



## **Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC) Air & Transportation Subcommittee Meeting**

### **Meeting Recording Link:**

<https://ctdeep.zoom.us/rec/share/-4h0Ykaltu7XoVxWw7J8nddZxBzM6kf4sXtUVQxPACE10ionSISOMpzghZw45RY2.BiZcvx5Olz3e81g8>

**Wednesday, July 30, 2025  
5:30-7:00 pm**

### **Description**

Join the Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council's Air & Transportation Subcommittee to learn about program updates to [CHEAPR: CT Hydrogen and Electric Automobile Purchase Rebate](#). This program provides purchase incentives to CT residents to are purchasing or leasing an eligible new or used EV or plug-in hybrid electric car. There are special rebates for income-qualified residents. This subcommittee has worked with DEEP's CHEAPR team in the past to increase outreach into EJ Communities. The CHEAPR staff are back to share more updates about the program and are looking to hear from you about how best to get this program information into your community.

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **1. Meeting Opening with Alex Rodriguez**

[Join the CEEJAC Air & Transportation Subcommittee! - Google Forms](#) If you are interested in joining the CEEJAC Air & Transportation Subcommittee, please fill out this survey or share with someone who you think might be interested!

#### **2. CT DEEP Presentation about CHEAPR – Tracy Babbidge and Paul Farrell**

In CT, most people favor the Battery EV over the Plug-in EV. Overall, we have a pretty positive ecosystem in CT for electric vehicles. In 2022, we had less than 500 rebates; and 2024 was unsustainable for how much we were issuing and what we had budgeted. 2025 is moving through the budget at an unsustainable rate leading us to rethink the incentive rates. For income qualified groups – we have the ability to stack rebates; we are seeing a steady uptick of people taking advantage of that Rebate+ program.

In 2024, we determined that our maximum budget was \$7.7 million/year because budget is based on DMV registrations (Greenhouse Gas Fee) and we're allocated a portion of RGGI Auction funds (CO2 trading program). CGB gets a majority of the funding from RGGI.

Federal changes and the impending sunset of the federal tax credit on Sept 30 might mean that over the past 30 days, we're seeing a 33% increase in daily demand. That is about \$1.56 million spending for 30 days. This leaves us with about \$4.8 million for the remainder of 2025. Additional RGGI funding is not expected until March 2026.

There are a number of scenarios that could play out with the federal budget bill and potential tariffs that may impact electric vehicle sales. Starting August 1, there will be changes to the incentive rates.

- MSRP Cap \$50,000
- Standard Incentive \$500
- Rebate+ New \$3000 + Standard (\$500)
- Rebate+ Used (stays the same)

Decision-making, we don't want to pause the program because we want to keep catalyzing EV sales in the state. Industries are thinking this will be a record-breaking quarter for sales. Rebate+ redemptions are increasing. EBikes Round 3 timing may change, but the current plan proposes to utilize a separate funding source for this round.

We have been moving this program to income-eligible communities. There is eligibility based on EJ residency, but not all applicants in an EJ area are at an income-bracket where they might need the incentive. We had a legislative proposal to have more statutory authority to set a specific incentive tied to residency, but it didn't pass (HB 1496).

Creation of Community+ Tier to allow EJ residents to be prioritized over standard incentive recipients. We want to make sure that the highest rebates are going to income eligible residents. This would create a new tier with an incentive at 200% of the Standard Rebate.

Incentive changes begin tomorrow, August 1 – a lot of work is needed to make sure that we're informing dealers and consumers.

#### **Additional Program Updates:**

- Eligible vehicle list is still being updated to add more model year EVs
- [2024 Annual Report for CHEAPR EV & eBike](#)
- Shifting to calendar year to align with the reporting period for Legislative Report
- Sharing Key Takeaways to share about data that's being collected, for example
  - Surveying respondents' top reasons for getting an EV. It started as an environmental concern and now one of the top reasons is cost-saving on fuel costs.

- Higher income households were buying Plug-in Hybrids at a higher rate while lower-income households are buying Battery EVs

### **EBikes**

Year 2 Update – this entire round was all income-eligible residents. About 66% of the vouchers has been redeemed; this round we provided 240 days since issuance, so the latest date to redeem is Jan 10, 2026.

### Round 3 Considerations:

- Budget is about \$760,000 – for Round 3, New Haven has EPA funding that they would like to include in this round to be administered through CHEAPR's program only available to New Haven residents (about 50 vouchers)
- Incentive Levels: Standard (\$500) and Voucher+ (\$1,250)
- Will continue with the lottery system

### **Community-based Air Quality Monitoring**

- DEEP working with Stamford, CT on American Resource Plan grants; DPH is also working in Ansonia and Derby, CT
- PurpleAir Sensors are available for loan!
- Team does a lot of outreach and Education to communities to schools and communities
- Air Sensor Performance Studies

### **Discussion**

#### **What will the next phase of CHEAPR need to be?**

#### **Options for the next phase of CHEAPR?**

- **Re-establish the Standard Incentive**
- **Prioritize income eligibility over EJ Residency**
- **Re-examine program framework**
- **Program Pause and Relaunch**
- **Other?**

**Comment:** Recommend doing follow-up with consumers a year or two later after buying an EV? Are they struggling with property taxes? Are they able to keep the car? Might be helpful to understand why they have or don't have it. Are there any unintended consequences for someone to be able to continue to have the car.

**Comment:** low-income consumers tend to purchase combustion vehicles; reaching out to car dealerships for partnership to circulate this information. Or reach out to car dealerships in EJ Communities who have sold a number of EVs to look at low-income eligibility vs resident status.

**Comment:** I think the logic for having non-low-income people in EJ communities receive the rebate is that these communities will especially benefit from more EVs, and fewer

internal-combustion vehicles, regardless of whether income-qualified people are driving them. The problem is the definition of EJ communities doesn't conform to non-attainment areas.

**Comment:** Consider eScooters to the CHEAPR program

**Comment:** Relook at geographic coverage of retailers for bikes in EJ Communities.

### **Questions**

#### **What is the income-eligible percentage who did not get a voucher from the lottery system?**

This will be a high percentage because there were over 6000 applicants into the lottery system.

#### **Where does funding come from?**

CHEAPR program; we're looking for other options through out Supplemental Environmental Project funding.

#### **Is the non-income EJ qualification going into effect on Friday? There are very few people who are taking advantage of the program in non-EJ communities.**

We don't have the data which is one of the concerns. There are 3 separate ways that someone can qualify Rebate+; the easiest way is to just say that I live in an EJ Community based on my residency. We don't have insight into whether they are coming in only on residency vs. Income-eligible.

#### **Is this really a problem though? Nervous about making another barrier for low-income people to qualify for the program. Still need to do more outreach about how low-income people can use EVs.**

Thought is to create another tier for residency; it's lower incentive than income qualified. We just want to make sure that the program is really reaching the income-qualified.

**Recommend that you just ask people that question.**

#### **What is the distribution of rebates in EJ Communities?**

Rebate+ eligibility is income qualified or take advantage of income qualified programs like food assistance or heating incentives, or if you live in an EJ Community or Distressed Municipality. There's a map on our statistics page of geographic distribution of incentives.

- [CHEAPR - Program Statistics](#) click on rebates by zip

#### **What have you been hearing from dealerships?**

We don't see any impacts to our funding from DMV fees, but we don't see any potential impacts to the RGGI funding other than any market changes.

#### **How is air quality monitoring data used in the state?**

We use the data from the 14 monitoring sites for a variety of reasons. To determine compliance with federal health-based standards; to see how effective our regulatory

program are; for air quality forecasting, which we do every day; to support broader scientific studies on regional air quality, and for air permitting. More information on our monitoring efforts can be found here:[Air Monitoring in Connecticut](#)

### **3. CT Green Bank – Fleet Electrification Accelerator, Jayson Velazquez**

**Contact:** Kevin Moss, [kevin.moss@ctgreenbank.com](mailto:kevin.moss@ctgreenbank.com)

#### **State Clean Transportation Policy (PA 22-25)**

- 2030 Target – Environmental Justice Communities will be 100% electric school buses
- 2040 Target – Statewide 100% electric school buses
- 10-year contracting authority
- Various state grant (DEEP) and low-interest (Green Bank) financing opportunities for deployment

#### **PURA Docket No. 21-09-17**

- Draft decision to allow for significant savings on charging costs for electric school buses
- It could make charging more economical for school districts over the long term. This was a barrier for some areas.
- Final Decision scheduled for August 13, 2025

#### **Fleet Electrification Accelerator Program**

- Free service in a cohort model for Distressed Municipalities (1<sup>st</sup> cohort will occur during this school year)
- Program aimed at creating a planning process for the school districts and opportunities for financing and incentives
- After a plan is put together, school districts can take part in Deployment Support: stakeholder analysis, installation support, construction, workforce development
- Engaging with Board of Education members, school districts, and will be out during Back to School Nights to provide outreach about the program and opportunity