

Quarterly Meeting of the Illinois Commission on Environmental Justice

Wednesday August 23, 2023 (1-3PM) via Webex

Meeting Notes

- I. **Welcome**
Chris Pressnall (Chair Wasserman not in attendance)

- II. **Agency Representatives:**
 - a. IDHS – Housing (not in attendance)
 - b. IDCEO (not in attendance)
 - c. IDNR - Jose Burgos
 - d. IDPH - Gerrin Cheek-Butler
 - e. IDOT (not in attendance)

- III. **Commissioners**
 - a. Victoria Wilson – Cook County Environmental and Sustainability commissioner for the Southland Triad, and owner and CEO of Naturally Urban Environmental, Inc.
 - b. Dulce Ortiz – Co-chair of Clean Power Lake County
 - c. Tonyisha Harris – Action for the Climate Emergency
 - d. Donovan Griffith – Vice President of Government Affairs, Illinois Manufacturers Association
 - e. Kelly Thompson – Executive Director of the Illinois Environmental Regulatory Group
 - f. Cheryl Johnson – People for Community Recovery (not in attendance)
 - g. Jose Burgos – Illinois Department of Natural Resources

- IV. **Chicago’s Cumulative Impact Assessment: Goals, Process, Outputs**
 - a. Speakers
 - i. Megan Cunningham – Managing Deputy Commission, Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH)
 - ii. Clayton Oeth – Senior Policy Analyst, CDPH
 - iii. Ellis Walton – Associate Attorney, Environmental Law & Policy Center
 - b. Goals
 - i. Provide Data
 - ii. Inform decision-making
 - iii. Co-design/co-lead project with community partners
 - The Cumulative Impact Assessment work is in line with Healthy Chicago 2025 – a citywide plan to close Chicago’s racial life expectancy gap by addressing the root causes of health, including the environment.

- c. Key Takeaways and Next Steps from Working Groups
 - i. **Interdepartmental EJ Group** developed a [Draft EJ Action Plan](#)
 - ii. Baseline Report and Policy Recommendations to be published in September 2023.
 - iii. Overall findings to be presented to the Mayor and the Chair of the City Council Committee on Environmental Protection and Energy by end of October 2023.
 - iv. **Policy Working Group** to publish the Draft Ordinance.
 - v. **Data & Methods Working Group** to establish an EJ Index and EJ neighborhoods map.
- d. Communications and Engagement
 - i. Inform and build momentum, co-design and co-host engagement between City and EJ organizations, gather input, provide forum for communities to share their stories and voices, provide a means for follow-up and a foundation for longer-term ground-truthing.
- e. www.Chicago.gov/cumulativeimpact

V. Questions

- a. Tonyisha Harris – Asked questions about future collaboration between the Commission on EJ and the Environmental Equity Working Group and the overall Cumulative Impact Assessment work. Commented about the Illinois EJ Permitting Act. Also asked why existing research/tools were not used.
- b. Andrew Armstrong – Illinois Attorney General’s Office – Asked speaker to speak more about community benefits, what sorts of projects would be desirable in that regard.
- c. Donovan Griffith – Asked what engagement looked like with the industry sector. Also asked about jobs impact in the community from this initiative, as well as how regulations may be implemented and what compliance would look like.
- d. Delia Barajas – Asked about why a cumulative impact assessment is not being done at the state level and how many EJ communities exist in Illinois.
- e. Donovan Griffith responded to this mentioning that the state has been working on state-wide regulations for environmental justice, this work has been around for a few years now. EJ related bills have been introduced each year. This is something that EJ groups and industry groups have been working on. Active communication and work around this has been happening and we continue to work on passing statewide regulation that works for all stakeholders, ensuring that all people have both environmental and economic justice through whatever bill gets passed.
- f. Victoria Wilson – Asked questions about previous reports under the last administration and why there must be another report (feasibility case study).

- g. Dulce Ortiz – Commented about question about why this is not being done state-wide and getting more support from other colleagues doing similar work and working to become proactive instead of reactive.
- h. Victoria Wilson – Commented about corporate accountability, federal mandates, and transparency regarding commitments from industry. What is the capacity of the city of Chicago to oversee and manage accountability process regarding the Chicago Cumulative Impact report.
- i. Sabrina Bailey – Illinois EPA Office of Community Relations – Asked a question about indexes and maps. Is there a scoring system or will indicators be used to score?
- j. Stephen Silvester – Illinois Attorney Generals Office, Environmental Bureau – Asked a question regarding implementation and reopening the Department of Environment. Also asked about impacts, and if the focus of the cumulative impact assessment is on a air emissions only, or other media.

VI. Illinois EPA Air Quality Alert Updates

Chris Pressnall

- a. Brief overview of Illinois EPA air quality update changes and improvements in light of Canadian Wildfire smoke making its way down to Illinois. Screen sharing did not function, but information was emailed to participants.

VII. Open Discussion/Questions

- a. Ongoing efforts to recruit more commissioners to have them appointed.
- b. Paulina Lopez-Santos will transition to become facilitator for commission meetings going forward.
- c. Any other comments?
 - i. Victoria Wilson – comment regarding legislation topics for next meeting.

VIII. Next Meeting Date

- a. We will work to find a meeting date that works via email.

IX. Adjourn

- a. Thank you! Meeting ended at 3pm.