

ILLINOIS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

MEETING NOTES

Wednesday, August 28, 2024 (1:00 – 3:00 pm)

I. Welcome

- *Brief Opening Remarks:* Paulina Lopez-Santos, Office of Environmental Justice, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) – welcomed Commissioners and meeting attendees.
 - Commission meetings are open to the public and are recorded. Meeting minutes and recordings are posted on the IEPA webpage.
- *Host/Facilitator:* Paulina Lopez-Santos, EJ Policy Administrator

II. Introductions/Roll Call

Ex-officio Members, State Agency Directors or Designees

- Chris Pressnall (designee) – Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA)
- Isabel Velez-Diez (designee) – Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (IDCEO)
- Gerrin Cheek Butler (designee) – Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) – Not present
- Jose Burgos (designee) – Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
- Brandy Phillips (designee) – Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)
- David Esposito (designee) – Illinois Department of Human Services, Housing Office (IDHS)

Elected Officials

- Representative Kimberly DuBuclet – State Representative 5th District

Governor Appointed Commissioners

- Kim Wasserman, Chair, Little Village EJ Organization – Not present
- Rolando Favela, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District – Not present
- Donovan Griffith, Vice President of Government Affairs, Illinois Manufacturer's Association
- Chynna Hampton, Equity Director, Climate Jobs Illinois in affiliation with the Illinois AFL CIO – Not present
- Tonyisha Harris, Climate and Energy Program Manager, The Nature Conservancy
- Cheryl Johnson, Commissioner, People for Community Recovery
- Marcus Jordan, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion for Operating Engineers Local 150 and Indiana, Illinois Iowa Foundation for Fair Contracting
- Dulce Ortiz, Clean Power Lake County – Not present
- Ashish Sharma, Climate and Urban Sustainability Lead at Discovery Partners Institute & Climate Scientist, University of Illinois System
- Victoria Wilson, President & CEO, Naturally Urban Environmental Inc., & Commissioner on Cook County's Environmental Sustainability Commission

III. Agenda

Illinois EPA Office of EJ (OEJ) Updates, Chris Pressnall

- General Iron Informal Resolution Agreement, updates on several deliverables
 - Two documents are about to go out for public notice and comment
 - Enhanced Public Participation Plan – 60-day public notice and comment period
 - Revised Language Access Plan – 30-day public notice and comment period
 - EJ Notification Letter template updates
- EJ Start screening tool
 - Updating the internal and external screening tool with 2023 data
- Commission membership & Illinois EPA Personnel Updates
 - Andrew Armstrong has resigned from the IL Attorney General's Office and stepped down as a commissioner – he now serves as Illinois EPA's Chief Legal Counsel
 - Illinois EPA Interim Director, James Jennings

Discussion/Q&A

- Question, Paulina Lopez-Santos: Do any state agencies have thoughts or observations about the Enhanced Public Participation Plan or Revised Language Access Plan? How is the language access journey going and do you have any tips to share with other state agencies?
 - Answer, Jose Miguel Burgos (IDNR):
 - IDNR is considering purchasing and using tablets with translation apps like Google Translate or Propio.
 - When it comes to direct interaction and outreach events, we are noticing that because of the language barrier, we are not connecting as much as we could at times.
 - Technology can be used as a good aid for dealing with the language barrier.
 - Follow up, Chris Pressnall:
 - IEPA has similar experiences.
 - Complete preliminary demographic analysis to know the community which we are going in.
 - Healthcare field has intriguing technology for language access issues.

Discuss 2024 Commission Report, Paulina Lopez-Santos

- Reminder: Annual EJ Commission Report to be submitted to Governor's Office (by October 1st)
 - Summarizes main topics from the year's commission meetings
 - Provides environmental justice recommendations
- Development of 2024 Commission Report
 - Commission's main goals
 - Commission Membership
 - 6 vacancies currently and a total of 24 voting members
 - Provide a summary of 2024 agenda topics
 - The last time Commission has submitted a yearly report was in 2018, so 2024 report will include a brief summary of calls that happened between 2019-2023
 - Discussion on report's goals for end-of-year 2024 - 2025
 - Procedural engagements
 - Potentially meet to compile comments on Illinois EPA plans.
 - Work products
 - Work product of the EJ-related questions would help commissioners get a better understanding and idea of state agencies' progress on their EJ efforts
 - Emerging issues

Discussion/Q&A

- Comment, Donovan Griffith: Another goal could be to get appointments so that we can have quorum.
 - Follow up, Paulina:
 - There must be at least 13 members who are present and, on the call, to have quorum.
 - The six official vacancies make it challenging to achieve quorum, but progress is being made.

Vote on EJ-related Questions for State Agencies + Path Forward

- EJ-related questions for state agencies have been drafted and discussed.
- Meeting did not reach quorum, so an official vote could not be held.
 - Plan to discuss and officially vote on the questions at or before next official meeting.

Discussion/Q&A

- Question, Ashish Sharma: I represent a university; not a state agency. How do these questions relate to us?
 - Answer, Paulina Lopez-Santos:
 - These questions are intended for state agencies that are a part of this commission to respond to.
 - The intent is to get a better understanding of state agencies' policies and efforts on EJ-related work and thus, the responses will aid the Commission in providing recommendations to the Governor's Office about EJ recommendations related to state EJ policies and initiatives.
 - Questions help us to understand where there are gaps and what can be enhanced or improved.
 - Follow up, Ashish Sharma:
 - It would be helpful in the future if we could have time to share what other organizations are doing to promote environmental justice.
 - Comment, Paulina:
 - I think it would be useful to share more about work that we are all doing.
- Comment, Paulina: We will try to vote on these questions at the next meeting.
- Question, Ashish: Is it possible for us to collectively work on providing a written collective report that lays out commission mandates and outcomes?
 - Answer, Paulina:
 - The intent of the yearly EJ commission report speaks to your comment.
 - If you have additional ideas, we could include those.
 - We will work to finalize that report so we can send it to the Governor's Office and let them know where our commission is at with discussions and topics.

IV. Next Meeting Dates and Location

The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, November 20th (1:00 – 3:00 pm).

V. Adjournment