



**Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC)
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 17, 2025
6:00-8:00 PM**

Link to Meeting Recording: https://ctdeep.zoom.us/rec/share/TaFlMzUv-G_ZxSbChK7zKdwwXa8oX0rx53fXn6lwrjlnwOKyChbg_koe5XP_YtkV.ps3lQCm3SYqqL97S

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

I. Community Dialogues (formerly Public Comment Period)

Jameson Davis – Long term resident of Hamden, CT. Talked about how over the past century the Town of Hamden has endured significant environmental challenges that continue to impact resident quality of life today. Lack of response and sense of urgency displayed from local elected officials that impact the community. Systemic practices of placing hazardous waste on marginalized communities which historically have had less power to resist. Health and wellbeing have been traded for economic and political gain. Nearly 300 homes continue to experience foundation problems from soil compensation. Structural issues threaten the wellbeing of residents and the safety of homes. Urges CEEJAC to do investigation and provide information about what's going on in the area.

Stephanie Darden-Smith – New Haven resident. Shared her experience growing up seeing the Old Hamden Middle School site being a toxic landfill and how nothing was done. Most recently her husband's grandfather had her foundation redone because her home was on a waste landfill. Stephanie thinks it is beyond time for CT to try and help remedy this issue.

Diane Lauricella – Thanked Jameson and Stephanie for sharing and asked what role the health department has played because this is a health issue. Diane is hoping they have stepped up because sometimes some health departments do not.

Susan Halpern – Stamford resident, Shared how back in 2019 and 2021 there was a health needs assessment done in Stamford and what was alarming was not only did they have high asthma cases compared to other neighborhoods in Stamford, but the life expectancy had 8-year difference by neighborhoods. Their city applied for an EPA grant, and they used it for air quality monitoring. Air quality monitors have not been put out anywhere but had a work plan that they were going to conduct community meetings and a working group and none of that has come to fruition. They had a few discussions at their NRZ and one public hearing in November but there has not been any action to resolve the issue here. Hoping to get more action on that.

Paul Farell, CT DEEP – Explained how he has not been tracking what has been going on but knows they got the grant. He will follow up to see what the holdup is if any. Will get back to her on that.

Reggy Saint-Fortcolin – Bridgeport resident; Brought up an EJ concern about DOT not taking care of the land they own in Bridgeport because recently noticed there are trees there that are invasive and bringing in spotted lantern flies which are killing trees in the area. This is concerning because Bridgeport has the least amount of tree canopy in the state and therefore does not have the trees to be losing.

Kristin Barendregt-Ludwig - New Haven resident; Talked about there being a lot of long-standing issues in New Haven. One of the biggest issues is the airport because it is not considered an affecting facility but there is a lot of interest in monitoring around the airport. Monitoring in general is a big question right now: What is being monitored and what isn't? What do we know about the status of the emissions being released into air and water? Kristin brought up housing since there is a lot of intersection with EJ issues that she knows CEEJAC is focusing on. Has been hearing about EJ leaders trying to understand the language they can use and how to pivot from using funding sources and grappling with level of uncertainty happening at the federal level.

Paul Farell: Shared how his team had an air monitoring open house last fall and are thinking about doing another one this fall. Most monitoring is regional so not doing microscale monitoring but there is a wide range of monitors. Purpleair.com shows where these little sensors are, and they have a sensor loan program. Check it out here: [Sensor Loan Program](#)

Dr. Mark Mitchell – Hartford resident; Interested in Capitol area systems. He lives in Hartford and the power plant that used to be the second largest air pollution source in the city was bought by the state. Despite the fact the Governor said that they would be moving all power sources for government buildings by 2030 they have proposed to upgrade the facilities by providing natural and fossil fuel gas instead. He knows the Sierra Club has been working on this and planning a press event on March 31st at 1pm. Hartford has some of the second highest air pollution and so we should not have the state contributing to our high asthma rates. Hopefully CEEJAC can weigh in on this.

Ian McDonald - Very concerned by the Governor's newly stated interest in gas expansion in CT and implications for towns with gas facilities and power plants Killingly, Bridgeport, Middletown, etc along with the climate

Theresa Hopkins-Staton – They acknowledged Jameson asking about for some sort of investigation for City of Hamden. In terms of level setting, Theresa did not want him to feel like the council had ignored it because the council cannot conduct any investigations.

Dr. Mark Mitchell said they will look at that and decide what the body can do but might be beyond scope.

Graham Stevens, CT DEEP shared how he can provide CEEJAC and Jameson with a history.

II. Subcommittee Report Out

- At the end of last year subcommittees met during CEEJAC retreat and decided on issues they want to cover during 2025.
- **Water Subcommittee, Cierra Patrick**
 - Dr. Mark Mitchell - What do you mean by water help?
 - Water quality improvement, water health is something that we can all enjoy. Drinking water or recreational.
 - Mary Pelletier – Resident of the city of Hartford. If we protect land around them, we protect our neighborhoods. The waters of small tributaries support plant life and that provides ecosystem benefits like shade. She wanted to push back on the notion that we in the city cannot do anything.
 - Stephanie Darden-Smith - In terms of what you are looking for watershed quality – what type of things are you testing for? Erosion? The soil around the watershed? Bacteria levels? PFAS? Or are you simply testing it to see if it matches portable water levels from water authorities. Trying to get an idea for what they are trying to look for in terms of healthy water.
 - Cierra - The water subcommittee meeting has a topic where CT DEEP will come to talk about water qualities and state requirements. Encouraged Stephanie to tune into that meeting.
 - Graham Stevens - The state has certain responsibilities for the federal Clean Water Act. One of the requirements is to assess the waters which they do on a targeted and randomized recurring basis. This is essentially an investigation. <https://portal.ct.gov/deep/water/inland-water-monitoring/water-quality-monitoring-program>
 - Mary Pelletier: The subcommittee should address how we do monitor waters.
- **Waste Subcommittee, Adrienne Farrar Houel and Diane Lauricella**
 - Theresa Hopkins-Staten – Are we seeing any curriculum changes that are addressing the needs for green jobs in the state?
 - There are unions that have been working with educational institutions. There is a tight knit network across technical high schools. Within regular high schools there have been number of attempts to bring knowledge about. Never enough done but some attempts to get this word out.
 - Shared in the Chat: <https://portal.ct.gov/gwc>

- Alex Rodriguez – Shared how he liked what Adrienne said about inter-agency collaboration with Department of Labor and getting more working people in contact with jobs in sustainable waste management.
- **Land Subcommittee, Yaw Darko**
 - Shared in the Chat: <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/long-island-sound-futures-fund>
- **Energy & Technology Subcommittee, Jayson Velazquez**
- **Air and Transportation, Alex Rodriguez**

III. Discussion: State of Environmental Justice on a national, state, and local level

Brenda Geer – Vice Chairwoman of Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation; Shared their concern on there being no tribes listed on the slide. If conversations are not happening, they should be, and Brenda is happy to help facilitate those conversations. Brenda shared how they have contacts with other tribes in Connecticut and can invite them to CEEJAC meeting since they might have good suggestions. Brenda shared how they are no longer able to eat fish in their ponds because of environmental issues. Invasive species have not been monitored or taken care of. Can follow up with Sarah to list the concerns but it would be great to have the four other tribes present because they do not want to speak for them. Brenda suggested getting the water tested in reservations since she has had E.coli in their water so thinks all the water should be tested. There are statutory requirements for the state so would be helpful to work together for solutions and getting the water tested.

Dr. Mark Mitchell said they do have Raheim Eleazer on CEEJAC but are interested in expanding the number of people with tribal backgrounds.

Alex Rodriguez – What the state is doing to safeguard the data and privacy of undocumented people at state sanctioned events?

- Annie Decker, CT DEEP – Said she would have to do more research since it is an important question. Encouraged him to share the best practices he recommends so she can provide a better response.
- Dr. Mark Mitchell added how he would like to know whether we are legally obligated to turn materials over to ICE if requested. Making sure immigrants are protected at state sanctioned events. Highly suggested folks provide suggestions to Annie, Edith or Sarah from CT DEEP.
- Jaime Smith – Hartford resident. Brought up [2025HB-07212-R00-HB.PDF](#) An Act Concerning the Trust Act which seeks to strengthen some of these concerns about what information can be shared and protecting our immigrant communities.
 - From the Chat: Guide for testimony for HB7212 An Act Concerning the TRUST Act:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/11wKDZSK_FuKjelbNpyj_IcyD-kVGU1DqefXLmyeLaws/edit?usp=sharing

Diane Lauricella – Shared how they are saddened to see Justice 40 and White House information taken down. She wants to know what kinds of avenues we have to at least save that material.

- Dr. Mark Mitchell – Shared how he knows that some universities downloaded a lot of the EJ tools that were developed and the policies. He is wondering if we could put links to those websites on the CEEJAC webpage.
- Kristin Barendregt Ludwig shared the following link in the chat: <https://screening-tools.com>
- Reggy S shared the following link in the chat: <https://eotarchive.org/>
- Devin Brown shared <https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40/>

Michelle Eckman – CT Roundtable on Climate and Jobs - Wanted to mention the little bit what they know about EPA region 1. The [Grantmakers program](#) is still functioning, and we are one of the regions where it has not been tormented. Anchor organizations are awaiting their agreements, so things are hopefully moving along. There were a lot of applications Region 1 received. They are committed to support these organizations to find them funding resources to continue doing their work regardless of what happens at federal level. [Thriving Communities – Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs](#)

Dr. Mark Mitchell - Do we know if HRiA (Health Resources in Action, main recipient of EPA funding for Grantmakers program) received the funding? [University of CT is the regional entity for Thriving Communities technical assistance center](#). Have they received their contracts?

- They have gotten the contracts gotten done before the election so the money should be coming from them. There are still agreements that need to be signed by EPA – there's still things they're waiting on from the EPA.

Mary Pelletier - Before the thriving community grant there was a [Communities Change] grant – does anybody know what happened to that one? Sustainable Springfield forester received 5 million for their program and got it in the first round which was summer approval.

Kathy Fay - Community Change grant for the City of New Haven was approved. They were the lead, and many local organizations were part of that – they covered multiple programs. It was approved but were not at the point of releasing funds but thinks it has been approved and moved to contract.

Mary Pelletier - At the last meeting there was a lot of emphasis on the Transfer Act Bill. A lot of abandoned industrial sites in cities have returned to forests. Sees developers grueling over these sites which the forests are protecting.

- Graham Stevens – Cleanup for many of these sites have been delayed for a long time and the forests have grown on them. They certainly want to make sure clean ups are done to protect shared environment whether for human use or wildlife use. That said, what is built on a site is up to the jurisdiction of a municipality. Municipalities have a plan of conversation and development. Conversation that might be important for CEEJAC.

Dr. Mark Mitchell wants to hear CT DEEP still has a commitment to EJ.

Sarah affirmed they still have commitment to EJ communities and their office is still here doing the work they were doing. Trying to support communities where needed.

IV. Announcements and Closing

a. Update on Release-Based Regulations, Graham Stevens CT DEEP

List of Participants

Allison Pilcher	Terry Adams	Ian McDonald
Lisette Andino	Jordan Graham	Jameson Davis
Cecelia Drayton	Kellie Kingston	Marc Gonzalez
Eddie Oquendo	Stephaine Darden-Smith	Kristin Barendregt-Ludwig
Sarah McCoy	Angelina DeBenedet	Mark Mitchell MD
Ms. Halle Lisette Pierce	Mary Pelletier	Marina Marmolejo
Rele Abiade	Jacquelyn Torres	Michelle Eckman
Alissa Bullard	Eliza Heins	Theresa Hopkins-Staten
Bumstead	Melissa Biggs	Jamie Smith
Kellie Russell	Greg Ohadoma	Reggy S
alicine francois	Brenda Geer	Anna Pickett
Mary Buchanan	Beth Kirmmse	Maggie Favretti
Robbie Goodrich	Kathy Czepiel	Graham Stevens
MEGHAN LALLY	Sheila Barney	Aziz Dehkan
Cierra Patrick	Katie Dykes	Jayson Velazquez
Diane Lauricella	Fleur Delacroix	Rahiem Eleazer
deb roe	Sydney Barnwell	David Michel
Aaron Goode	susan Halpern	Kathy Fay
Stephanie Valadez	Paul Farrell	Alex Rodriguez
Rele Abiade	Doris Johnson	Emma Cimino
Aziz Dehkan	Anthony Afriyie	lynne bonnett
Kendall Keelen	Annie Decker	Brendan Schain
Devin Brown	Adrienne Houel	
Hannah Beath	Chris Schweitzer	
Adrian Huq		

Tools and Resources from Federal Government:

- EPIC's site with mirrors of tools like CEJST, CDC's Social Vulnerability Index, and EPA's EJ Screen: <https://screening-tools.com>
- Justice40 Archived Webpage: <https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40/>
- [Digital Government Hub](#) is an open-source reference library to improve government service delivery; maintained by Beeck Center for Social Impact and Innovation at Georgetown University.
- [Federal Archives – Climate Program Portal](#) has archived IJA & IRA Program webpages and datasets from USGS, EPA, NOAA, US Census.

Additional Data Repositories:

- Harvard's Library Innovation Data Lab has a full archive of Data.gov <https://lil.law.harvard.edu/blog/2025/02/06/announcing-data-gov-archive/>
- [Harvard Dataverse](#) is a repository of data open to all researchers from any discipline inside and outside of the Harvard community.
- Syracuse University Libraries Data Search: [Home - Numeric Data Resources - Research Guides at Syracuse University Libraries](#)
- Data Rescue Project: <https://www.datarescueproject.org/about-data-rescue-project/>
- Boston University created a search tool to find archived data sets: <https://www.findlostdata.org/>
- End of Term archive, which saves as many pages as possible in the Wayback Internet Archive <https://eotarchive.org/>