



Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC)
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2023; 6:00 - 8:00 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)

- Dr. Mark Mitchell, MD, MPH, Emeritus Professor
- Terry Adams, Stamford
- Yaw Darko, CT Land Conservation Council
- Adrienne Farrar Houël, Greater Bridgeport Community Enterprises
- Sharon Lewis, Executive Director, CT Coalition for Environmental Justice (CCEJ)
- Cierra Patrick, Economic Development Manager, City of Groton
- Theresa Hopkins-Staten, President Eversource Energy Foundation, VP Corporate Citizenship and Equity
- Lori Mathieu, Environmental Health and Drinking Water Branch Chief, in for Commissioner Manisha Juthani, Department of Public Health
- Xochitl Garcia, New Haven
- Karen Kitsis, Deputy Commissioner at Department of Transportation
- Alex Rodriguez, Environmental Justice Specialist, Save the Sound
- Maisa Tisdale, The Mary and Eliza Freeman Center for History and Community, Bridgeport

1. Welcome from Commissioner Katie Dykes

The *Commissioner* opened the meeting with a moment of silence for Yolanda Stinson, who passed away a few weeks ago. She was a member of CEEJAC, appointed in 2022 and was a long time environmental justice organizer from Bridgeport, CT.

The *Commissioner* provided a year in review of the CEEJAC Journey. All subcommittees are up and running. Energy and Land held their first meetings, and air had a tour at the Windsor lab. We've held special sessions – on EJ screening tool, and EPA rollout of EJ grants. CEEJAC had many subcommittee meetings, and helped pass the cumulative impacts for EJ Law. Now we need to work on getting regulations approved. Working on issues related to Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA), Combined Sewage Overflow's particularly in North End in Hartford. Excited about work happening in Subcommittees and applying equity lens to DEEP's programs.

Dr. Mitchell conducted roll call. When Sharon Lewis was called, she gave appreciation for recognizing Yolanda Stinson, as she was an organizer for Connecticut Council on Economic and Environmental Justice.

Edith Pestana read through the Ground Rules for the meeting.

2. Subcommittee Updates

Waste Subcommittee - Adrienne Farrar Houel shared that we are looking at what technology can be employed to have better waste management. We're interested in what are the newest and best opportunities for solutions and provide recommendations regarding waste solutions. We've started looking at the MIRA Dissolution Authority (MDA) in Hartford and looking at what properties they have across the state and the impact that they will have across the state. We'll continue working with Joe DeNicola, from CT DEEP.

Sharon Lewis shared that there was a lot of back and forth that there was no EJ representation on the board. DEEP has assigned Joe DeNicola to attend the MDA board meetings and then relay what happens at the meeting to CEEJAC. We don't think that this is equity. We need to rethink that style of communication – we need to have EJ people on the board of MDA. CCEEJ was asked by folks in North Haven to stop them for a proposal to build an ECO Park. The concern is that to sidestep the EJ law, they are going to put the incinerator in North Haven. State of CT is doing a lot to prepare them for building the incinerator by remediating the acres of land where the proposed site of ECO Park will be. Someone should pay attention to what is going to happen.

Water Subcommittee – Graham Stevens from CT DEEP presented that the subcommittee is engaging community in water planning functions. One of the things happening now is integrated water management, which is a 10 year planning effort to direct state's activities towards certain water bodies and certain approaches and prioritization. We want to balance urban and suburban and rural water courses. We've done a good job focusing on water bodies that are more pristine in nature and not subjected to development-based water solutions.

We will host a session for CEEJAC to learn more about the planning process around the 10 year plan for the [Integrated Water Resource Management](#). We are seeking stakeholder groups to help with a watershed planning process for restoration or remediation. Water protection and restoration is a collaborative effort with municipalities and other stakeholders. CEEJAC Water Subcommittee Meeting in January will provide an inside scoop to engage with DEEP on the 10 year plan and a primer on this planning management process. The DEEP sponsored public meeting is January 16th. January 10th is Water Subcommittee Meeting, register here:

https://ctdeep.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUvdOGtpzgjGtW8cytzKp_e6ydaT-jZuVVZ

Air & Transportation – Alex Rodriguez shared that the subcommittee had the first in-person meeting in Windsor. Learned about purple air monitors – which is open to any CT resident to install in their home, school, or business to track real time data. One pressing issue right now is the proposed clean cars and trucks regulations – the governor withdrew the proposal in November. Dr. Mitchell will cover this more at our next Air & Transportation Subcommittee meeting in January. We will talk about history of air transportation work and how this applies to this legislative effort. We have advocated for clean vehicle regulation standards in the past. This Subcommittee Meeting has been scheduled for January 17, 2024, 5:30-7:30 PM, Register for the meeting here: Register in advance for this meeting:

https://ctdeep.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcsce-prT0jGdUbX3_nAUbyWbd4Q-J8gT5A

Land – *Yaw Darko* shared that the subcommittee is working on an urban forestry grant program and Urban Green and Community Garden grant program. We’ve recruited new members and are recruiting more. The main goals for the subcommittee include: identify a public participation process that includes community stakeholders in the development of grant funding programs, identify strategies for conserving and revitalizing/remediating land in urban environments, identify opportunities to reduce barriers to accessing open space beyond urban parks.

Energy & Technology – *Sharon* shared that the group is working on defining energy justice, talked about weatherization assistance programs and residential energy preparation services. We have recruited new subcommittee members. The goals of the subcommittee are to: identify and address barriers to energy justice, identify the problems and provide a recommendation to make sure communities can access programs and funding. *Jayson Velazquez* added that we workshopping energy justice and how we were going to approach implementing it across any plans and state climate plans. The subcommittee will continue to meet to workshop those definitions.

3. EJ Law Update, Presentation from Annie Decker, CT DEEP

Edith Pestana from CT DEEP, shared that this year is the 30th year since the program came to inception. We have one of the oldest equity policies in the country. We were one of the first states to statutorily define Environmental Justice. Dr. Mitchell and many other commissions were involved in this process.

Annie Decker continued the presentation by sharing that the statute defines EJ communities in 2 ways. A community becomes an EJ community by being a census block group where 30% or more of the population consists of low-income persons who are not institutionalized and have an income below 200% of the federal poverty level. So we measure EJ through poverty and “distressed municipality” which is defined by DECD.

Cumulative Impacts law has expanded definitions of “affecting facilities” that are covered under the EJ law. This law is focused on permitting and these are the facilities that trigger the law. In June 2023, governor signed into law (SB1147 – An Act concerning the Environmental Justice Program of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection). This bill has 2 components: updates the public participation requirements that are effective as of Oct 2023; second is cumulative impact provisions which won’t be finalized until regulations are adopted.

It adds additional requirements for notices for residents – like posting electronically or what newspapers must state. Community Environmental Benefit Agreement (CEBA) now requires that an EJ resident participate in the negotiation process. And now the law adds a nexus and proportionality requirement, so any negotiation must have a relationship to the project itself. There are 3 major components to the cumulative impact portion of the bill – we will be developing a list of how to measure public health impacts across communities. Regulations will help us identify and measure these kinds of stressors. The law tells us to create tools to take that information and assess the impact of a potential permit. We will be building upon the EJ Screening Tool.

We're at the beginning of this process – we're planning listening sessions for early to mid next year. We're hiring more staff for our office and building an RFP to get our tools developed. The LRRC – Legislative Regulatory Review Committee will be at least 2 years down the line.

- Question (Maisa) – How does this law interact with citing council procedures?
 - (Annie) – It applies to DEEP's and citing council's decisions
 - (Dr. Mitchell) – citing council approves certain facilities, like electrical transmission and landfills. They overrule the local zoning.
 - (Maisa) – how will the two interact, will the citing council question about EJ or will they wait for that question to be raised in pre-filed testimony?
 - (Annie) – the law requires that the applicants submit and go through the assessment of public health stressors before seeking approval from the citing council.
 - (Maisa) - are there standards that people seeking permits have to meet? Will they have to show their EJ process or submit an EIS? If it's not there will the citing council tell them that it's not there?
 - (Edith) – Citing council takes into account what DEEP's perspective is on a permit. DEEP assesses the EJ process. If DEEP finds that cumulative risk is disparate, then we can deny the permit which means that the citing council can't move forward. So historically, citing council has relied on the agency. But now you are required to have a CEBA.

4. Clean Cars & Trucks Regulations – Presentation by Dr. Mitchell

They are known as ACCII/ACT (Advanced Clean Cars II/Advance Clean Trucks Rule). This was supposed to go through the legislative regulatory review committee (LRRC) if it requires regulations to be written, it has to go to the committee and be approved. Regulations in CT take a longer time than many other states.

The ACCII/ACT – CT passed laws that CT should follow CA laws instead of federal laws. LRRC is evenly divided between republicans and democrats. There was a lot of opposition and that it was unlikely to pass the LRRC. So the governor pulled the regs and legislature has said that they are interested in addressing it.

This is a major EJ issue – key to reducing asthma is reducing air pollution which is mostly from traffic. Even though low income people in urban areas are less likely to own automobiles, they are more likely to suffer from air pollution. One of the main reasons this didn't go forward is because we don't have EJ groups that can focus on transportation. Black and Puerto Rican Caucus is really important to this process – so we need to figure out messaging for the community and our legislators.

(Alex) – This law isn't requiring that everyone get an electric vehicle. It is important that we decarbonize the transportation sector – we will help kids who are suffering from asthma by electrifying heavy duty vehicles.

(Dr. Mitchell) – if we can get all urban fleets to convert to electric, like trucks and buses, then this will have a big effect to encourage those who drive into the cities.

5. Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, Presentation by Rebecca French, CT DEEP

There are 3 deliverables under this program. CT received a \$3 million grant to undertake the creation of a priority climate action plan, comprehensive climate action plan, and a status report over 4 years. Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) is due March 1, 2024 – focused on priority greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction measures. Anything that the state wants additional funding for has to be in the PCAP.

The Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) is due in 2025 that will be focused on all sectors that will focus on long term GHG reduction goals and strategies. We have done a lot of climate planning in CT already. We're drawing upon work from GC3, multiple sector level plans like integrated resource plan and decarbonize electric sector. This is a building process.

Implementation grants are due April 1, 2024 – the PCAP is due March 4, 2024. State is developing both PCAP and CCAP. Four objectives of these grants:

- Implement ambitious measures that will achieve significant cumulative greenhouse gas reductions by 2030 and beyond
- Achieve substantial community benefits (such as reduction of criteria and hazardous air pollutants), particularly in low-income and disadvantaged communities (LIDAC)
- Complement other funding sources to maximize these GHG reductions and community benefits
- Pursue innovative policies and programs that are replicable and can be “scaled up” across multiple jurisdictions

A high priority of EPA is substantial community benefits. CT needs to identify measures that achieve both of these things well. We will be doing a preliminary analysis of benefits for low income and disadvantaged communities (LIDAC). Implementation grant awards 25 points for community benefits – for any GHG measure, we will discuss benefits and disbenefits. We will be continuing to assess, quantify and report all these benefits. Invitation to participate in public meeting on Dec 18, 2023 6-8pm with live Spanish translation. There will be a presentation for state's climate pollution reduction plan and approach. Ahead of that meeting, we'll be sending out a Request for Information to get feedback on the state's implementation ready measures to inform that community benefit analysis. Thanks to LIDAC Advisory Group, including members here (Alex Rodriguez and Dr. Mitchell).

- Question (Dr. Mitchell) – Is this related to President's Justice 40 Initiative?
 - (Rebecca) yes
- Question (Theresa Hopkins-Staten) – what is going to be done? I know there will be a meeting in Spanish, but what will be done to get the word out so that residents in the communities, EJ communities, are aware and can weigh in and ask questions? We're hearing it from you, but for those who don't have access to Zoom, what other methods of communicating are you employing to ensure that the word is getting out?
 - (Rebecca) – We're hoping that CEEJAC can help us repost and share that meeting. The measures that we're including came from GC3, which had a lot of stakeholders included in that process. The survey is a way that we can have a very open period to have folks weigh in. In terms of looking ahead, the EPA has given us the time, but not a lot to do local and community engagement.

- Question (Adrienne) – Who is on the LIDAC advisory committee?
 - (Rebecca) – Brenda Watson, Aziz Dekhan, Dr. Mitchell, Alex Rodriguez, Kristin Barendregt-Ludwig. It’s a small group to help get the PCAP together.
- Question (Dr. Mitchell) – are you planning a draft for the proposal, when will that be available for comment?
 - (Rebecca) – the list will come out with the request for information. There won’t be anything more except the list of actions that we’re considering for implementation funding. We’ll be quantifying the GHG measures by Dec 18. We’ll be walking through those measures on the 18th.
 - (Dr. Mitchell) – there needs to be grants to local grassroots groups to bring this to people who aren’t following this. Hoping that this might be possible?
 - (Rebecca) – I think that’s the intention for the CCAP. Commissioner Dykes announced at CIRCA Resilience Summit that DEEP is going to continue to fund the Climate Resilience Grants to enable CBO’s to participate in community planning.

6. Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, Presentation by Kyle Shiel, Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG)

LIDAC focus is something that we’re concerned on and we want to make sure that we’re not missing anything. Project Manager for Hartford MSA. State has their own plan, and there are 3 other regional plans (CRCOG + RiverCOG), (WestCOG + MetroCOG), and (SCROG + NVCOG). This program has a timeline – PCAP leads to implementation funding. Need to start implementation application in January. PCAP requires LIDAC benefit analysis. We’re using EJ Screen and CEJST through EPA to identify disadvantaged communities. There are 8 LIDAC communities in Hartford Metro area.

Timeline – regions didn’t get money until August. So we spent the fall getting consultants on board. What makes the most sense for CT to be competitive. Hartford plan – set aside money to engage with equity coach through Sustainable CT who is meeting with stakeholders to get into community and hope to help fold that work into the PCAP.

In our scope, we have one more in-person engagement planned in early January – looking for recommendations on format, time, location.

Lindsay Naughton, MetroCOG

Project manager for CPRG, partnered with WestCOG, Michael Towle. Timeline has been similar to CRCOG. Consultant started on Dec 4. First engagement, was the statewide one in November. First MSA engagement is scheduled for Dec 18th – municipally focused and that same week will launch our survey and in January hoping to have 1-2 virtual/hybrid public engagement opportunities to refine our project list, quantify measures, and conduct LIDAC benefit analysis. In addition to drafting the plan with our consultant, we are in the process of putting together an advisory committee. We would like to hear from you and who we should be hearing from. Hartford MSA Climate Technical Advisory Committee – who else should we be reaching out to?

We also have Nicholas Dostal on here from MetroCOG – highlighting EPA Community Change Grants program that gives \$2 billion in total funding. This grant must involve work with a CBO. This has a

rolling application deadline until November 2024. This is a more broad and inclusive deadline process.

- Question (Dr. Mitchell) – What does CRCOG’s consultant do?
 - (Kyle) Kamora Herrington kamorasulturalcorner@gmail.com

- Question (Maisa Tisdale) – Want to thank you about asking who else you should be reaching out to? It’s not limited to MetroCOG community partners – public meetings are open to general public not just the community groups listed as community partners to MetroCOG.
 - (Lindsay) – we will have 1 additional public meeting, we may lean on our community organization partners to do outreach and get feedback on where to host the meeting. They will also be translated and accessible.
 - (Maisa) – when will MetroCOG be recruiting official community partners?
 - (Lindsay) – we are in the process of figuring that out. If you would like to email me, happy to work with consultant to make sure that interested organizations are signed up.

- Question (Edith) – whenever possible, you actually present your project at a regularly scheduled neighborhood meeting. It’s much easier that way, everyone will be at attention. It’s more meaningful that way.
 - (Lindsay) – will be looking at NRZ’s but if there are additional meetings, please let us know.

7. EPA’s Community Change Grant Program, Presentation by Dr. Mark Mitchell

This program is divided into 2 grants, talk about things that affect climate change and resilience and mitigation (ex. Resilience centers). There are consultants that can help develop the ideas and that you have the infrastructure in place and help filling out the forms. There are smaller \$1-3 million grants for engagement in government bodies like CEEJAC, like engaging around regulations for ACCII/ACT. This can be divided into a number of organizations. Both of these require that there is a partnership between 2 CBO’s or a CBO and a tribe, govt, higher education institution. Rolling application until November 2024.

8. Public Comment Period

- Susan Halpern, Live in South End of Stamford. This was a heavily industrial area and we still have a sewage treatment plant, asphalt plant, junkyard in this area and now we have 15,000 people living here in new apartment buildings. Want better air monitoring equipment here. They have purple air monitors here, we have 2 in the south end. With all this industrial activity, there are trucks, there are apartments west and a third of a mile from an asphalt plant. There needs better air monitoring for VOCs and gaseous pollutants, not just PM. How can we go about getting better air monitoring in this neighborhood?
 - Doris – Jake Felton will reach out
- Ian McDonald, Killingly, CT – Windham/Willimantic NAACP EJ Committee. Appreciate the earnest effort on ACC/ACT and MDA. More air monitoring, it’s best practice for areas like North Haven and Brookfield (compression air station near a middle school), we should be using purple air monitors to get the best data available. Project Maple pipeline

expansion. Not sure how the new EJ law would deal with pipeline expansion projects like this? There might be a compression station expansion as well.

- Annie – will follow up with you. One of the versions of the EJ bill would have addressed pipeline expansion.
- Lorena Venegas, East Haven, CT. We were #17 on the EJ list and now we're #25. But now we're doing worst. We have a high ranking official from Dept of Health highlighting incidents of asthma hospitalizations and the impacts of airport expansion. For an EJ town like us, we're not asked to be a part of a CEBA. Improving EJ laws is going to help, but as long as the time clock coincides with our town. We don't have the community organization base and we have a force that is compelling more freight to our neighborhood.
- Ashley Stewart, longtime resident of CT. To Lorena's comment – possible option for GHG measures is to help EJ communities to build infrastructure to help them. To use some of that funding to help support them and CEBA's and help them support what they need moving forward.

Full List of Registrants

Lawrence Young	Ethan Van Ness	Will Healey
Adrian Huq	Patricia Houser	Brenda Geer
David Michel	Desen Ozkan	Mark Mitchell
Nicolas Dostal	Almariet Roberts	Robbie Goodrich
Sharon Lewis	DJ Plis	
Susan Halpern	Joe Barrera	
Graham Stevens	Inventorn Eddie Oquendo	
Jacob Felton	Evelyn Mantilla	
Michael Davis	Serena Palmer	
Blizzard Sharod	Ian McDonald	
Keyana White	Sarah Huang	
Pete Babich	Kathy Czepiel	
Theresa Hopkins-Staten	Sharmin Akter	
Lindsay Naughton	Doris Johnson	
Andrew Hoskins	Lori Mathieu	
Eliza Heins	Kate Donnelly	
Paul Farrell	Edith Pestana	
Rebecca French	Karen Kitsis	
Hank Webster	Jacquelyn Torres	
Elijah El-Hajj-Bey	Veronica Grossman	
Aundre Bumgardner	Danica Doroski	
Joseph Dickerson	Reginald Fortcolin	
Maisa Tisdale	Diane Lauricella	
James Fowler	Florencia Bugatti	
Kathy Fay	Kay Lehoux	
Robert Hotaling	Eric Hammerling	
Carolyn Behre	Gustavo Requena Santos	
Ashley Stewart	Mary Hogue	
Daphne Dixon	Amanda Limacher	
Ryan Boggio	Molly Johnson	
Lawrence Young	Alexander Rodriquez	
Yaw Darlo	Joanna Sebik	
Laura Cahn	Kyle Shiel	
Joe Lanza	Halle Lisette Pierce	
JP Vellotti	Annie Decker	
Lorena Venegas	Sarah Walters	
Jillian Kara	Adrienne Houel	
James Odonnell	Aaron Goode	
Jacqueline Cabrera	Xochitl Garcia	
Joel Anastasio	Terry Adams	
Yahshua WS	Lindsay Suhr	
Xinsheng Lou	Lynne Bonnett	
Jay Strange	Jayson Velazquez	
Katie Dykes	Cierra Patrick	
Drew Pallotto	Ashley Benitezou	
Julian McGrath	Brenda Watson	