

Illinois Environmental Justice Advisory Group

Meeting Minutes – July 9, 2008

10:00 – 12:00

This meeting of the Illinois EJ Advisory Group was held at the Illinois EPA Headquarters in Springfield on the above date and time. The moderator/facilitator was Ken Page.

Attendees at Illinois EPA:

1. Emeritus Professor Peter Wenz, University of Illinois at Springfield
2. Jim Monk, Illinois Energy Association
3. DK Hirner, Illinois Environmental Regulatory Group
4. Mark Biel, Chemical Industry Council of Illinois
5. Andy Rathsack, American Council of Engineering Companies of Illinois
6. Director Doug Scott, IEPA
7. Ken Page, IEPA/EJ
8. Kurt Neibergall, IEPA/CR
9. Rick Cobb, IEPA/BOW
10. Al Keller, IEPA/BOW
11. Elmo Dowd, IEPA/PO
12. Ed Bakowski, IEPA/BOA
13. Gary King, IEPA/BOL
14. Chris Pressnall, IEPA/DLC
15. Brad Frost, IEPA/CR
16. Amy Dragovich, IEPA
17. Scott Phillips, IEPA/DLC
18. Chris Romaine, IEPA/BOA

BOL – Bureau of Land; BOA – Bureau of Air; BOW – Bureau of Water; DLC – Division of Legal Counsel; CR – Community Relations; EJ – Environmental Justice; PO – Policy and Outreach

Attendees by Conference Call:

1. Kathy Andria, American Bottoms
2. Dr. Irene Brodie, Mayor, Village of Robbins
3. Sarah Shipp-Parran, Economic Youth Committee for Economic Recovery
4. Dr. Sylvia Hood Washington, Community Partnership for Children's Environmental Health

Attendees by Video conference in Chicago:

1. Keith Harley, Chicago Legal Clinic
2. Maggie Rice, City of Chicago, Department of Environment
3. David Brinn, Chicago Jewish Community Relations Council
4. Jack Darin, Sierra Club
5. Peggy Salazar, Southeast Environmental Task Force

a. Welcome by Director Scott and Ken Page

b. Introductions:

Everyone in the conference room was introduced as well as the attendees on conference call/video conference.

c. IEPA Discussion:

i. EJ tracking database

1. IEPA indicated that the tracking database will not be rolled out to the public immediately.
2. Question: Is there a legal definition of Environmental Justice? IEPA indicated that yes, they will use a legal definition.
3. Question: Will the EJ tracking database be used for EJ issues within a permitting process? IEPA indicated that yes, the database will be used in these situations.

ii. EJ brochure (tri-fold)

1. IEPA indicated that copies of the brochure will be sent to environmental groups and EJ Advisory Group members. The brochure will also be available on the EJ webpage in both English and Spanish.
2. Question: Will different programs within the IEPA receive copies of the brochure? IEPA indicated that no, they will not receive a hard copy, because it is available on the website.

iii. Finalizing EJ Policy

1. The Agency is in the process of finalizing the policy by making changes to the interim policy based on past comments. These changes include alterations in wording and increasing clarity. Once these changes are finalized, the Agency will continue to look at larger scope changes that may call for legislative changes. The policy will continue to be changed down the road.
2. Question: Is the IEPA still accepting comments for the policy changes? IEPA indicated that yes, anyone can submit ideas, but they cannot guarantee that these changes will be made in this round.

3. Question: Can the IEPA distribute a working draft of the policy in order for others to make comments? IEPA answered yes. A copy of the working draft interim policy will be sent.
4. Question: How will the policy impact how the Agency operates its programs? IEPA indicated that the policy continues to evolve and get better at implementing goals and focusing on community involvement, and yes, there will be an implementation strategy.

d. Member Discussion

i. Ford Motor Supplies Campus

1. IEPA indicated that they need to set up communication with their Des Plaines office and Cheryl Johnson to address/inspect the current odor problem. As of now, the Des Plaines office has not received any other odor complaints regarding this facility.

ii. Community Partnership for Children's Environmental Health – Dr. Sylvia Hood Washington

1. Dr. Washington discussed the EJ issues evolving around children's health. She discussed how EJ communities do not just want to be the subject of ongoing studies. The participating communities need to see benefits and efficient outcomes from the EJ efforts.
2. Comment: There are a high number of pregnancies lost in the East St. Louis area. No one has investigated this issue, and it may be due to toxic releases next to the area.
3. Comment: We need to be clear as to what exactly we're saying is being caused by pollution.
4. Question: Will requests be sent out to communities to participate? Dr. Washington indicated that yes, requests will be sent out, and it is important to pin point what is happening.
5. Comment: There are complaints about sand blowing in on the west side of the Village of Robbins.
6. Comment: We are trying to reach out to communities so that they can identify what they would like us to study in their area.
7. Question: Will the definition of EJ be clarified to help inform these communities? Dr. Washington indicated that yes, we want people to be informed of what EJ is, and we want them to be able to seek help.

iii. Mapping of EJ Communities in Chicago – Maggie Rice

1. Ms. Rice indicated that the first portion of determining the EJ communities in Chicago has been completed. She gave the definition of an EJ community and its criteria. She indicated that there are 10 communities (all in the Northwest and Southwest areas of the city) that are not qualified, 15 which could be qualified, and 52 that would be qualified based on demographic information. The next step is to look at health conditions and defects in those 52 communities.
2. Question: Is there a map of those 52 communities? Ms. Rice indicated that at this time, there is not a map, but there will be one after the second phase.
3. Comment: The list of communities will be available to the EJ Advisory Group on the web.
4. Question: Is there some sort of historical break-down of where these communities are located and separated from each other? Ms. Rice indicated that Chicago has an official list of communities that has remained the same for many years.

iv. 5 proposals for improving EJ – Keith Harley

1. All proposals are supported by a research paper in which students evaluated the best practices developed by states. They focused their work to address different topics including asthma, Right-to-Know, etc.
2. Question: Will there be a meeting to discuss the proposed practices and issues in breakout sessions? The IEPA indicated that they are working on getting a sponsor for the next meeting.

e. Old Business

i. EJ meeting with individual breakout sessions?

1. There will be a meeting once a sponsor is found. It will be an all-day meeting for everyone to join.

f. Open Discussion/Questions

- i. Comment: There is a group in Stevenson County interested in addressing health issues.

g. Next meeting date and location

i. Everyone will be contacted about the next meeting.

h. Adjournment