

MARYLAND COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

**Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities
November 23, 2021, 10-12p**

Minutes

Attendance

Commissioners: Ben Grumbles, Camille Burke, Barbara Paca, Monica Brooks, Voncia Molock, Paulette Hammond, John Papagni, Lesliam Quiros-Alcala, Crystal Faison, Delegate Regina Boyce, Subha Chandar, Phillip Wilson, Paula Dannenfeldt

Participants: Tracy Garrett, Betsy Nichols, Wandra Ashley Williams, Hope Clark, Ann Bristow, Geri Nicholson, Staci Hartwell, Megan Latshaw, Brooke Harper, Pam Kasemeyer, Victoria Veneable, Patuxent River Keepers, Fred Tutman, Christine Krone, Devon Dodson, Horacio Tablada, Suzanne Dorsey, Lisa Nissley, Lisa Jones, Kimberlee Drake, Jay Apperson

Introduction by Camille Burke, Chair

Chairman Burke welcomed everyone to the meeting. She thanked everyone for joining the meeting during the holiday week. She also shared that this week she has been working on a project to increase tree canopies and she thinks it a great project everyone would be interested in. Secretary Grumbles welcomed everyone.

There was a motion to approve the October minutes. Voncia Molock asked that we correct a typo in her email address listed in the minutes. The change will be made and the minutes were approved.

Staff Reports

Devon Dodson reported that on December 7th the Commission will have its annual joint meeting with the Children's Environmental Health Protection Advisory Council. There are many overlapping topics and we will concentrate on those. We will also make sure we are respecting the duties of each organization and make sure we are not stepping on each other's duties.

The Commission is charged with collaborating with the Office of Minority Health & Health Disparities per SB 674/HB 1207. Devon Dodson will be reaching out to the staff at MDH to begin to coordinate that communication. Also, there is an opportunity to add a member with EJ expertise to the BRF Advisory Council. The Council meets quarterly. If you are interested, please reach out to Devon.

Community EJ Concerns in Anne Arundel and Washington Counties

Staci Hartwell of the NAACP, Tracey Garrett (Anne Arundel County NAACP chair and Lothian resident), Betsy Nicholas, (Waterkeepers Chesapeake) presented on issues around Environmental Justice in their communities. Staci Hartwell spoke about the Clean Truck Rule. Issues of on road air pollution have a great impact on minority populations. Their community would like to see climate considerations in all permitting decisions and these decisions should align with climate goals of the state. Many of these issues have also been hit hard by COVID. We need to work together to make sure EJ is considered and protect communities. Tracy Garrett shared there are many communication issues in her area (Lothian, South of Annapolis). Communities are not always able to get the information they want. They reach out to various government agencies on different levels and are not able to get answers. Devon Dodson offered to help sort through this and figure out who is responsible for what. He is the EJ Officer and can work to move everything forward.

Camille Burke agreed. She said often we hear about accountability and we want to help with that. We want to help coordinate between the state and local government. Tracy Garrett continued, pointing out that a lot of people do not have the luxury of attending these meetings and they need information too. Devon Dodson will pursue this issue. Betsy Nichols would like to see more information provided to the public including impacts of projects.

MDE Partnership Project in Cheverly, MD

Megan Ulrich of the MDE Air & Radiation Administration shared a presentation about the air monitoring and enhanced compliance partnership between MDE & the Town of Cheverly. The presentation can be found [here](#).

Commissioners asked if the project was well received by non permitted facilities and if there were any violations by these facilities. Megan Ulrich answered that everyone was cooperative. The Department can not give a violation to non regulated facilities, but there were three incidents where there was uncontrolled dust. The facilities were open to the comments on that and generally we had better information about the area. Philip Wilson asked if there is a plan for diesel and idling? The Department was looking more at particulate matter.

Climate XChange Maryland - Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act

Hope Clark and Wandra Ashley Williams presented on the prefiled bill, HB 171/SB135 Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act sponsored by Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo and Senator Kramer. Bill Text can be found here: <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2022RS/bills/hb/hb0171F.pdf>

Talking Points from Climate XChange Maryland: : The destructive impacts of climate change to Maryland's lands, history, and economy, as well as to the health, traditions, and prospects of its people, now constitute an existential *climate crisis*. The Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act (CCEJ) addresses these threats to Maryland with transformative, market-based solutions.

The CCEJ Act incentivizes the reduction of fossil fuel CO2 emissions, and its passage would put Maryland on a commonsense, practical pathway toward a sustainable, vibrant economy. It will generate billions of dollars for investment in clean energy infrastructure, all while providing protective benefits to Maryland's trade-exposed small businesses and its most vulnerable populations: low- and moderate-income households.

HOW CCEJ WORKS

- **Builds on the Statewide Inventory and Emissions Reduction Plan** setting new statewide, greenhouse gas emission reduction goals:
 - 60% by 2030; 100% by 2040; and zero emissions after 2040, using 2006 emission levels as a baseline. These goals complement existing programs like the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)
- **Creates a Climate Crisis Council** in coordination with the Maryland Department of Environment, will develop a plan to achieve targets, hold periodic public meetings, administer schedules of fees, and delegate distribution of funds.
- **Establishes two types of fossil fuel fees** that include a polluter pays, no-pass through provision:
 - Non-transportation fuel fee (Building Heat) starts at \$15/ton CO2, increases \$5/ton per year, and is capped at \$60/ton until the target is met.
 - Transportation fuel fee (Gas) starts at \$10/ton CO2, increases \$3/ton per year, and is capped at \$37/ton until the target is met.
- **Establishes revenue for two separate funds** for green infrastructure, and household and employer benefits:
 1. 50% of the total revenue will go to low- and moderate-income households and energy-intensive trade-exposed (EITE) businesses to protect them from financial harm.
 - a. The **Household** Benefits Account - 80% of the money in the Benefit Fund
 - b. The **Employer** Benefit Account - 20% of the money in the Benefit Fund
 2. 50% of the total revenue will go to the *Climate Crisis Infrastructure Fund* - to invest in initiatives that improve the health and welfare of the citizens of the State.
 - a. At least 50% of the **Infrastructure** account **shall be invested in projects that are directly located within and provide meaningful benefits to environmental justice communities.**
 - b. Up to 5% of the **Infrastructure** account shall provide technical assistance, capacity, and planning tools to county and municipal governments to develop qualified local climate plans and investment proposals.
 - c. Up to 50 % of the **Infrastructure** account shall be disbursed to county and municipal governments for qualified projects to mitigate GHG, and build resilience.

The Commission has several duties in this bill.

Public Comment

Delegate Boyce shared she feels we need to find ways to build community and opportunity. Voters need more information and resources. After hearing these presentations she is reminded everyone has a stake in the environment and it is important to open the lines of communication.