

## CEEJAC Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 18, 2026 | 1:00 - 3:00 PM

Meeting Recording:

[https://ctdeep.zoom.us/rec/share/oTtUzNz5L3f9h\\_Yl04tre0scQNLnvTHyMdayHZNp5NNwdKIEW0nywBG2bsYrJ7EW.ixYi-vKA9OPGuzln](https://ctdeep.zoom.us/rec/share/oTtUzNz5L3f9h_Yl04tre0scQNLnvTHyMdayHZNp5NNwdKIEW0nywBG2bsYrJ7EW.ixYi-vKA9OPGuzln)

**CEEJAC Members and Subcommittee Members Present:** Maritza Bond, Mary Pelletier, Kendall Keelen, Theresa Hopkins-Staten, Maisa Tisdale, Terry Adam, Kafi Rouse, Rahiem Eleazer, Alex Rodriguez, Robbie Goodrich, Paul O Robertson, Mark Mitchell, Cierra Patrick

Sarah Huang, Director of Office of Equity and Environmental Justice at CT DEEP, opened the meeting in place of co-chairs, Commissioner Dykes and Dr. Mark Mitchell. Sarah provided an overview of the purpose of the Council including the responsibilities of the Council as detailed in Executive Order 21-3. Sarah went through the agenda for the meeting and ground rules and passed off to Alex Rodriguez, CEEJAC Member from Save the Sound.

Alex facilitated **Community Dialogues** and asked for any environmental justice concerns or issues that guests wanted to raise to the Council.

- Stephen Dodge, Clean Fuels Alliance America  
Stephen shared his disappointment with DEEP in not adopting biomass diesel, which includes certified used cooking oils or other waste oils that fall under federal guidelines and regulations. New York City has adopted a mix of electric and biomass diesel for their buses. The results were saved costs and reduced emissions. This is one method of providing an intermediary step to full electrification that can clean the air more than current diesel vehicles, especially for heavy-duty vehicles that are more expensive to switch to electric.
  - Alex invited Stephen to join the Air & Transportation Subcommittee meetings.

Sarah provided an update about DEEP's work with the Council including,

- Published [CEEJAC Annual Report 2024 – 2025](#)
- Published [Summary of Newhall Street Neighborhood State Superfund Site](#)
- DEEP has selected a vendor for the inaugural Community Resource Hubs and has begun contract negotiation and the hiring process for a program manager
- DEEP is continuing work on drafting regulations per Public Act 23-202, which focuses on cumulative impacts in the environmental justice permitting process (as detailed in CGS 22a-20a). DEEP started public workshops in 2024 to engage key stakeholders in providing feedback on the regulatory concepts. Throughout 2025, DEEP brought on a consultant, Industrial Economics, Inc who are supporting the agency in creating a Cumulative Impacts Tool, which will be a companion to the regulations. The contractor came on board in 2025 and conducted initial research and proposals on methodology for calculating cumulative risk. Now, in 2026, the

agency will begin hosting public workshops with CEEJAC Waste Subcommittee to workshop regulatory concepts and develop draft language.

- The EJ Office is working with CEEJAC Councilmembers to draft bylaws for the Council. A draft of the bylaws will be shared in a few months.

Sarah introduced new agency designees to the Council: Kafi Rouse, Head of Strategy for Culture, Engagement, and Inclusive Communications at Department of Transportation and Julian Pierce, Deputy Commissioner at Department of Housing.

### **Council Retreat Debriefs and Subcommittee Workplans**

- Air & Transportation (Alex Rodriguez and Robbie Goodrich)

One of the things that the subcommittee wants to do is cross the streams of relationships we have across agencies and bureaus. They want to provide recommendations that reflect the needs of the communities by holding quarterly meetings in communities. In Bridgeport, we had an in-person community meeting with the school teacher union and Dept of Transportation. It was a great opportunity and we brought together key stakeholders in a discussion to move towards more solution building in vehicle electrification and clean air.

- Energy & Technology (Jayson Velazquez and Kendall Keelen)

Hoping to focus on collaborations with other subcommittees where clean energy touches on those areas. Looking to increase education and awareness surrounding different types of industries that are local to CT. And helping to raise awareness of different workforce training programs. Large area of focus is to connect more with communities themselves – want to look at workshops that we can host to talk about technologies that are available. Also hoping to get a better understanding of the work of other state agencies who manage programs related to clean energy.

- Water (Cierra Patrick and Ashley Stewart)

Look at policy, planning and DEEP initiatives. [PA 25-125 section 12](#) asks the Commissioner of DEEP to evaluate how to integrate and advance nature-based solutions (NBS) in the state to support climate change mitigation, adaptation, and ecosystem resilience. The water subcommittee will work with DEEP on best practices, particularly in regards to environmental justice communities. The subcommittee will learn more about the state's water plan. The subcommittee will focus attention on climate resilience including policies promoting green infrastructure and nature-based solutions. The subcommittee will continue their discussion about resilience improvement districts and the opportunities and risks. Lastly, the subcommittee is working with DEEP on the Coastal Access Guide – improvement and accessibility.

- Mary Pelletier, Park River Watershed highlighted the challenge of needing to bring all relevant stakeholders together in order to implement watershed management plans. Many groups have developed the management plan, and have updated their management plans, but it is challenging to move towards applying for funding on

implementation when we can't get all relevant actors to the table at the same time. Additionally, there needs to be an increased focus on green infrastructure and how existing watershed plans compliment or contradict existing state or private actions.

Cierra noted that the subcommittee should continue this conversation because she has heard from other watershed groups about the same issue of having a plan and lacking coordination with stakeholders.

- Land (Yaw Darko and Jhoni Ada)

Land subcommittee will focus on:

1. Revisiting the statutory changes that this subcommittee provided input on related to DEEP's OSWA and UGCG funding program;
2. Exploring Affordable Housing including DEEP's work and intersection with urban conservation, Community Land Trusts
3. Continuing our Community Resource Hours to share information on upcoming programs and for participants to ask DEEP program staff questions about potential projects/initiatives.

### **Open Discussion with Participants**

Mary Pelletier shared that when we talk about affordable housing, we often get interest in developing former wetlands or other problematic sites for long-term ecological resilience and community safety. She shared that in Hartford and West Hartford there were areas that were filled as parking lots and are now being called for redevelopment. There is a strong desire that the Land folks talk with the Water folks (in CEEJAC and outside) to ensure that there is a strong intersection of water quality, impacts on water, and land use for affordable housing.

Aaron Goode, New Haven Green Fund, gave a thanks to subcommittee chairs for great work. He mentioned that CT Recreational Trails program managed by DEEP. He has served on CT Greenways Council and knows that it's an important program that funds \$10 million/year. He recommended that the Council investigate the extent to which those funds are being spent in an equitable way and is aligned with the work of the Council and DEEP's goals. He also recommended that the Council work with the Greenways Council to look at whether that program is operating how it should be.

There were no remaining questions, so we went around the room and did introductions.

- Sabrina Davis – Southern CT Region Council of Government (SCROG) and New Haven resident
- DEEP Staff: Danielle Russell, Eliza Heins, Emily Pysh, Chris Field, Greg Harris, Annie Decker, Edith Pestana, Doris Johnson, Claire Sickinger

- CEEJAC Members: Maritza Bond, Mary Pelletier, Kendall Keelen, Theresa Hopkins-Staten, Maisa Tisdale, Terry Adam, Kafi Rouse, Rahiem Eleazer
- Stephen Dodge, Clean Fuels Alliance America
- Becky Kessler, CT Coalition on Economic and Environmental Justice (CCEEJ) and Zero waste Coalition. She is interested in the Council's work on waste reduction and has recently shifted focus on data center siting. She wants to learn more about what is happening with data centers in CT and how is CEEJAC involved.
- Devin Sector, environmental manager for Casella solid waste facilities
- Madison Spremulli, CT Coalition on Economic and Environmental Justice (CCEEJ) Communications and Zero waste Coalition
- Karen Abrams – Legacy project; climate, racial and gender justice, just transition program with black communities; build more partnerships
- Mary Buchanan, UConn CIRCA
- Gabriel Slaughter, legal fellow with Save the Sound. His work focuses on MS4 permits, Tweed Airport expansion, and incinerator developments.
- Lynne Bonnet, New Haven Green Fund. She has been working with Gabriel on Port Area of New Haven. She noted that Tweed Airport is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in New Haven and she is interested in ozone levels in the area of the Tank Terminals and Tweed Airport, since they are not being measured by existing Purple Air monitors.
- Michelle Blanchard – Assoc general counsel at casella
- Lance Caldwell – DECD, previously working on EJ tools, new to state, New Haven resident
- Aaron Goode – English Station in New Haven, currently working with City of NHV for CEBA
- Erin McBride, Senator Chris Murphy