

ILLINOIS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MINUTES

Wednesday, June 4, 2025 (1:00 pm – 3:00 pm)

I. Welcome & Opening Remarks

- Paulina Lopez-Santos (IEPA) welcomed everyone and introduced Chair Victoria Young
- Chair Young welcomed everyone and introduced herself

II. Roll Call and Introductions

Ex-officio Members, State Agency Directors or Designees

- Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Chris Pressnall) – Present
- Illinois Department of Human Services (David Esposito) – Present
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Isabel Velez-Diaz) – Present
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources (Jose Burgos) – Present
- Illinois Department of Public Health (Gerrin Cheek Butler) – Not present
- Illinois Department of Transportation (Brandy Phillips) – Present

Elected Officials

- Representative Kimberly DuBuclet – State Representative 5th District – Present
- Senator Celina Villanueva – State Senator 12th District – Not present

Governor Appointed Commissioners

- Victoria Young, Naturally Urban Environmental Inc. – Present
- Ashish Sharma, Discovery Partners Institute, University of Illinois System – Present
- Marcella Keenan Corona, MK Corona – Present
- Pratigyan Bhusal, United Congregations of Metro-East – Present
- Donovan Griffith, Illinois Manufacturer' Association – Present
- Chynna Hampton, Illinois Workforce Innovation Board – Present
- Tonyisha Harris, The Nature Conservancy – Not Present
- Cheryl Johnson, People for Community Recovery – Not Present
- Marcus Jordan Indiana-Illinois-Iowa FFC – Present
- Dulce Ortiz, Clean Power Lake County – Present
- Stephen Sylvester, Attorney General's Office – Present

After assessing those present, it was confirmed that the meeting was at quorum (15 of 24)

III. Commissioner Approval

Approval of March Meeting Minutes

- Chair Young discussed March 19th meeting minutes, which were emailed to all the commissioners by Paulina, and brought them to a vote for approval

- Votes cast and ayes have it, no nays
- March 19th Meeting minutes approved. IEPA will publish on its website Approval of Discussion Topics
- Votes cast and ayes have it. Meeting proceeds.

IV. Discussion Topics

Illinois Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG)

- Chair Young introduced JC Kibbey, State of Illinois Climate Advisor, for a presentation regarding the [State of Illinois Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program](#) (CPRG)
 - JC provided an overview of the size and scope of the program and next steps towards public engagement and outreach, and encouraging commissioners to voice their thoughts regarding challenges, opportunities, as well as general thoughts or questions.
 - Background – IRA (U.S. EPA’s Inflation Reduction Act, 2021). Illinois applied for and was awarded \$430 million in 2024.
 - Core mandate of the program is to reduce greenhouse gases (GHG).
 - GHG Inventory – Transportation 25%, Power 22%, Industry 19%, Buildings 16%, Agriculture 12%, Waste 1%.
 - Illinois EPA’s CPRG plan focuses on 5 priority areas; Clean Buildings, Clean Freight and Fleet, Clean Industry, Clean Agriculture, and Clean Power (Please see the [full video recording of Commission meeting](#) for full presentation.)
 - Questions
 - Commissioner Sylvester – asked about the security of the federal funding given the current administration’s policies.
 - Response from JC – funding is obligated via signed grant agreement and may be cancelled for cause but reiterated that reasons for cancelling this money are clearly and specifically outlined.
 - Follow-up question from Commissioner Sylvester – who is currently holding the money?
 - JC – it is in a jointly held account, called an ASAP account that both Federal government and the State of Illinois has access to.
 - Commissioner Corona (via chat) – “How is outreach for sub-awardee applications being conducted? What types of entities are eligible to be funded by this grant?”
 - JC – There are over 20 measures for the program. Some are being implemented by Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Finance Authority, Illinois Department of Agriculture, or Illinois Power Agency. In some cases, it is being done through a Request for Proposal, or through Notice of Funding Opportunities, and rebates or grants administered by state agencies. There are also opportunities for community-based organizations.

- Commissioner Sharma– asked a question regarding money being awarded to communities and organizations to install charging infrastructure. Specifically, whether there was comprehensive approach to take stock of where the infrastructure is currently, regarding flooding risks, traffic congestion, etc. so the investment the state is making is equitable and climate resilient.
- JC – Megha Lakhchaura, the Illinois EPA EV coordinator and her team have been leading the charging infrastructure grant programs and have information and knowledge regarding questions related to EV infrastructure, with relation to EJ, etc., which they are using for the CPRG program.
- Commissioner Sharma – followed up with a comment regarding experience with climate change. EJ is being considered, but not climate change with regards to investments in areas that are susceptible to flooding, for example.
- Commissioner Esposito – asked a question regarding a communications plan for outreach to community-based organizations that are eligible. The second question was in regard to a spending deadline and asked if initiatives are being implemented simultaneously or in a phased approach.
- JC – to the first question, there are aspects to the communications piece and there are specific public meetings (virtual and in-person) dates scheduled in June, as well as outreach done via the Illinois EPA EJ Listserv. Additionally, there is a developed list of groups and individuals JC is in contact with, other established channels, and an inbox, EPA.CPRG@illinois.gov. JC welcomes feedback and requests from EJ and community-based organizations.
- JC – This program is a 5-year grant, and the work must be completed by 2030. There are implementation timelines for different measures, which are more or less on track, although federal uncertainty made this rocky. Notices of funding opportunity are out for first measures.
- Commissioner Ortiz – asked how other initiatives align with CEJA proposed goals to be carbon free by 2050.
- JC – There are two pieces in the power sector where they sought areas where there wasn't much investment (climate strategy holes). Very large investments are being made in the power sector. Modeling is used to anticipate needs for new energy, policy needs, and clean energy planning. Municipal utilities need resources for planning towards clean energy.

Shared Platform: Microsoft Teams

- Challenges and technical issues – documents will be shared on that platform, central location (bylaws and housing archives of agenda, minutes, and subcommittee materials). No one seemed to indicate any access issues.
- Commissioners are encouraged to reach out to Paulina and/or Chair Young if any challenges arise.

Bylaws: To be adopted and voted on at the EJ Commission's August meeting

- Chair Young explained that bylaws had been drafted to follow the laws for the development of the commission. They are intended to structure the commission, and Paulina has shared this document with the commissioners. The file also exists in the Teams shared folder.
 - Please send comments, remarks, or suggestions by the end of July.
- Commission aims to move forward with voting and adoption of the bylaws in August – this will be vital and important.

Subcommittee Survey: Review & Vote on Subcommittee Structure, Path Forward

- Voting outcomes on priorities for the commission subcommittee structure:
 - #1 Air, Water, and Soil Quality Monitoring and Enforcement
 - #2 EJ Policy and Legislative Affairs
 - #3 Funding, Equity, and Workforce Development
- Paulina shared her screen and began discussing the survey responses
 - Transparency for all responses
 - 17 responses out of 19 current commissioners
 - Results of the Survey:
 - Survey was created in response to commission discussions to guide future work, shape future agendas, discussions and work products by subcommittees
 - Paulina presented breakdown of 17 Survey responses, with the top three aforementioned priorities listed as well as the results for questions regarding Work Products (top 3 listed below)
 - #1 Written policy recommendations or framework
 - #2 Workshop or presentation to share findings
 - #3 Interactive online portal to share data, tools or resources
 - Paulina then presented slides with survey questions regarding commissioner engagement and interest, as well as availability.
 - Finally, Paulina presented slide with some comments/questions from Commissioners.
 - Chair Young asked Paulina to put up the slide with survey question regarding Commissioners interest in leadership roles in

subcommittees and asked commissioners to please consider the positions of subcommittee chair.

- Proposed Subcommittee Structure
 - Commissioners were organized into the top 3 subcommittee topics and discussed placement of commissioners within subcommittees. After a lengthy discussion on placement of all commissioners, including who would chair each subcommittee, commissioners voted on placements and subcommittees. Proposed chairs who were present were asked if they agreed to chair each subcommittee.
 - Vote and Approval on [Subcommittee Structure](#) as presented as well as chairs and co-chairs
 - Ayes have it
 - No Nays

V. Open Discussion & Questions

- Commissioner Corona flagged proposed rule – Clean Air Act Permit Program Procedures 35 Ill. Adm. Code 270
 - Public Comment Period open until June 30th

VI. Next Meeting Dates & Location

- Next Meeting August 20th Webex 1-3pm, 3rd quarterly meeting

VII. Adjournment

- Victoria thanked all those present at the commission meeting – 2:36 PM