

**ILLINOIS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, August 20, 2025 (1:00 pm – 3:00 pm)

I. Welcome, Opening Remarks, & Call to Order

- **Date/Time:** August 20, 2025 (1:00–3:00 PM)
- **Chair:** Victoria Young
- **Host:** Illinois EPA
- **Quorum:** Achieved (16 of 24 members present)

II. Roll Call

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-Diez) – 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

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

Governor Appointed Commissioners

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

III. Commissioner Approval

- June 4 Meeting Minutes: Approved and to be posted on IEPA website.
- Agenda for August 20 Meeting: Approved.

IV. Discussion Topics

- Subcommittee Updates
 - * Subcommittee input will inform the October 1 Annual Report*
 - 1. *EJ Policy & Legislative Affairs (Subcommittee Chair, Marcella Keenan Corona):*
 - Focused on reviewing environmental and EJ-related legislation
 - Discussed climate funding distribution to communities
 - 2. *Air, Water, and Soil Quality Monitoring & Enforcement (Subcommittee Chair, Ashish Sharma):*
 - Discussed priorities including safe drinking water, sewage outflows, and pollution-permitting reform
 - Concerned over large data centers entering EJ communities (impact on energy and stability)
 - Discussed the potential for planning statewide EJ screening guidance and coordination with Illinois EPA
 - 3. *Funding Equity & Workforce Development (Chynna Hampton reporting):*
 - Focused on partnering with Illinois DCEO to make funding more accessible
 - Discussed need for increasing member participation to shape future actions

Open Discussion Following Subcommittee Updates: Legislative Role & Clarifications

- When/how to engage with legislation
 - Commission has advisory role (i.e. reviewing legislation, not drafting or testifying)
 - Commission gives input via annual reports, not public testimony
 - Commission acts as a clearinghouse for EJ-related legislation
 - Members may speak individually but not on behalf of the Commission.
 - Illinois EPA's legislative team to brief on EJ-related bills during next quarterly meeting
 - Potential off-meeting training on how to navigate Illinois legislative systems
- Draft 2025 Annual Report Review
 - Draft available on Microsoft Teams and by email
 - Final Report Review Meeting: September 24 (1–3pm virtual, via Webex)
 - Report due October 1 to Governor and General Assembly
 - Subcommittees should integrate their focus and key takeaways

- Bylaws Reminder & Review
 - Bylaws under review in Microsoft Teams folder
 - Comments due before the November meeting, when revisions will be voted on
 - Bylaws considered a working document
- Annual Trainings Reminder & Access to Microsoft Teams
 - Mandatory commissioner trainings due yearly; Illinois EPA staff to email additional information to Commissioners
 - Commissioners must confirm Microsoft Teams access; assistance available from Commission Chair or Illinois EPA staff

V. Open Discussion & Questions

- Community Update: Alliance of the Southeast highlighted stoppage of the proposed Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) expansion in Chicago
- State Agency EJ Activities
 - DHS: Addressing homelessness and institutionalization concerns
 - DNR: Advancing internal climate action and community access to nature
 - DCEO: Integrating EJ and climate into economic incentive programs, including clean energy and electric vehicle (EV) sectors
- Concern raised regarding data centers and their potential overuse of water resources and increase in pollution
- Chair emphasized integrating human rights, housing, and food access into EJ definitions

VI. Next Meeting Dates & Location

- Subcommittees to schedule second meetings before Sept 24th meeting
- Submit comments on the draft annual report
- Review bylaws and provide feedback
- Complete mandatory trainings
- Attend the final quarterly meeting on November 5th at 1-3pm (virtual, via Webex)

VII. Meeting Adjourned

- Chair Victoria Young closed by emphasizing collaboration and impact through the October report and upcoming legislative engagement.