathy Fay
Rebecca French
Annie Harper
Maebel Haynes
Steven Hernández, Liaison, Public Health & Safety
Alycia Jenkins
Doris Johnson
Diane Lauricella
Walter Morton
Huan Ngo
Edith Pestana
Allison Pilcher, Liaison, Mitigation Strategies
Alexander Rodriguez
Denise Savageau, Liaison, Resilient Infrastructure & Nature-based Solutions
Max Teirstein
Maisa Tisdale, Co-chair

Sarah Watson
Aicha Woods (she), Liaison, Public Health & Safety
Joanna Wozniak-Brown

AGENDA & NOTES

Welcome: Ashley Benitez, DEEP Liaison

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

Welcome and Introduction of Co-chairs: Kristin Barendregt-Ludwig, Lee Cruz, Maisa Tisdale

- Co-chairs introduce themselves, their work affiliation, and their prior experience working with GC3
- Ashley Benitez facilitates the introduction of working group members
- Working group members state their name and professional affiliations

Charge to the EEJ Working Group: Rebecca French, Director, Office of Climate Planning

- Executive Order 21-3 was signed in December of 2021 and advanced additional initiatives and expanded the duration of GC3
 - Established CEEJAC to advise the Commissioner of DEEP on current and historic environmental injustices as well as health disparities and racial inequities
- For 2022, working groups are charged with engagement, implementation, and monitoring and evaluating programs
- Each working group has an Equity and Environmental Justice liaison to provide expertise in this area
- The EEJ working group will review and apply the GC3 2020 equity lens to all working group findings
- Timeline review:
 - Each group will meet with the Equity and Environmental Justice working group in November
 - In December, working groups will present their findings
- There are two subheadings for the GC3: Mitigation and Resiliency and each working group operates under those umbrellas
- Working groups should include cross-cutting themes in mind

- Utilize equity lens
- Align with municipal and regional climate mitigation and adaptation efforts
- Be informed by science
- Leverage new and expanded state and federal climate programs (significant shift in the landscape since 2020)

Review of 2020 EEJ Work Products: Lee Cruz

- Presents the definition of “equity”
- Discusses the various types of equity: distributive, procedural, contextual, and corrective
- Presents key principles that apply to GC3 process
- Presents GC3 Public Participation Checklist developed during previous GC3 processes
 - Includes guiding questions for accountability and community involvement
 - Developed chart that provides guidance for remote engagement
- Presents 2020 Recommendations and their status
 - Community engagement strategy for climate planning
 - Environmental justice and climate vulnerability mapping tool
 - Prioritize mitigation in vulnerable communities
 - Community Resilience Program
 - All recommendations are currently in progress
- Presentation of webinar series hosted in 2020

Questions and Discussion: *For full comments please see the Zoom recording and/or audio transcript*

- Max Teirstein: Will IRA funding support GC3 initiatives? Understands that a big charge of the working group is around monitoring, which could be supported through funding.
 - Rebecca French: Still determining how the bill applies to recommendations from the GC3. We know more about the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act since it has been out longer.
- Kathy Fay: Sometimes DEEP needs to solicit public input from communities and she is concerned around time frames, which can be too tight to solicit input. Is there a policy in place about how much lead time we should give communities?
- Denise Savageau: There is a role for the EEJ working group to be more proactive. The 2022 timeline is shorter but looking at 2023 gives us the opportunity to think about how we bring folks in and give people a chance to participate
 - Lee Cruz: Agrees that we should be looking at how we can reconvene people: lead-time, childcare, other initiatives allow people to participate more readily
- Diane Lauricella: Notes budgeting process for towns is beginning and we should try to ensure that municipalities are connected to federal and state funding
 - Rebecca French: Do have representatives from municipal and regional governments on the working groups, so we have people to reach out to and connect with

Discussion of November Meetings: Ashley Benitez Ou

- Reiterates charge for the 2022 working groups
- Highlights that the EEJ working group will ensure all recommendations are viewed through the equity lens described in the Jan. 2021 GC3 report
- Presents November working group meeting schedules
 - Notes that we are soliciting working group recommendations for meeting agendas
 - Group will also provide written comments following the meetings
- Ashley Benitez Oz: What recommendations do you have to administer the EEJ process?
 - Alexander Rodriguez: Appreciated the comments about various kinds of equity. Sees his role as grounding the group in those who are most vulnerable and notes that part of what he envisions is asking the working groups how their recommendations can uplift communities that need to be connected to resources.
 - Lee Cruz: Agrees with Alex's ideas and notes that the other working groups need someone to remind them of the equity charge.
 - Kristin Barendregt-Ludwig: Also notes that EEJ members can connect other working groups with the tools EEJ has already developed
 - Denise Savageau: Agrees that priority should be on training other working group members and giving them the tools they need. Should another checklist be created that includes broad impacts that touch on environmental justice, like job creation?
 - Kathy Fay: Likes Alex's suggestion to ensure inclusion of all communities and appreciates Denise's suggestion of a more comprehensive checklist.
 - Edith Pestana: Highlights how important it is for EEJ working group members to have a shared understanding what designates a "vulnerable" community.
 - Maisa Tisdale: When we give checklists, we should also give measures, which should be considered alongside the checklist suggestion.
- Rebecca French: Are working group members interested in participating at the federal process?
 - Alex Rodriguez: Yes, if there is any way to relate what is occurring federally to boosting public participation at the state and local level, including providing funding to allow participation, that would be ideal.
 - Denise Savageau: Because programs function at the local level, federal participation and comments are critical and we should be better at this. Also notes that we tend to use the EPA definition of equity, which doesn't come from a benefit standpoint, so while we should consider preventing harm, we should also consider providing benefits, as well.

Looking Ahead to 2023:

- Ashley Benitez Ou: What activities would the group like to see in 2023?

- Rebecca French: Agrees that the checklist idea is great and could be shifted to 2023

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

Alex Rodriguez: Goal is to uplift populations that are most marginalized and affected by climate harms and racial inequities. There is good momentum at the state and federal level but there was an effort to push forth dirty permitting reform, which is the opposite of environmental justice. Alex hopes that this iteration of the GC3 uplifts communities, holds polluters accountable, and considers levying fees on fossil fuel companies that hinder climate action in Connecticut.

Joanna Wozniak-Brown: There was a comment on the Inflation Reduction Act and other things rolling out on the federal register on how those projects should be rolled out. Are there components of policies that can result in achieving equitable program rollout?

Adjourn and Next Steps:

- Kristin Barendregt-Ludwig: Still looking to fill liaison positions for the S&T group. If you're interested, please reach out to Kristin.
 - Kristin: Reiterates how important it is to incorporate community input and decision making during this process
- Thanks from the co-chairs

Resources:

[GC3 Working Group Meeting Schedule](#)

[GC3 Phase 1 Report, Jan. 2021](#)

[Equity and Environmental Justice in Climate Solutions Webinar Series](#)

Chat Record:

00:35:31 Alanis Allen, DEEP Office of Climate Planning:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Climate-Change/GC3/Working-Group-Meetings-2022>

00:35:47 Alanis Allen, DEEP Office of Climate Planning: ^Recordings and slides will be posted here

00:37:19 Maisa Tisdale: Hi, I'm Maisa Tisdale. President/CEO of The Mary & Eliza Freeman Center for History and Community. I apologize, but I am unable to use my camera at this time.

00:38:17 Denise Savageau: Denise Savageau, Chair

CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation and President CT Association of Conservation Districts. Liaison to the Resilient Infrastructure and Nature Based Solutions workgroup

00:39:11 Max Teirstein: I'm Max Teirstein, a recent Yale graduate who supported the GC3 and the EEJ Working Group through a position with Edith at the DEEP EJ program in 2020 and I recently completed a large EJ mapping project with the Yale Center for Environmental Justice and New Haven City Planning Department.

00:39:12 Mary Buchanan: Mary Buchanan, Community Resilience Planner at CIRCA, and liaison to the Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry Working Group

00:44:06 Alexander Rodriguez: Ashley's just good like that ;)

00:45:02 Alexander Rodriguez: Max was a superstar secretary to the public participation sub committee. Good to have you back, Max!

00:45:18 Max Teirstein: Thanks so much Alex! Great to see you!!

00:46:13 Maisa Tisdale: The Freeman Center is located in the South End of Bridgeport, CT. We played a leadership role in Resilient Bridgeport (Rebuild by Design & NDRC). Our environmental and EJ interests are flood hazard prevention, sea level rise, preservation-based equitable development, and community advocacy & participation.

00:47:56 Alexander Rodriguez: For more info on Save the Sound. Save the Sound works to ensure that: Long Island Sound, rivers, and lakes are safe for swimming, fishing, and boating, and our waters and coastal habitats support thriving populations of fish, shellfish, whales, turtles, seals, and birds; Your family has clean air to breathe, communities are healthy and vibrant, and Connecticut leads the nation in slowing climate change and building a clean energy economy; Our last great open spaces and the lands that filter your drinking water are protected from over-development, and critical natural areas can support wildlife, recreation, and clean water; and The laws that protect natural resources, public health, and environmental justice are strong, and the region's residents are empowered to use them.

00:49:17 Alexander Rodriguez: My role within the org is that developing and implementing monthly grassroots stakeholder programs in Connecticut and New York; engaging stakeholders in policymaking; applying an environmental justice lens on public policy; collaborating with colleagues to advance legislative priorities; building relationships and educating policymakers; and providing communications support for EJ-related subject matter, particularly on organization of briefing papers, press events and educational webinars.

00:49:21 Alycia Jenkins: I'm based in Hartford, CT

00:52:53 Joanna Wozniak-Brown: Hi Everyone, just wanted to say hi - Joanna Wozniak-Brown, CT Office of Policy & Management, Climate & Infrastructure Policy Development Coordinator

00:53:52 Maisa Tisdale: Actually the historic Mary & Eliza Freeman Houses (c.1848), under restoration, are in the South End, formerly Little Liberia (c. 1821). The Eliza House will serve as the community Resilience Center. Our offices and gallery are downtown. www.freemancenterbpt.org

00:56:50 Alanis Allen, DEEP Office of Climate Planning: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/climatechange/GC3/GC3_Phase1_Report_Jan2021.pdf

00:56:56 Alanis Allen, DEEP Office of Climate Planning: ^GC3 Report

01:09:23 Alanis Allen, DEEP Office of Climate Planning: Slides will be posted here: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Climate-Change/GC3/Working-Group-Meetings-2022>

01:09:50 Max Teirstein: So the Inflation Reduction Act funding that CT will receive and is dedicated to EJ/climate justice will support the 2020 GC3 proposed initiatives?

01:15:11 Alanis Allen, DEEP Office of Climate Planning: More info on the webinars: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Climate-Change/GC3/Equity-and-Environmental-Justice-in-Climate-Solutions-Webinar-Series>

01:19:57 Ashley Benitez-Climate Planning CTDEEP: For those WG members that joined us later. Feel free to introduce yourselves in the chat!

01:21:02 Ashley Benitez-Climate Planning CTDEEP: If anyone would like to provide public comments please send me a direct message.

01:21:23 Edith Pestana: The CT EJ Screening Tool will be available for public comment in Mid November! Stay tuned!

01:21:33 Max Teirstein: YAAAAY!!!!

01:21:38 Alexander Rodriguez: I think I missed the timeline for submission of working group reports this time around. Can someone clarify please?

01:22:59 Rebecca French, CT DEEP Office of Climate Planning: Thank you for the question Alex. There are no narrative reports for 2022. Working groups will only have met 3 times by November. They are doing a powerpoint presentation only.

01:31:56 Rebecca French, CT DEEP Office of Climate Planning: happy to take clarifying questions on the process too

01:32:17 Doris Johnson: Is it possible to have more than ten minutes for public comments

01:32:18 Doris Johnson: ?

01:32:42 Doris Johnson: Thank you!

01:33:00 Allison Pilcher: When you refer to working group-specific questions, would those be questions the other working groups want to ask this group or questions this group has for the other working groups (or both)?

01:33:07 Edith Pestana: Does this group feel comfortable analyzing the work through an "equity" lense?

01:33:53 Edith Pestana: It may be helpful to provide some guidance in advance

01:34:56 Allison Pilcher: Thanks!

01:35:08 Doris Johnson: Can this working group provide continuous feedback on the lack of equity in other working groups?

01:37:17 Kathy Fay: Some working groups (mitigation in this case) have been working on a wide variety of topics. Various agencies and others will be doing implementation. How can we ensure that each of the agencies and each of the many programs have applied/will apply an equity lens?

01:40:16 Edith Pestana: YES!!

01:40:18 Rebecca French, CT DEEP Office of Climate Planning: @doris I think the liaisons from EEJ to the other working groups can help with that regular feedback. Yes, EEJ can suggest further ways to address lack of equity in other working groups

01:40:40 Alexander Rodriguez: Recommended question for the fellow working groups: How do your recommendations address and uplift the social and economic welfare of state-identified EJ communities and marginalized populations not mentioned on CT DEEP's list of EJ communities?

01:41:06 Alexander Rodriguez: I like Denise's recommendation regarding a check list.

01:41:08 Rebecca French, CT DEEP Office of Climate Planning: Thank you Alex and Kathy for suggested questions.

01:41:28 Aicha Woods (she,hers): and safe clean green affordable housing on check list

01:43:00 Edith Pestana: the Checklist could include the definition of "vulnerable communities" for example-

01:44:02 Max Teirstein: People with disabilities are so often left out when thinking about equitable impacts. Would be especially eager to know how working groups focused on buildings/transportation/infrastructure/public space are considering accessibility

01:44:43 Doris Johnson: @Rebecca - thanks

01:46:53 Kathy Fay: agreed!

01:47:00 Alexander Rodriguez: Balancing a checklist with measures is a good recommendation. Thank you for centering us, Maisa

01:47:31 Diane Lauricella: +++ checklist plus measures a great idea

01:47:38 Alanis Allen, DEEP Office of Climate Planning: Send any emails/ written comments to DEEP. ClimateChange@ct.gov

01:49:32 Kristin Barendregt-Ludwig: This is a good opportunity to hear about the priorities in this group or the opportunities you see for 2023.

01:49:56 Denise Savageau: Good to hear this is continuing in 2023!

01:57:23 Ashley Benitez-Climate Planning CTDEEP: Feel free to post suggestions for 2023 in the chat as well.

If you need more time we look forward to your suggestions to DEEP.ClimateChange@ct.gov

02:00:44 Maisa Tisdale: I agree with you Alex.

02:01:12 Diane Lauricella: I think we should have a brief section meeting about what is happening with the Federal work and dollars...we want to make sure that the munis and the state agencies are applied to priority projects...

02:01:43 Alexander Rodriguez: We want to share that money with members of the public and community-focused orgs that will invest back into the communities

02:02:21 Joanna Wozniak-Brown: The Inflation Reduction Act has funds for Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grants, which may need public comment on the program as well as momentum for identifying projects that could qualify: ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES.—An eligible entity may use a grant awarded under this subsection for—

“(A) community-led air and other pollution monitoring, prevention, and remediation, and investments in low- and zero-emission and resilient technologies and related infrastructure and workforce development that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants;

“(B) mitigating climate and health risks from urban heat islands, extreme heat, wood heater emissions, and wildfire events;

“(C) climate resiliency and adaptation;

“(D) reducing indoor toxics and indoor air pollution;

or

“(E) facilitating engagement of disadvantaged communities in State and Federal advisory groups, workshops, rulemakings, and other public processes.

02:02:40 Alexander Rodriguez: Micro grants on clean transpo advocacy was a good thing we had going last year. Many groups we awarded funding to are still involved in enviro convos. This type of work should continue

02:04:15 Rebecca French, CT DEEP Office of Climate Planning: Thank you so much for the rich discussion tonight

02:04:32 Diane Lauricella: Thank you for the discussion. Will contact via email.

02:04:56 Ashley Benitez-Climate Planning CTDEEP: Looking forward to it!

02:05:14 Maisa Tisdale: My thanks to everyone as well.

02:05:33 Ashley Benitez-Climate Planning CTDEEP: Thank you, Maisa!

02:06:04 Alexander Rodriguez: Looking forward to the next meeting. Thank you, Rebecca, Ashley, our working group chairs, and CT DEEP team :)

02:07:16 Annie Harper: apologies for being so silent. I was listening amid some chaos here at home. But I look forward to participating more in the future

02:07:24 Diane Lauricella: +++++

02:07:47 Kathy Fay: that was beautifully said!