



Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC)

Monday, June 10, 2024, 6:00-8:00 PM

[Link to Meeting Recording](#)

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

CEEJAC Members

Name	Position
Commissioner Katie Dykes	Commissioner & CEEJAC Co-Chair
Dr. Mark Mitchell	CEEJAC Co-Chair, MD, MPH, Emeritus Professor
Yaw Darko	Senior Project Specialist, CT Land Conservation Council
Adrienne Farrar Houël	President, Greater Bridgeport Community Enterprises, Inc., Bridgeport
Alex Rodriguez	Environmental Justice Specialist, Save the Sound
Terry Adams	Member, Board of Representatives, Stamford
Sharon Lewis	Executive Director, CT Coalition for Economic and Environmental Justice (CCEEJ)
Xochitl Garcia	Bilingual Environmental Justice Advisor, New Haven
Cierra Patrick	Economic Development Manager, City of Groton
Brandon McGee	Deputy Commissioner, Department of Housing
Theresa Hopkins-Staton	President, Eversource Energy Foundation, VP Corporate Citizenship and Equity
Paul O. Robertson	Deputy Commissioner, CT Department Economic and Community Development
Karen Kitsis	Deputy Commissioner, CT Department of Transportation
Hannah Beath	Director, Office of Climate and Health, CT Department of Public Health Attending for Commissioner Manisha Juthani
Maisa Tisdale	President, The Mary and Eliza Freeman Center for History and Community, Bridgeport
Sheila Barney	Environmental Justice Community Representative – Stamford.
Rahiem Eleazer	Environmental Justice Community Representative – Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation
Sharod Blizzard	Environmental Organization Representative – Clean Water Action CT

Tenaya Taylor	Environmental Organization Representative – Nonprofit Accountability Group
Anthony Afriyie	Stratford Town Councilor

1. Welcome from Commissioner Katie Dykes

Highlights from last few months:

- Air and Transportation meeting on e-bikes and electric vehicles. Had a great discussion around how to support e-bike utilization amongst EJ communities.
- Legislative session concluding. There was a bill related to the siting council that charged DEEP and other agencies to look at how processes of siting council are impacting EJ communities. Will engage CEEJAC in conversation on this effort.
 - Excited about Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA) expanding which is funded by bond funds that helps secure access to open space.
 - Glad to see legislation that would further the budget implementor and remove a cap on the level of increased rebates that DEEP can provide through the CHEAPR rebate program for low-income and EJ community residents. Looking forward to working with the CHEAPR board and CEEJAC on this.
 - There was another piece of legislation related to Resilient Bridgeport which is vital to help address flooding resilience in Bridgeport. This program had FEMA funding available, and they needed to clarify if DEEP owned a parcel to move forward.
 - Will be able to utilize RGGI Funds for a proposal to support Equity Hubs across Connecticut to help bring DEEP to multiple communities. Want CEEJAC’s feedback on the Equity Hubs effort.
- Alex Rodriguez requested a policy brief about legislative initiatives that affect CEEJAC’s work.

Announcement of New CEEJAC Members: This year they launched a new Jobs App DEEP page to improve access and transparency. A way to centralize applications to boards and councils across the state.

The Commissioner then shifted to welcoming new members which represent multiple locations including Stamford, Waterbury, and Mashantucket Pequot:

- Sheila Barney
- Raheim Eleazer
- Sharod Blizzard
- Tenaya Taylor
- Anthony Afriaye
- Desen Ozkan
- Kendall Keelen
- Omar Green

- Rodrigo Pinto
- Tayarisha Batchelor

Thanked continuing CEEJAC members as well as those who are not renewing their membership.

2. Subcommittee Updates

- Water
 - Integrated Water Management Planning Presentation scheduled for January 2024.
 - Water Subcommittee Member Meet & Greet scheduled for March 2024
 - Urban Water Initiative (UWI) Presentation scheduled for April 2024
 - Exploring ways to strengthen capacity of watershed groups leading up to a UWI 2.0
 - Conduct research on proposed process. Follow up with CEEJAC & Water subcommittee members to identify benefits, impact, and support needed – June to September.
 - Regulation & Awareness – A Water Conservation Presentation date TBD (maybe September).
- Waste
 - Wants to welcome Dr. Tayarisha Batchelor
 - There was a Plastic 101 Presentation done by Dr. Mitchell.
 - Provided review and initial comments to DEEP’s Materials Management Infrastructure Grants Program.
 - Continuing to follow along with any updates on AB ECO Park project developments.
 - Research and exploration of anaerobic digestion + EJ
 - Prepping for plastics 102 Presentation
- Air and Transportation
 - On April 30, the subcommittee held a panel discussion titled Electric Vehicles and Ebikes: Eliminating Barriers to Ownership. The discussion was in-person. They delved into the benefits and challenges of EV and E-bikes ownership in rural and urban communities. Transport Hartford Academy’s Jay Strange offered e-bike demonstrations to folks who had never ridden an e-bike before. Alex encouraged attendees to view the recordings online.
 - To increase application for the CHEAPR and CHREAPR Voucher programs, DEEP should partner with the subcommittee and community-based organizations for stimulating events that highlight these programs as reliable clean transportation solutions.
 - DEEP should create a social media kit for promoting the success stories of EV and ebike owners to attract more interest in state and federal rebate programs.

- DEEP should facilitate meetings between the Air & Transportation subcommittee members to support development of state implementation plans for addressing air quality programs.
- Land
 - Working with DEEP's Land Acquisition and Management's Team on Open space and watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA) Program. Lindsay provided an overview of statutory changes and application and evaluation changes.
 - Provided guidance on scoring criteria for OSWA applicants:
 - Creation of a resource guide
 - Adding multi-modal forms of outreach
 - Accounting for future greenway connectivity – especially important urban areas
 - Focus benefits on surrounding areas of greenspace
- Energy & Tech
 - Have gotten funding from the EPA to broaden solar and storage through project SunBridge and home energy rebates.
 - Received an overview of Project SunBridge (Solar for All) and IRA Home Energy Rebate Program. Project SunBridge Program design recommendations from the subcommittee: Consumer projections, Collaboration with COGs, universities, and utilities for education and engagement
 - IRA home energy rebate program
 - CT should allocate more than the minimum to households with low income.
 - Low incentives for landlords to participate.
 - Focus on areas with high concentrations to energy burden and electricity outages.

3. Equity Hubs

- Introduction by Commissioner:
 - We have heard from a lot of communities across the state about the need for education, awareness, and technical assistance in EJ communities to better access programs and funding opportunities that DEEP administers.
 - Equity Hubs are a place where DEEP staff and the public come together through facilitations of a community partner. A physical space and facilitation services to help DEEP support better outreach, education, and input into program design and funding.
 - Equity Hub reflects DEEP listening to CEEJAC and members of EJ communities.
 - First bringing this concept to CEEJAC will then share to the public as a draft RFP to solicit feedback from communities and organizations that might respond to the RFP and may consider serving as an equity hub.
 - Some of the goals they are hoping to achieve are extending DEEP's ability to conduct outreach and engage EJ communities. Support better access to DEEP funding including application support services,

- grant development, etc. Have a limited amount of funding to establish hubs in various communities.
 - Resilience Hubs are a slightly different type of concept. It is possible that an Equity Hub can function as a resilience hub. Resilience hubs are physical space that provides for emergency services (e.g. climate impacts). They are contemplating a different source of funding to support the development of resilience hubs. Will probably bring this concept to CEEJAC later in the summer.
- Joseph Dickerson, CT DEEP Senior Outdoor Equity Advisor
 - Has worked in community development for many years. The Equity Hubs effort relies on the community development model which is community driven. They want to work with organizations that are deeply connected to their communities that are able to make connections that a big agency like DEEP isn't able to make those same connections in those same ways on the 1:1 basis that community organizations can. They are getting into the first draft of this proposal and are hoping CEEJAC and community members can help tweak it to ensure it is a reflection of what is needed in communities and reflects best what skills community organizations can bring to the table. Reflecting on themes they have heard they want to better hear from community members to ensure they are responsive. Want to have as deep involvement in communities as possible. They want to reflect that their goal which is to reflect the things we have heard from CEEJAC and other community members in developing this process.
 - Commissioner chimed in by sharing how they had a lot of members that participated much earlier in an important conversation at the Swift Factory where they talked about these issues.
 - Want to ensure DEEP is closing the equity gap and that they are able to get funding and resources to communities where it will matter the most. They are hoping the Equity Hubs can be an opportunity for collecting information, getting to know people, and bringing people to the table.
 - The range of services they could provide includes the following:
 - Community access to DEEP funding
 - Resource connection
 - Outreach, engagement, & listening
 - Community needs & impact liaisons
 - Community education & participation
 - Have funding for one or two equity hubs for the state. Their goal is to have several more across the state so it can be closely targeted to communities. They recognize how 1-2 hubs are not going to meet the needs. Recommendations for location hubs include EJ Block Groups, Distressed Municipalities Rural focus, etc.

- One of the key recommendations they are looking at from CEEJAC is helping them understand some of the cost benefit analysis around solo community-based organizations (CBOs) versus partnerships. Investigating what partnerships can look like and are supportive of these but do not want it to be a requirement.
- How do they evaluate hubs and whether they are achieving their goals?
 - Counting number of people served
 - Counting events, attendance at events
 - Surveying community members.
 - Adding up grant money facilitated through the Hubs.
 - What would success look like?
 - Joseph has worked in nonprofits where they have had to track a lot of data when working with government funding as such, they want to be conscious of not overburdening organizations.
 - Next steps
 - Incorporating CEEJAC feedback
 - RFP/RFQ Draft for Public Comment
 - Webinar
 - Public Information Meetings
- Feedback from CEEJAC?
 - Eboné Lockett: Living in Charlotte, North Carolina but doing work in Connecticut. Thinking about Equity and where the nexus for workforce development is. Intentionality to bring folks into entrepreneurship.
 - Joseph shares how that is something they have been mindful of by including workforce development. He has been leading a workforce development project and resonates with them on the importance of bringing these opportunities.
 - Eboné: Hartford is solarized but is getting complaints about poor installation so what is the codification to ensure that as we move to this transition, they make it equitable and protect the assets they are making.
 - Joseph responded that DEEP has hotlines that people can call but having someone in your neighborhood that you can walk in and tell them this isn't working is valuable.
 - Alex Rodriguez: Has this funding already been procured by DEEP?

- Joseph said they set aside a funding mechanism. Some of it will reflect what the need is and the depth of needs of the RFP.
- Commissioner added how one of the challenges the equity hub will help overcome is to be able to sub-grant funding to hubs to then sub-grant funding to smaller service providers and smaller entities. Want to design the RFP and identify what they want to accomplish with the hubs and if they see strong response to the RFP, it will tell them how much more budget they need.
- Alex: You have mentioned in the past how DEEP is limited on what things they allocate funding for. Are you audited for the sub-awardee use of funds or are they able to spend it on the services they want?
 - The Commissioner responded yes to the first option, but this is another thing they want feedback on. They want to support meaningful outreach but there are contracting limitations they need to be mindful of. Can invest DEEP staff perhaps by having staff rotate equity hubs to be able to support these.

4. Project SunBridge (Solar for All), Lauren Savidge and Claire Sickinger, CT DEEP

- Overview of Solar for All
 - DEEP was awarded \$62.45 million dollars through EPA’s Solar for All program for the Project SunBridge and intends to focus on multifamily affordable housing. Still waiting on terms and conditions from EPA and more guidance on modifications to their workplan, budget, and allowable activities. DEEP has five years to spend the money, with the first-year award serving as a planning period. DEEP worked with Green Bank, CT Housing Finance Authority, Public Utilities Regulatory Authorities, and Department of Housing on their application and continue to meet with this working group as the “Project SunBridge Collaborative.”
 - Application components which might change based on EPA’s feedback include:
 - Financial assistance
 - Additional incentives through the Energy Storage Solutions Program
 - Interest rate buydowns for Smart E-loan
 - Multifamily affordable housing revolving loan fund
 - Multifamily affordable housing leases
 - Additional funding for capital solutions
 - Technical Assistance
 - Workforce development trainings and programs

- Technical support for communities deploying distributed solar and storage.
 - Support for customer outreach, engagement, and community-based organizations.
 - Building assessments and audits.
- Timeline (tentative)
 - June: EPA sends out general terms and conditions to awardees.
 - July-Aug: EPA Project Officer will offer specific feedback/guidance.
 - End of July: Funds are obligated and DEEP receives their notice of award.
 - 1 September: Program start date.
 - End of October: Full approval of budget and workplan.
- Engagement Strategy
 - Engages Project SunBridge Public Advisors, Stakeholders and community members. Have multiple targeted meetings with different targeted audiences and might cover different topics. The two different target audiences are stakeholders and community members.
 - Stakeholders
 - Be more technical in nature.
 - Might be invited to give presentations during meetings.
 - Meetings will be more focused on funding implementation an implication for existing programs.
 - Take place during business hours.
 - Meetings are hybrid.
 - Community members
 - DEEP will strive to hold meetings throughout the state.
 - DEEP will try to provide snacks for attendees.
 - High level informational presentations but otherwise structured like a listening session.
 - Meeting outside business hours.
 - Potential meeting topics
 - Financial assistance options
 - Technical assistance options and tools for municipalities
 - Workforce development needs
 - Participation challenges specific to building owners.
 - Participation challenges specific to tenants
 - Will probably do preliminary Request for Information to get input from stakeholders on financial and technical assistance and set expectations for future stakeholder engagement. The RFI may include data requests to better understand barriers and gaps in existing programs.
 - Engagement timeline

- Summer 2025: Initial scoring phase – Consult with stakeholders on program implementation and community engagement strategy. Release RFI.
 - Fall 2025: Stakeholder outreach on updated information from EPA and revisions to program budget and workplan.
 - Future: Scoping and RFP(s)_ for technical assistance subawards, including community outreach and engagement, and workforce development.
- Digital communication
 - Using Campaign monitor.
 - Will keep their webpage up to date with meeting materials, opportunities for public participation and resources for those interested in accessing the Solar for All funding.
 - To build relationships with stakeholders they will send materials, updates, feedback surveys, availability of funds, and messages thanking people for their participation.
 - Will work with the Communications Office to post on social media directing people to opportunities for public participation as they launch the first RFI and throughout the implementation period.
- Next Steps
 - Wait for more guidance from EPA.
 - Release RFI.
 - Start scheduling Project SunBridge Public Advisors meetings.
- Questions for CEEJAC
 - What meeting structure(s) should DEEP consider for meaningful engaging with stakeholders at this preliminary stage?
 - What is missing from DEEP’s engagement strategy?
 - Who is missing from DEEP’s engagement strategy?
 - What consumer protection measures might be necessary to ensure customers aren’t taken advantage of?
 - Attendees can reach out to their emails or request to be added to the email list: Claire.Sickinger@ct.gov and lauren.savidge@ct.gov
 - Claire thinks they will be doing engagement starting with the RFI in the meantime while they wait for EPA’s guidance.

Q&A

Alex Rodriguez: Claire, I know the co-directors of a cultural brand design studio that can assist you in developing culturally driven promotions that will help you connect and educate Latine residents about this program. <https://www.forladiaspora.studio/>

Maggie Faveretti: Thank you Mark! youth-centered engagement and co-design... community stakeholders could be helping to design the program. Will Claire’s team want

CEEJAC to sponsor other forums for people to be educated on? What exactly does she want?

Claire said this would be amazing. Having an ongoing relationship with CEEJAC throughout the implementation process is going to be helpful. Anticipates working more with the energy subcommittee and the full CEEJAC as they move forward with the stakeholder engagement.

Dr. Mitchell: Are you looking for feedback on how to organize the program or are you getting feedback from the committee on the process? Claire said it's both and referred to the engagement timeline slide.

5. Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Home Energy Rebate Program, Ben McMillian, CT DEEP

- Key inflation Reduction Act acronyms
 - 50121 – Home Efficiency Rebates (HER) also originally referred to as HOMES
 - 50122: Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates Program (HEAR) – originally referred to as HEEHRA
 - Administrative and Legal Requirements (ALDR)
- Important dates
 - Application deadlines are January 31, 2025, they expect to have application well within that.
 - January 2030 – If the state fails to use all low-income funds after the given years can request to use them for other income levels.
 - September 30, 2031 – States must expend all funds by this date.
 - DEEP anticipates submitting their application well ahead of Jan 31, 2025, deadline.
- General rules about the program: Each program is effectively 50 million dollars.
 - Must spend minimum on low-income households and low-income MF with the option to increase the percentages up to 100%.
 - Federal grants cannot be used on the same measure (i.e. HP cannot be installed with funding from both HEAR and WAP).
- High level summary
 - Offers points of sale consumer rebates for qualified electrification projects (purchase and installation costs).
 - Also includes rebates for improvements to electrical panels or wiring and home insulation or air sealant.
 - For household that are low income can cover up to 100% of the cost.
 - All eligible recipients must fall below 150% of AMI but have the option to further limit it to households below 80% AMI.

- Can be stacked with federal tax credits and all state/utility/local incentives.
- Single households cannot receive a rebate for more than one appliance of a single type.
- HER Summary
 - DOE awarding grants to state to provide rebates that discount the price of energy saving retrofits in single family and multifamily buildings. Legislation passed was fuel-neutral, so focused on energy consumption, reporting in kWh and kWh-equivalencies.
 - Designed for residential air sealing, weatherization, and building envelope measures. Performance-based. Retrofit projects may also include appliances and electrification.
 - All income levels potentially eligible, rebates double for low-income households. Have the option to limit program to low-income households (less than 80% AMI).
 - An assessment is required for every home receiving a HER rebate.
- Her Modeled Savings Rebates
 - Modeled Home Efficiency Rebates is a program path requiring calibrated home energy models consistent with the BPI-2400 standard to estimate energy savings prior to the upgrades, providing rebates for homes predicted to achieve a minimum of 20% energy savings.
 - Connecticut's existing C&LM programs currently provide rebates for efficiency upgrades based on a modeled savings approach governed by Connecticut's Program Savings Document (PSD).
- HEAR Product Rebates
 - For the purposes of calculating rebate amounts for HEAR, total project costs are costs that are invoiced to the eligible entity or the eligible entity representative for the purchase and installation of a qualified electrification project.
 - A given address cannot receive over \$14,000 in HEAR rebates over the course of the program. Rebates must be provided at point of sale and/or as part of an invoice.
- HEAR Installer Incentives
 - An incentive must be provided to encourage governmental, philanthropic, commercial, and nonprofit (e.g., community groups) organizations to assist households with low income and moderate income with accessing HEAR.
 - States may elect to reserve these incentives for projects carried out in homes and dwelling units with households with

less than 80% AMI and/or for installations of equipment not commonly installed to encourage contractors to serve households with low income and learn how to install newer technologies.

- DEEP guiding principles
 - 1. Increase equitable access to electrification alternatives, energy savings, and comprehensive building energy retrofits to groups who historically have had more limited access (e.g. households with low income, renters, existing barriers, etc.).
 - 2. Leverage existing programs, with modification, if necessary, where possible.
 - 3. Value efficiency of delivery, i.e., minimize administrative costs and maximize delivery of measures to residents.
 - 4. Target funding to market segments where long-term market transformation is likely to be catalyzed by an infusion of federal funding.
 - 5. Leverage other funding sources, including private capital, to maximize uptake.
 - 6. Optimize potential for technology uptake when federal subsidies run out (education, awareness, stories, data, etc.).
 - 7. Incorporate capacity building and workforce development where possible.
- Initial stakeholder input
 - Support for focus on low-income households. Some advocate for a focus on senior citizens.
 - Support for focus on low income multifamily. Concerns were brought up over cost-shifting from landlords to tenants.
 - No consensus on focusing on specific technology. Some advocates for the utilization of newer technologies. Some advocate for technologies that improve indoor air quality.
 - Suggestion to focus HER Measured pathway pilot on market rate households.
 - Draft program design – HEAR and HER: Planning to focus the program entirely on low-income households (lower than 80% AMI). Then split 50% to LI SF and 50% to LI MF. This is based on public feedback they have received thus far and will therefore be using additional public feedback and RFI responses to further refine the program design.
- Request feedback from CEEJAC especially on the following:
 - Should Connecticut allocate 100% of the funding to low-income customers?
 - Should Connecticut dedicate more than 10% of funding to multifamily housing?

- Are there specific measures or technologies that Connecticut should be focusing the funding on?
- Other comments or feedback?

Public comment:

Dr. Mitchell likes how they have multiple opportunities for people to learn more and provide input. There is a question about what percentage should go to multifamily.

- Vicki Hackett replied that they are looking at this amount of funding which is small holistically with all the other funding they have. If going to focus on one area (low income in this case) does not mean they cannot make an adjustment in other funding. They must unlock tranches of funding and in order to get to the next level of funding from DOE they have to spend a certain amount. That is why they are proposing the 50 by 50 split.

Dr. Mitchell: Timeline for providing input?

- Vicki responded that the RFI feedback has expired but for the blueprint phase they will be reaching out to get more feedback. Can amend their approach if they run into issues or get feedback showing that another direction is better to go.

Dr. Michell: For both programs he recommends having a certification/registration program for the vendors who are out there and that they can advertise they are registered with DEEP. If they take advantage of communities should have the certification removed. DEEP does not register contractors but the Office of Consumer Protections does. More opportunities to engage in this regarding solar vendors.

Additional questions and comments in the chat:

- Maggie Faveretti: A Tribal hub [as part of the Equity Hubs Effort] would be important because they don't necessarily fit the typical EJ definitions.
- Maggie Faveretti: Grant management costs and lack of stability in funding if grant dependent.
- Eboné Lockett: Thank you for this informative session. We are offering a 6-month “Climates of Inequality” exhibit and intersectional experiential-learning in Hartford, CT January, 2025 - June, 2025 in community with residents and stakeholders, Hartford Library, UCONN @Hartford, Hartford Public Schools, Kenny Park Sustainability Village and others. This is a Humanities Action Lab and Rutgers University traveling exhibit and we welcome community voices and community solutions. Please accept this as an invitation to connect and get engaged. To learn more... ceo@harvestinghumanity.com. I have to hop off for a 7pm but look forward to connecting more deeply.
- Alex Rodriguez: Proposed services to include - Aiding in addressing housing services/equity barriers, bilingual and multilingual translation, childcare, and

honorariums for residents. Also, plus +1 on the workforce development recommendation Ebone made previously.

- Tenaya Taylor: Not sure where this goes but CHEAPR should expand to include older models!

Registration List:

Eliza Heins	David Plis
Alex Rodriguez	Katie Dykes
Terry Adams	Ian McDonald
Mark Mitchell	David Michel
Michael Davis	Aundre Bumgardner
Lissette Andino	Jonathon Savage
Ismail Abukar Osman	Rodrigo Pinto
Tenaya Taylor	Jeffrey Stewart
Treyvion Taylor	Lorena Venegas
Pallavi Mande	Ben McMillan
Venkat Modugula	Desen Ozkan
Eboné Lockett	Leah Haas
Florencia Bugatti	Connecticut Network
Doris Johnson	Peggy Diaz
Charles Tracy	Reginald Fortcolin
Jamie Smith	Aaron Goode
Leslie Downey	Lauren Savidge
Sonya Carrizales	hector arzeno
Claire Sickinger	Karen Kitsis
Zoemma Warshafsky	Kathy Czepiel
Sabrina Xie	Mary Buchanan
Maggie Favretti	Leigh Whelpton
Joseph DeNicola	Adrian Huq
Adrienne Houel	Vicki Hackett
Lawrence Young	Harrison Nantz
Kyle Shiel	Anstress Farwell
Keyana White	Daphne Dixon
Mayor Pete Bass	Ryan Boggio
Sharon Huttner	
IRIS HERZ KAMINSKI	
Anthony Afriyie	
Hank Webster	
Halle Lisette Pierce	
Lindsay Naughton	
Alicea Charamut	
Kendall Keelen	
Annie Decker	
Blizzard Sharod	