

ILLINOIS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

MEETING NOTES

Wednesday, November 20, 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.
 - Paulina handed the floor to Chair Kim Wasserman to facilitate the meeting.
- *Host/Facilitator:* Kim Wasserman – Commission on EJ Chair & Executive Director of the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO) – Introduction, welcome, roll call.

II. Introductions/Roll Call

Ex-officio Members, State Agency Directors or Designees

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

Elected Officials

- Senator Celina Villanueva – State Senator 12th District – Present
- Representative Kimberly DuBuclet – State Representative 5th District – Present

Governor Appointed Commissioners

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

III. Agenda

- Kim Wasserman: Before we begin, does anyone have any questions or comments on the agenda for today?
 - Follow up, Donovan Griffith:
 - Request to move the Vote on EJ-related Questions for State Agencies to the top of the agenda to make sure we maintain quorum.
 - Answer, Kim Wasserman asked if there were any objections.
 - Seconded by Chris Pressnall
 - Since there are no objections, the Vote on EJ-related Questions for State Agencies will be moved to the top of the agenda

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

- This is a revisited work product
 - To assess state agencies' progress and journey on EJ-related issues
 - 60-day period to answer
- Question, Paulina: Does anyone have any thoughts on the questions?
- Question, Ashish Sharma: Could we add a question that asks agencies if they partner with academic institutions on EJ-related issues?
 - Answer, Kim Wasserman:
 - I think that would be helpful and relevant.
- Question, Donovan Griffith: On Question 7, I know that the IEPA doesn't consider individuals with disabilities when determining environmental justice areas, so what's the intent of this question?
 - Answer, Chris Pressnall:
 - IEPA considers disability access for interactions and accommodation policies in instances such as public hearings.
- Question, Juliana Pino: Could we have separate questions to ask about community group partnerships and academic institution partnerships?
 - Answer, Kim Wasserman: I agree this would be helpful.
- Question: Ashish Sharma: Can we rephrase the questions about partnerships between community interest groups and academic institutions to require agencies to provide detailed answers?
 - Answer, Paulina Lopez-Santos:
 - Yes, please let me know if I'm editing the document correctly.
 - Follow up, Juliana Pino (in chat):
 - Speaking for myself, this looks great and is in alignment with what was raised, Paulina. Thank you.
- Question, Victoria Wilson: How will this be filled out?
 - Answer, Paulina Lopez-Santos:
 - Will be sent by Illinois EPA (as the Commission's administrative support Agency) via email to all State Agency representatives on the Commission, with all other Commissioners copied
 - 60-day period
 - Retouch at the beginning of 2025
- Comment, Juliana Pino (in chat): I recommend an amendment to question 7 that adds, "If so, please provide a list of program names and/or a short summary of the programs."
 - Follow up, Victoria Wilson:
 - Could we make this a consistent instruction for questions 6 – 12?
 - Follow up, Paulina:
 - Yes, is it more helpful to include this instruction at the top of the document or for each question?
 - Follow up, Kim Wasserman:
 - I think there's a value in both.
 - Follow up, Victoria:
 - Depends on how detailed we want responses to be.
 - I think we want their responses to be intricate and specific.
 - Follow up, Paulina:
 - I'm hearing we want detailed answers for all questions. I'll add clear instructions at the top of the document.
 - Sharing screen in real-time to show edits to the document to reflect the suggestions.
- Official Vote on EJ-related Questions for State Agencies
 - 13 ayes
 - 0 nays
 - Motion goes through
 - 60-day period of completion

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

- General Iron Informal Resolution Agreement, updates on several deliverables
 - Public comment period ended for two documents
 - Enhanced Public Participation Plan (PPP) – November 8
 - Revised Language Access Plan (LAP) – November 6
 - OEJ in process of addressing public comments for LAP and PPP
 - Comments will help guide and inform internal implementation
 - Translation of documents
 - Potential extension on LAP + PPP due to need to translate

2024 Trainings

- Required trainings to be completed annually, in need of completion by commissioners by the end of 2024
 - Ethics Training
 - Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Training

Discussion/Q&A

- Question, Dulce Ortiz: Are these the same trainings that were required for other state commissions?
 - Answer, Chris Pressnall:
 - I believe they are the same.
- Question, Victoria Wilson (in chat): What is the deadline?
 - Answer, Paulina Lopez-Santos:
 - By the end of the year.
- Question, Victoria Wilson: If we've already completed these at the beginning of the year, do we need to recomplete the trainings?
 - Answer, Paulina Lopez-Santos:
 - If you can track down a certification that you completed the training earlier and send it to me, that could work.
- Question, Paulina Lopez-Santos: Chris, most state agencies have already completed the training due to the state agency requirement, right?
 - Response, Chris Pressnall:
 - Yes, so these trainings are mostly for governor-appointed commissioners

IV. Open Discussion/Questions

- Question, Victoria Wilson: Are we going to stick on the same schedule for next year? Is it two-year terms now for renewal?
 - Answer, Paulina Lopez-Santos:
 - I think that's correct
 - Follow up, Chris Pressnall:
 - Yes, it looks like renewal for most Commissioner terms is in 2026.

V. Next Meeting Dates and Location

- Comment, Kim Wasserman:
 - Next year, we must think what we can do to help communities at the local and state-level
 - Chris, Paulina, and I will meet to discuss 2025's quarterly meeting schedule and send calendar invites to all

VI. Meeting adjourned