

Environmental Justice Forum
Meeting Minutes – November 19, 2008
10:30 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

This Environmental Justice Forum was held at the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel and Conference Center in Springfield on the above date and time. The moderator/facilitator was Ken Page, Environmental Justice Officer, Illinois EPA.

Attendees:

1. Kathy Andria, American Bottoms Conservancy
2. Sarah Shipp-Parran, Economic Youth Committee
3. Bess Schenkier, Chicago Legal Clinic
4. DK Hirner, Illinois Environmental Regulatory Group
5. Peter Wenz, University of Illinois at Springfield
6. Andy Rathsack, American Council of Engineering
7. Kimberly Wasserman, Little Village Environmental Justice Organization
8. Jack Ailey, Pilsen Environmental Rights & Reform Organization
9. Gary King, IEPA
10. Kurt Neibergall, IEPA
11. Ed Bakowski, IEPA
12. Rick Cobb, IEPA
13. Scott Phillips, IEPA
14. Sherrie Elzinga, IEPA
15. Al Keller, IEPA
16. Laurel Kroack, IEPA
17. Jim Ross, IEPA
18. Chris Romaine, IEPA
19. Dennis McMurray, IEPA
20. Lisa Bonnett, IEPA
21. Elmo Dowd, IEPA
22. Ken Page, IEPA
23. Dick Breckenridge, IEPA
24. Maggie Carson, IEPA
25. Doug Clay, IEPA
26. Sanjay Sofat, IEPA
27. Crystal Myers-Wilkins, IEPA

- I. Registration
- II. Welcome by IEPA Associate Director Elmo Dowd
- III. Purpose of Forum/ Introduction of Attendees
 - a. Everyone in the conference room was introduced
 - b. Ken Page explained the purpose of the forum:
 - i. An extension of the EJ Advisory Group Meetings
 - ii. To promote environmental equity and protect all people from environmental pollution
 - iii. To discuss ways to solve issues that IEPA has not properly addressed, including EJ Legislation, Best EJ Practices and EJ in Permitting Programs
- IV. EJ Discussion
 - a. Ken Page discussed the contents of the packets handed out to forum attendees:
 - i. Environmental Justice Policy
 - ii. Fact Sheet: EPA-State EJ Cooperative Agreement Initiative
 - iii. Region 5 Environmental Justice Action Plan
 - b. Ken Page discussed the U.S. EPA's Cooperative Agreement Grants and the goals of how the Agency would use the funds
 - c. Question: Does the action plan contain all five states in Region 5? Ken Page answered Yes.
 - d. Question: Will the demonstration project be tied to the EJ grant? Ken Page answered No.
 - e. Question: Will each region have a demonstration project? Ken Page answered Yes.
 - f. Ken Page urged forum attendees to share any demonstration ideas that they have with IEPA for consideration.
 - g. Ken Page gave updates on the Environmental Justice Database:
 - i. First part should be rolled out in 7-9 months
 - ii. Will track anonymous EJ complaints, develop reports and determine how to better use resources

- iii. Elmo Dowd added that IEPA will use the database as an improvement tool to re-focus EJ, work with community agencies and strengthen community activities

V. Assignment of Breakout Groups (Ken Page read assignments out loud)

a. Permitting (Crystal Myers-Wilkins was facilitator):

- i. Kathy Andria
- ii. DK Hirner
- iii. Andy Rathsack
- iv. Laurel Kroack
- v. Al Keller
- vi. Ed Bakowski
- vii. Doug Clay
- viii. Sanjay Sofat

b. Legislation (Kurt Neibergall was facilitator):

- i. Bess Schenkier
- ii. Peter Wenz
- iii. Gary King
- iv. Jim Ross
- v. Chris Romaine
- vi. Lisa Bonnett
- vii. Maggie Carson

c. Best Practices (Rick Cobb was facilitator):

- i. Sarah Shipp-Parran
- ii. Kimberly Wasserman
- iii. Jack Ailey
- iv. Sherrie Elzinga
- v. Scott Phillips
- vi. Dennis McMurray
- vii. Dick Breckenridge

VI. Broke for lunch from 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

VII. Convened to assigned breakout groups

VIII. Regrouped for discussion of suggestions/recommendations from breakout groups

a. Permitting:

- i. Indicated that communities want to meet with IEPA to review drafts before they are complete
- ii. Noted the IEPA's problem with identifying EJ problems
- iii. Suggested enhanced outreach in notifying people when a permit is being drafted; more community/EJ involvement in the permitting process
- iv. Suggested that Agency documents, such as fact sheets and compliance history, should be provided to EJ areas for free
- v. Addressed that communities are being bribed with host agreement fees

b. Legislation:

- i. Proposed cumulative risk modeling for permits; indicated that this would be expensive
- ii. Proposed compliance data accessibility; more information should be available to the public, and companies should be responsible for making this information public
 1. Question: How could companies make sure the information is in compliance? IEPA answered that the information could be the same as reports that are submitted to the Agency
 2. Question: How could you require companies to make their information public? IEPA indicated that there could be state requirements for companies of certain size, but confidentiality would have to be taken into consideration
- iii. Proposed legislation with diesel retrofits in urban areas
- iv. Proposed an Executive Order at the state level for EJ

c. Best Practices:

- i. Suggested that people should be given more updates on projects and the recipients of those projects
- ii. Proposed that Chicagoans meet with IEPA and the City of Chicago to clarify who is responsible for what
- iii. Indicated that there should be more transparency in the process; more information should be available to the public
- iv. Suggested that EJ language should be adopted within IEPA to make sure EJ principles are incorporated

- d. Comment: We appreciate IEPA putting this forum together and apologize that more community representatives did not attend. The location for the forum was a good neutral meeting place.

IX. Closing Remarks by Associate Director Elmo Dowd/ Adjournment at 3:30