



**Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC)
Energy and Technology Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
November 1, 2023 10:00 – 12:00 PM ET**

[Link to the recording](#)

This is a public meeting and will be recorded and posted on the [Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council](#) website.

Disclaimer: Please note this is not a word for word translation

CEEJAC Members Present (full registrant list below)

- Leticia Colon de Mejias, Green ECO Warrior, *Co-Chair*
- Sharon Lewis, Connecticut Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice, *Co-Chair*
- Adrienne Farrar Houel, Greater Bridgeport Community Enterprises, *Subcommittee Member*
- Jayson Velazquez, Acadia Center, *Subcommittee Member*
- Theresa Hopkins-Staten, Eversource, *Subcommittee Member*
- Alex Rodriguez, Save the Sound
- Karen Kitsis, CT DOT

1. Welcome

Sharon Lewis welcomed this first meeting of the Energy Subcommittee and introduced the co-chairs - *Leticia Colon de Mejias*. Sharon did roll call and read through the community agreements for the group and did an overview of the agenda.

2. Subcommittee Introductions

Subcommittee members introduced themselves and shared why they are interested in being a part of the Energy and Transportation Subcommittee.

3. Summary of Subcommittee Goals

- Identify and address barriers to energy justice
- Identify the problems and provide a recommendation to make sure communities can access programs and funding

Leticia shared that the systems and plans at DEEP and Green Bank don't always operate together. There is a shortage in Conservation Load Management Fund and there is nothing in the plans to do something about it. 50% of the funds are not available so programs are being shut down. They are asking to do a 10 year look back instead of a 3 year look back.

- Who is at the table at these meetings?
- Who has a vote or a say?

These questions matter in determining the plans and funding that are available and impact people. We should create a repository of the barriers to energy justice.

Sharon introduced "What additional programs or topics should we cover?"

Leticia shared that there is no community solar, there is a disconnect between Conservation Load Management Plan, CES [Comprehensive Energy Strategy], Green Bank Plan, Inclusive Prosperity Plan. Funding sources including REPS and others. Want to talk about Inflation Reduction Act and UConn CIRCA. She wants to discuss how this body [CEEJAC] makes decisions and how does our information get to these plans? Want to ensure equal access to funds and ensuring there are funds, that was can stabilize funds to support workforce development.

Adrienne wants a good understanding of what is available and asked if we can have a compendium of what PURA, EEB, DEEP is offering so we can have an idea of gaps.

Jayson shared that energy efficiency funding is important and how we can meet this year's plan with the budget reduction right now. We need a timeline of the overlapping plans and the deployment of what will happen in 5 years or so. Does our work have an impact on PURA?

Theresa shared that we have our goals, but at the end of the day, what happens to this information? Are we creating a report? What is the charge of the committee and what will DEEP do with what is proposed? We should have subject matter experts who are executing these plans to hear firsthand what folks have seen as barriers and what this committee can do to remove these barriers. We should have a conversation to frame some of these solutions and additional actions to address these barriers.

Leticia shared that we need to create metrics – what types of things should we measure? What is the intention of this body? How will this group advise the plans?

4. Defining Energy Justice

Leticia read the following: Energy Justice begins by acknowledging the unjust environmental and human health impacts of the energy systems we depend on to heat our

homes, cool our homes, run our hospitals, light and heat our schools, churches, keep our food safe, and to run our first world societies and our economies. We all use energy every day, and having access to reliable, resilient, affordable, and safe energy is an American necessity.

Power begins at the source, and is transmitted to where it is needed, used, or wasted. The Impacts of this system are known to create pollution that harms both people and the environment. This fossil fuel energy infrastructure affords the energy we need, but the costs have created burdens for humans who live near the zip codes where energy is harvested, processed, shipped, transmitted, generated by burning fossil fuels, including trash, to create electricity.

Energy Justice requires putting lower energy impacts including energy costs, energy pollution, and energy access and resilience to environmental and climate impacts. This includes protecting and expanding state programs that lowers energy demands in residential settings where people live and shelter in place.

Our plans must intentionally LOWER ENERGY WASTE, and LOWER ENERGY DEMANDS, until a clean energy solution is implemented the first line of defense is NOT WASTE ENERGY. This lowers peak demand and avoids unnecessarily creating local energy related pollution.

Energy Justice requires equal access to energy saving technology and upgrades and clean energy resources. In Environmental Justice communities and beyond.- Energy justice requires planning, funding, and action, to sustainably transition power plants, which are currently and have been the number one cause of energy pollution, from utilizing 95% fossil fuel electric generation to 100% renewable or safer less impactful sources of energy, and to connect environmental justice communities to clean energy resources, affordable reliable energy, and jobs as well as new emerging energy saving and clean energy technology.

Educate and Engage- Energy Justice requires access to information which prepares communities from cradle to career for opportunities to connect with energy basics like where does it come from and how can we use less, to higher learning such as workforce development, and careers that lift their livelihoods and provide sustainable employment and healthy living conditions.

Basic needs to come first in our energy plans, equal access to life saving energy such as : heat, lights, hot water, water sanitation, medical devices, refrigeration, cooking and housing that sustains during climate emergencies or natural disasters such as floods and storms. These must come before personal EV infrastructure.

Sharon shared that we're not going to vote on this today, but we will reconvene and gather opinions for how to define this for the state of CT.

5. **DEEP-Administered Energy Efficiency Programs by *Becca Trietch***, Senior Policy Advisor in the Bureau of Energy Technology Policy (BETP)

- Within DEEP there is an energy branch, which includes work on energy and transportation, telecommunications and broadband (BETP).
- Within BETP we have different offices:
 - Affordable Housing Energy Retrofits
 - Building and Transportation Decarbonization – delivers Conservation Load Management Program delivered by Energize CT
 - There is an office of Energy Supply and Infrastructure– energy resource needs
 - Office of Telecommunications and Broadband – new office because of all the federal funding to support internet connectivity.

Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)

- Funded by federal funds – Federal Department of Energy \$3.5 million/year – serve 200-250 single family homes each year
- Reduce household energy costs through weatherization: insulation, air sealing, testing of heating systems, health and safety measures (limited funds for this)
- Eligibility – 60% state median income or less (Low-Income)
 - Use CEAP [CT Energy Assistance Program] application that is a federal funded program delivered through Department of Social Services in CT
 - Helps residents pay for their energy bills during the winter.
 - WAP uses the same application as the CEAP program
- Through BIL [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law] able to expand program to include multi-family buildings (5+ units)
 - CT has BIL WAP funding = \$46 million to be spend out by 2026 (end of June 2027)
 - DEEP has also been awarded \$3.5 million to help with single family program this year
- Delivery Structure
 - Federal funding flows to DEEP
 - DEEP competitively selects nonprofits to deliver to customers.
 - Service providers do the initial audit in the home
 - This showcases what measures should be installed in the home
 - Aiming to launch programs by the end of the year
 - Struggling to get contracts in place with service providers
 - Will start signing 3 year contracts to avoid start/stop in the past due to legal review within the state
 - Have contracted through Community Action Agencies to deliver programs
 - Single Family Region 1: CRT – CT Renewal Team
 - Single Family Region 2: Center for EcoTechnology (CET)
 - Multifamily full state: international Center for Appropriate & Sustainable Technology (ICAST)

- Providers are split within the state that focuses on rural and urban areas of CT
- Question: *Leticia* asked that WAP was moving to the multi-family lane, but REPS was written for 1-4 unit housing because single family housing doesn't have a lot of funding whereas multi-family homes do have access to funding.
 - Answer: REPS will only focus on 1-4 units. For weatherization in multi-family, we want to get more buildings to get weatherization done. There are other funding opportunities for multi-family buildings, but they are mostly financing opportunities or HUD overseen. For multifamily funding application to DOE, if we don't see the demands for multifamily, then we will shift our funds to single family homes.
 - *Leticia* shared that REPS and WAPS is important for EJ community single-family homes because they don't have access to a lot of other funding.
- Connect with local Community Action Agency – need to fill out CEAP application first to get access to WAP
- Conservation Load Management Programs are much larger and have funds for low income homes, in active conversation to coordinate WAP with HES-IE [Home Energy Solutions – Income Eligible].
 - Will look at cost-sharing process with Eversource and United Illuminating, we're hoping to get utility ideas to go to Contractor Technical Advisory Committee and Contractor Feedback group, and will also bring to Energy Efficiency Board Committee meetings to get public feedback.

REPS (Residential Energy Preparation Services)

- Focused on removing health and safety measure from households
 - Ex. Asbestos, mold, knob and tube wiring
- A household needs to enter through Utilities (HES-IE) or WAP and be income qualified through these programs.
 - There will be an initial audit and they will identify mold, asbestos that prevents updating energy efficiency in the home.
 - Selected ICAST as the Service Provider (3 year contract)
- Mold, pests, radon, knob and tube wiring, limited amount of roof repairs, water control measures, CO alarms, sump pump improvements.
 - Some homes we won't be able to solve all the problems, but majority of homes that have been referred, have been remediated and fits the maximum dollar amount per household.

Leticia shared that this body should be used to tell the actual story. Brought this as a concern to EEB in 2013 and told publicly that I was a liar and that there is not a 30% income barrier to low-income households. Met with Annie Harper at Yale and created a group of contractors to

identify the barriers for low income housing. What questions you ask, Who you ask, and who reflects the data affects how these things move forward. Concept of EJ is to allow us to speak for ourselves. What value will CEEJAC add, unless it applies the EJ and equity lenses of programs, plans, funding?

Theresa asked a process question: Many of these eligible barriers are impacting the health and wellbeing of individuals in that home. When these different barriers are identified, is there an escalation of work that happens because of these items being identified?

Becca responded by showing the process:

- Household enters a weatherization program (WAP or HSE-IE) and do an audit to identify what needs to be done
- ICAST team writes up whole scope of work and they remediate the mold. Identify the sources of mold has been difficult to fully remove.
- Once measures have been remediated, there is a household inspection of REPS program, sends to utilities, and sends to weatherization contractor to schedule the weatherization assessment.
- There are a lot of steps to this process, and we hoped to get this treated quickly, but it has taken a long time (6 months). Primary concern is to improve the speed of this process.

Sharon asked how many homes do you do on an average a year? What is the oversight program for the contractors to do the right thing? We hear that once contractor sees asbestos, they stop the process and walk away.

Leticia shared that there used to be a walk away fee where you could get paid for walking away, but we removed it to stop contractors from walking away. Now they do post, pre and during inspection to make sure that contractors stay. This is for Residential Conservation Load Management.

Becca shared that DEEP does in/post progress inspections to prevent the walk away and referrals to the program.

Leticia shared that 6 months is too long, IE contractors have only 45 days to finish a contract through HSE-IE or they might get removed from the contract.

Becca shared data as of 10/10/2023: 45 units have been done, 11 are completely done, 34 are mold related and are to be reinspected.

- Will have updated numbers for Energy Efficiency Board residential committee meeting on Nov 8.
- Will have a total of \$9 million for the program

- Trying to figure out whether there are particular measures that are more expensive per unit.

6. Questions & Answers

Theresa – Are contractor meetings available? Yes, we will get information out.

Jayson – Is there a central place to engage in meetings and how to engage in these processes?

Leticia offered that this group should have a discussion about procedural exclusion – when/where the meetings are and how to meaningfully engage

Jayson – Would people at DEEP identify who could put together these resources? Who are the people who are building the webpage?

Edith Pestana shared that Leticia is bringing up something that we are building upon, we do that with the office of Communications, we are looking for recommendations about how to present it. Subcommittee should meet again and identify what it is that you want access to make that more accessible.

Jayson – PURA is establishing a program to provide compensation for diverse stakeholder engagement, what is DEEP's capacity s for establishing a program for EJ communities to be compensated for their work?

Leticia – DEEP should create explanatory videos of all the areas of DEEP to understand where/when and how to engage. GC3 developed a community engagement planning guidance. Develop a draft of what are the major areas of Energy and what are the bodies, who to contact, and when are the meetings.

7. Public Comment Period

- Diane Lauricella – long term EJ and former waste management and energy regulator. DOE is having Justice Week and DEEP should look at how people can get access to deadlines related to Energy and Energy Justice.
 - <https://www.energy.gov/promoting-energy-justice>

8. Closing

- There is a responsibility for DEEP and EO to make sure that this group has the ability to advise on programs and policies and funds.
- Defining areas of DEEP works in so that community members can have access
- Edith – is this a good time to hold these meetings?
 - DEEP staff could send out something to schedule these meetings; there is not a good time
- Write a grid in excel to write the problems, potential solutions, date it was reported, and track the progress.

Resources Shared in the Chat:

- <https://efficiencyforall.org/wordpress/2021/03/01/addressing-health-and-affordability-challenges-for-low-income-families/>
- https://efficiencyforall.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Indoor-Health-Barriers-v6_2-26-2021_rs.pdf
- <https://efficiencyforall.org/wordpress/2020/11/22/addressing-health-safety-barriers-in-ct/>
- *Leticia* provided additional questions in the chat that aimed to take an EJ Lens. These questions are framed here:
 - Does WAP use lens to hire contractors of color or protected groups Minorities? Does WAP track who gets service in what area? Does WAP offer workforce openings or training for EJ communities' to access jobs? Does WAP connect to lean energy?
 - How do folks qualify for HES-IE vs. WAP? Are there different ways to apply?
 - How do RFP's go out to EJ communities' with EJ contractors?
 - Are there metrics for workers and ethnic lens?
 - Will you still allow onboarding of minority contractors in the 3 years?
- *Jayson* asked how are these programs being considered with the development of the Home Environmental Improvement Revolving Loan Fund pilot program development that was set up at the end of the last legislative session?

Full List of Registrants

Tenaya Taylor
Aaron Goode
Denise Best
Terry Adams
Mary Hogue
Daphne Dixon
Halle Lisette Pierce
Eliza Heins
Michael Turaj
Gannon Long
Deborah Roe
Michael Davis
Jayson Valazquez
Hank Webster

Annie Ropeik
Paul Aresta
Lidia Ruppert
James Fowler
Sarah Huang
Adrieene Houel
Diane Lauricella
Lee Cruz
David Boomer
Sergio Carrillo
Ian McDonald
Theresa Hopkins-stat
Ashley Benitez
Sarah Walters

Alex Rodriguez
Karen Kitsis
Lawrence young
Becca Trietch
Reggy s
Cecelia Drayton
Doris Johnson
Leticia Colon
Sharon Lewis
Ryan Boggio
Mike Smith
D'Shyla Hodge