



Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC)

Special Meeting Minutes

January 9, 2024 10:00 AM – 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 of the meeting.

CEEJAC Members Present (full registrant list below)

- Terry Adams, Stamford
- Yaw Darko, CT Land Conservation Council
- Maisa Tisdale, The Mary & Eliza Freeman Center

CEEJAC Subcommittee Members Present:

- Jayson Velazquez
- Diane Lauricella
- Sharmin Akter
- Marc Gonzalez
- Reggy Saint Fortcolin
- Daphne Dixon
- Ryan Boggio

1. Welcome

Sarah Huang, CT DEEP started the meeting as the substitute for Dr. Mark Mitchell, chair of CEEJAC. Sarah read the Meeting Agreements and then introduced the speakers, Michael Towle from WestCOG.

2. Climate Pollution Reduction Grant – CT Councils of Government (Michael Towle)

Michael provided additional context that this special session was requested by CEEJAC so that the COGs could provide more information about their grants and to help identify where there are gaps, want to know if we are having any issues in the processes and proposals. He introduced the other folks on the call including: Lindsay Naughton, MetroCOG; Christine O’Neill, NVCOG; Megan Joufflas from RiverCOG; Kyle Shiel from CRCOG; Stephanie Camp and Ben Lovejoy from SCRCOG.

3 applications that will be discussed include:
Southwest CT Climate Action Plan – Fairfield County
Impact 2045 – New Haven area
Greater Hartford area

3. Agenda for the meeting:
 - a. PCAP Development
 - b. Common Themes
 - c. CEEJAC Feedback - outreach
 - d. Next Steps
4. PCAP Development process: There are 6 steps to put it all together: review of existing plans, municipal meetings with staff, do a GHG inventory with measures and totals for the future, public engagement about what products they want to see and their concerns, prioritization process, review authority to implement.
 - a. Review of existing plans – looked at state, regional, and local plans
 - b. Each region met with municipalities 1-1: collecting input on project ideas, had alignment on project concepts because we were all drawing from the same plans
 - c. GHG inventory was done by UMass Amherst for all 3 regional climate action plans. Broke into sectors: mobile emissions, electric power, solid waste, combustion, ag, wastewater, forestry
 - i. Transportation sector was the biggest source of CT’s emissions
 - ii. Buildings was number 2 source of emissions
 - d. Public engagement – tabling events ex. SCRCOG at farmer’s markets to get the word out about what these plans are. The slide showed a list of entities who they have engaged with.
 - i. Are there any organizations that we may have missed?
 - e. Prioritization process – we are planners and have a process for how we prioritize projects, but the PCAP has a very specific process. We looked at the grant award and what they are going to rate what is/will be competitive for the grant. Grant is all about reducing GHG emissions. The plan likes co-benefits like providing jobs, but GHG reduction is the main component.
 - i. Then we looked at whether the project is within the purview of a municipality, COG, or partnership. If we wanted to change how the utilities operate – the COG can’t tell the utility how to operate.
 - ii. Then we want to know if the measure has a demonstrable LIDAC benefit – we measure that.
 - iii. Is it supported by municipal leader – COG’s work for municipal leaders (elected officials). Is the project ready in the short term? They want to see what can get done now or be really effective right now.
 - iv. PCAP is only the start, Comprehensive climate action plan will build upon this
 - f. Review of authority to implement – we have to look at the authority to implement these projects. Are COGs legally able to implement? Need to coordinate with the state. We don’t want to compete with the state, we need to make sense of what we’re going to apply for and work together on it. We have municipalities who are applying as well. COGs can’t pass laws.
5. Common Themes/Public Engagement (Ben Lovejoy and Stephanie Camp, Christine O’Neill)

For some additional context – Low income Disadvantaged Communities (LIDAC) is governed by Justice40 initiative, which states that the purpose of this program is that 40% of the benefits flows to LIDAC communities. This section of the agenda will highlight Common Themes that came up

between the 3 plans. One thing to remember is that COGs don't have taxing capabilities, but they can encourage municipalities to implement programs.

6. Sector Review

- a. Transportation – emissions that move. This is the largest category of emissions. There is still a lot that can be done at the regional and local level.
 - I. Clean and green municipal fleet – plow trucks, public works vehicles.
 - II. Transit first approach – discounted fares, and implementing connections to key employers
 - III. Building out public charging infrastructure
 - IV. Port and freight terminal programs
 - V. Measures to encourage mode shift

Question/Answer:

Maisa Tisdale – define for us which areas cities, municipalities are willing to work in? The project has to be something that they are willing to participate in. Through the discussions that you've had, what projects are they willing to entertain?

Ben – we are doing a planning process, priority actions that the region should take to reduce GHG. Then the implementation process is the competitive side of the process to implement those PCAP measures. Building the coalitions is a challenge. Municipalities can take a list from what we've developed.

Lynne Bonnett, New Haven – What is the GHG inventory for host city function? New Haven has traveling vehicles like fuel tanks and none of these are included in New Haven's GHG inventory. This inventory is the foundation for future granting. Train station, airport are not accounted for – we have all these emissions, but these are not recorded here. Want to see the inventory and what is our exposure to GHG emissions.

- o Ben – methodology is in the draft plan, GHG inventory is an ongoing work in progress for each plan. CCAP will have a GHG inventory, welcome feedback on how to improve that inventory process.
 - o Christine O'Neill– Public comment period on PCAP, 30 days to submit comments especially on oversight.
 - o Lindsay Naughton – PCAP will be more general. For example, the e-bike incentive could result in different types of applications vs. specific applications. This plan will act as a support for other projects. If municipalities want to apply for e-bike programs, the high level recommendation would be to reduce mileage. The implementation funding structure leans on this planning phase.
- b. Buildings – stationary combustion. Emissions that don't move (houses, commercial)
 - I. Electrification of buildings – converting HVAC systems
 - II. Government buildings to lower energy consumption, light pollution standards
 - 1. Retrofitting schools, town halls
 - III. Renewable energy transition – rolling out high speed internet, offshore wind, solar installs
 - IV. Increase local renewable energy production like public access to charging
 - V. Solutions to create building performance standards

Question/Answer:

Sharmin Akter, PhD Student at UCONN – does that include air conditioners, or refrigeration?

Ben – for stationary combustion the category for energy categorization. Industry use flight tool to use parcel data.

Rep. David Michel, Stamford - Have the COGs and CEEJAC discussed with mayors the existing polluters the EJ law is not addressing? Existing polluting facilities are untouched by the EJ law

Ben – The focus is on what municipalities are doing to improve their overall carbon footprint. We focused on “What they are doing at the local level and what their long terms goals are.” If there are projects they want to pursue, they could reference this document, but it wasn’t focused on the pollution emitters.

Rep. Michel – when we did implement the new EJ bill, we left out the existing polluting facilities in the bill. There is more pushing that is needed because COPD rates in EJ zone is not being addressed. CEEJAC with COGs could start to fix this existing pollution that is affecting children and families. Can we effectively address that?

- Ben – this is a 4 year process, there is opportunity to discuss further within CCAP. PCAP is for grant implementation. CCAP is more comprehensive action plan that will focus on LIDAC communities and disproportionate benefits.
- Maisa Tisdale – CEEJAC’s role is only an advisory one to DEEP, we are not empowered to make changes. The conversation that has to happen is between CEEJAC and members of state legislators.
- Rep. Michel – recommendations from CEEJAC are welcome to address existing facilities.
- Maisa – a way to activate concern and CEEJAC members to be heard and find a way to implement through action because our role is advisory.
- Rep. Michel – how do you address things that municipalities won’t address but should address.
- Ben – we do have to have interagency coordination and ongoing conversations. Municipalities have a voice but does need state level intervention to be implemented.

Lynne Bonnett – worried that inventory was limited and that Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven have polluting facilities that are not included in the inventory.

Ben – We had to submit quality assurance plan to EPA about how UMass was completing the inventory, that document was approved by EPA. Had a state level GHG inventory released last year and the EPA said we can’t take that plan and break it up, so we had to create a new inventory plan.

c. Waste Management and Materials

- I. Diverting waste through food scrap collection programs, educational outreach
- II. Enact and expand statewide waste reduction laws
- III. Biodigesters, anaerobic biodigesters and get existing ones to max capacity
- IV. Adaptive reuse
- V. Establish a regional waste management authority –

Question/Answer

Diane Lauricella, Norwalk – advocate for reduction. Regional waste authority would help scale up. Issue related to lack of enforcement, incentives, education up front to ensure that feed stock to build static

plie facility or anaerobic. Why are we not looking at this problem with waste/food by developing regional waste sheds.

- Christine O’Neill – COGs don’t have authority to enforce anything. We have a law on the books, DEEP has admitted that we have a lack of capacity to enforce laws. If authority was given to municipalities and COGs through a regional waste authority then this could be accomplished. Ben – SCRCOG got funding to look at regional waste management authority but lack statutory authority.
- Reggy Saint Fortcolin – there is no interest in food scrap collection and diversion.

d. Industry –

- I. Improving emissions monitoring, accounting, and reporting.
- II. Reducing emissions through low carbon procurement
- III. Corporate recycling standards
- IV. Support for low-embodied carbon materials

Question/Answer

Lynne Bonnett – industry has records of truck deliveries, port knows how many trucks are coming in. One way to participate is to remove truck from host city functions from the mobile sources because that is a hodge podge of everything.

- Ben – inventory is as accurate as possible and open to hearing about attribution of emissions
- Lindsay Naughton – CCAP will provide specific detail for each sector
- Ben – hard to get data about macro level data about individual vehicle emissions.

e. Agriculture and working lands –

- I. Forest management
- II. Land restoration
- III. Increase urban tree canopy

Question/Answer

Reggy Saint Fortcolin – remediation fall under this? Work at land trust, but you can’t plant a tree in Bridgeport. Watering trees? Canopy is cool but it’s a one year art piece if you don’t have the maintenance plan.

f. Carbon removal co-benefits

- I. Greenify an area, additional greening would strengthen it from a pure application and co-benefits part of it.

7. Next Steps

- a. Planning areas are under the same timeline for getting the PCAP done by March 1 then we can apply for the implementation grant due on April 1. Then Comprehensive climate action plan due in July 2025. If concepts aren’t in the PCAP they will go in the CCAP.
 - I. IMPACT 2027 have a draft PCAP available soon
 - II. All COGs have surveys, but focus on Southwest CT and Greater Hartford surveys
 - III. End of January – draft PCAP from Hartford and Southwest CT
 - IV. CRCOG – will have two meetings about these draft plans (Feb 1 and Feb 8)

Question/Answer

Laura Cahn, New Haven Env Commission – survey, my part of new haven is not an EJ community. When I went into the detailed part to specify which things I thought would help, it stretched to more than the page.

- Michael Towle – there are a variety of EJ categories for federal funding. There are surveys for all the planning areas. Geographically, you should be taking two surveys
- Christine O’Neill – we have to use CEJST, EJ Screening Tool are used to identify the LIDAC communities.

Surveys:

Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/swctclimate>

New Haven: https://umassamherst.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4TmgsqGfnjVQEke

Hartford: <https://forms.office.com/r/sPknzT561s>

Websites:

Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk: <https://www.swctclimate.com/>

New Haven: www.CPRGCT.org

Hartford: <https://crcog.org/regional-planning-and-development/regional-climate-action-plan/>

Contacts:

Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk: Inaughton@ctmetro.org and mtowle@westcog.org

New Haven: bloveyjoy@scrcog.org and smcamp@scrcog.org and coneill@nvcogct.gov

Hartford: kshiel@crcog.org and mjoufflas@rivercog.org

Full List of Registrants

Jayson Velazquez	Terry Adams	Leticia Colon de Mejias - Warrior Queen
Marc Gonzalez	D'Shyla Hodge	Queen
Maritza Bond	Sharmin Akter	Lori Mathieu
Jaimeson Sinclair	Kristin Barendregt-Ludwig	Connecticut Network
Eliza Heins	Stephanie Camp	Megan Joufflas
Danica Doroski	Sara Margolis	Anna Mariotti
Eric Hammerling	Renata Silberblatt	Ethan Van Ness
Lindsay Naughton	Christine O'Neill	Justine Phillips-Gallucci
Ben Lovejoy	Antoinette Quagliata	Karen Kitsis
Hank Webster	Joel Anastasio	Laura Cahn
Adrienne Houel	David Nowak	jay stange
Kim Rice	Ryan Boggio	Alex Rodriguez
doris johnson	Kyle Shiel	Rebecca Dahl
Reggy s	Emma Cimino	Lissette Andino
Michael Towle	Andrew Hoskins	Daphne Dixon
Michael Davis	Evelyn Green	Maisa Tisdale
Joseph Dickerson (He/Him) - CT DEEP	Paul Farrell	Camille Fontanella
Halle Lissette Pierce	David Osterman	Patrick Carleton
Diane Lauricella	Angelina DeBenedet	Ashley Benitez
lynne bonnett		David Michel

LaVerne Kelly
Yaw Darko
Aaron Goode
Teresa Eickel
Marcos Gonzalez