

# Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities

## Meeting Minutes

September 22, 2020, Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Obie Patterson, Senator for Prince George's County, District 8; Joseph Griffiths; John Papagni; Robert Hackman; Camille Burke; Crystal Faison; Paula Dannenfeldt; Paulette Hammond; Richard Fairbanks; Stephan Levitsky

MDE Staff Present: Ben Grumbles, Secretary; Horacio Tabalada, Deputy Secretary; Suzanne Dorsey, Assistant Secretary; Devon Dodson; Cindy Osorto; Mark Shaffer; Chris Hoagland; Christopher Beck; Susan Casey; Kimberlee Drake; Erick Thunell

Guests: Ann Ciekot, CJ Jackson, Dorothy Morrison, Elizabeth Shwe, Janet Cornick, John Kumm, Katie Nash, Ann Pam Kasemeyer, Emily Wezik, John Kumm, Tiffany Jennings, Ann Ciekot, Jennifer McLaughlin, Terry Bellamy

Next meeting: November 24, 2020, 10am-12pm, Virtual

Recording, presentation, agenda, and meeting minutes will be available online:

<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/CrossMedia/EnvironmentalJustice/Pages/cejsc.aspx>

### 1. Introductions

- **Camille Burke**, Chair, Director Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program for the Baltimore City Health Department
  - Thanks to previous MDE designee, Duane Johnson, and welcome the new MDE staff: Devon Dodson and Cindy Osorto
  - Looking forward to building strong partnerships
  - Suggestions for future direction of the Commission will be important and are welcomed
- **Ben Grumbles**, MDE Secretary
  - Honored to work on environmental justice and recognize that it will be important to remain active and engaged. Recognize that we can and must do more. MDE will be with you and supporting you.
  - Aligning talent is important in Commission as well as robust participation
  - Thank you to all the members that have served in the past
  - Definitions on environmental justice (EJ) and consideration of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) will be important
  - Past and Current Efforts include:

- The Chesapeake Executive Council of the Chesapeake Bay Program has adopted a diversity statement on August 18, 2020 ([https://www.chesapeakebay.net/news/pressrelease/chesapeake\\_executive\\_council\\_adopts\\_diversity\\_statement](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/news/pressrelease/chesapeake_executive_council_adopts_diversity_statement))
  - This commission is not the only independent commission speaking to EJ. There are EJ conversations underway within the Maryland Climate Change Commission as well as the Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council (CEHPAC)
  - There are national conversations underway pertaining to EJ, including New Jersey having recently signed an EJ bill
  - Maryland will need to learn more and have specific mechanisms in place, including potential considerations of cumulative impacts
  - MDE knows that there is a need for developing an EJ policy – permitting and citing of various facilities will be important
  - On July 14, 2020, Governor Hogan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) alongside governors of 14 other states and the mayor of Washington, D.C. to collaborate to increase the number of electric medium- and heavy-duty vehicles — pursuing a goal of all sales of these vehicles being zero-emission models by 2050 (<https://news.maryland.gov/mde/2020/07/14/hogan-administration-joins-multi-state-clean-truck-initiative/>)
  - Tackling EJ may include financial assistance, water equity and affordability considerations, waste management, and more
  - Moonshot Missions is an example of a nonprofit aiming to serve disadvantaged communities and is headed by Former DC Water CEO, George Hawkins
- **Robert Hackman:** Thank you for your commitment. I have served for the Commission for a few years. How will MDE help staff the commission? Beyond two members (including reports and studies)?
    - **Ben Grumbles:** MDE has a strong internal network across administrations and programs that will support EJ efforts and we will help to network with external organizations as well
  - **The Honorable Senator Patterson:** Committed to serving black and brown Marylanders throughout the state. Are we going to be including specific action items? Adequate waste management is a big concern, including addressing permit expirations and delays
    - **Ben Grumbles:** MDE staff is eager and ready to help Commission members with items to focus on. MDE is currently developing an Environmental Justice Policy that will help guide permitting and citing decisions. We would also be happy to connect with other senate members
    - **Camille Burke:** I support helping serve various disenfranchised communities across Maryland

## 2. Discussion

- **Devon Dodson,** MDE Designee and Senior Energy Policy Advisor
  - I bring over 20 years of experience working in state government and am committed to Ben's vision on EJ, including by helping develop an internal MDE EJ Policy

- Deliverables by the end of this year will be provided
  - Sister agencies will help address any concerns
- **Richard Fairbanks**
  - I had trouble accessing the emails and had to call in
  - Concerned about Brandywine
  - I have served the Commission since 2016 and want to help out as much as possible
  - Concerned about discussions on systemic racism
- **Cindy Osorto**, MDE Staff to the Commission, Legislative and Policy Analyst
  - MDE has a lot of capacity and internal support
  - Presentation for this meeting is available and provides background on the statutory charge of the Commission
  - The Commission is tasked with advising State government agencies on environmental justice, developing criteria to identify communities, analyzing the effectiveness of State and local government laws and policies to address issues of environmental justice and sustainable communities, and provide annual recommendations to the Governor
- **Devon Dodson**
  - I will be serving as the liaison between Ben and the Commission
  - Identification of EJ communities is a critical issue
  - Several tools are available, including EJ Screens, but MDE will need help from partnerships
- **Robert Hackman**: Agree that it is important to work smarter, not harder
- **Camille Burke**: The Commission will develop a new direction and criteria
- **Devon Dodson**: There will likely be legislation on EJ issues during the 2021 legislative session and MDE staff will help monitor this
- **Robert Hackman**: It is important to discuss how best to identify EJ communities
- **Devon Dodson**: MDE will provide EJ definition options for the consideration and discussion of the Commission
- **Stephan Levitsky**: Commission's identification of EJ is important
- **Joseph Griffiths**: How will the various state agencies coordinate together to address EJ legislative needs?
- **Devon Dodson**: The Commission will take an independent position separate from the positions of state agencies and we may need to meet more often during session
- **John Papagni**: State agency review and comment is different than taking a position
- **Devon Dodson**: Commission vacancies and expirations will need to be addressed. There are currently three Governor-appointed vacancies: general public, environmental nonprofit, and health expert
- **Camille Burke**
  - I want to state publicly that I offered my resignation to Secretary Grumbles and my main concern is to serve the state of Maryland and its citizens
  - It will be important to weigh in on EJ bills as a Commission
  - Report recommendations are critical
  - I currently serve as liaison to the Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council (CEHPAC)

- Information sharing is important, and it will be okay to disagree on issues if we are all respectful
- **Richard Fairbanks**
  - I supported the appointment of Paulette Hammond
  - I am a retiree and willing to stay or not stay, but committed to helping in any way I can
- **Paulette Hammond:** I can represent the Environment, as President of the Maryland Conservation Council
- **Camille Burke:** Thank you

### 3. Public Comment

- Elizabeth Shwe, reporter from Maryland Matters: Last month, advocacy groups wrote a letter to Governor Hogan denouncing the Commission for failing to influence any meaningful policies, and one of the reasons cited was lack of sufficient representation for low-income populations and affected communities of color. Will the Commission address this concern and how?
  - **Devon Dodson:** The Commission does not have to establish a separate workgroup due to the size of the Commission. The letter has not been provided to the Commission.
  - **Camille Burke:** One affected community is Baltimore City, which I represent. Crystal Faison represents Prince George's County. We already have some diverse representation, but we would be happy to respond to the letter if it is provided to us
  - **Ben Grumbles:** I have seen the letter and I welcome all comments and suggestions. The Commission makes the final decision, but I see value in focusing on communities of color, as well as underserved and overburdened communities. It is important to have broad representation, fully staffed, and empowered Commission.
  - **Cindy Osorto:** An optional reading suggestion is included in the presentation and please note that sustainable communities is not defined in statute

### 4. Concluding Remarks

- **Camille Burke:** Thank you everyone for your continued commitment. I'm excited about the work moving forward.