

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARD
NOVEMBER 15, 2022**

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA PHONE:

Jenn Baka
Heather Bedi
Adam Cutler
Arthur Frank
Hazem Hijazi
Bobby Hughes
Rashida Lovely
Joylette Portluck
Jerome Shabazz
Horace Strand

DEP STAFF PRESENT VIA PHONE:

Glenda Davidson, DEP
Abbey Cadden, DEP Policy Office
Justin Dula, Office of Environmental Justice
Jennifer McLuckie Office of Environmental Justice
Winnie Okello, Office of Environmental Justice
Bo Reiley, Bureau of Reg Counsel
Juan Serrat, Office of Environmental Justice
Jessica Shirley, DEP Office of the Budget
Jill Whitcomb, DEP Office of Water Programs

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dr. Kandis Boyd, EPA, Director, Chesapeake Bay Program Office
Ben Dannels
Laura Edinger
Mike Ewall, Energy Justice Network
Julianna Kurdila
Madison Stromswold
Bo Williams

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Adam Cutler called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Cutler solicited additions or corrections to the Minutes of the August 18, 2022 meeting. Hearing none, Chairman Cutler requested a motion to approve the Minutes.

Arthur Frank made a motion to approve the Minutes of the August 18, 2022 meeting. Jerome Shabazz seconded the motion. With no abstentions, all were in favor, and the motion was unanimously approved.

PRESENTATIONS

Jessica Shirley, DEP, Infrastructure Implementation Coordinator – Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act Update

This presentation provided updates to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act (IIJA/IRA Act). \$1.2 trillion dollars has been allocated for IIJA Act, over 15 years, nationwide, of which, \$19 billion has already been allocated to Pennsylvania. This investment goes towards traditional and nontraditional investments, such as rebuilding roads and bridges and improving the environment through remediation and abandoned well plugging, clean water and clean energy, among other things. DEP has put most of its investment money towards abandoned mine reclamation. \$245 million, is being allocated, per year, for the next 15 years.

The IRA is the largest investment in energy and climate change. Focus is being put to reduce emissions. Tax credits and grant programs are available for electric vehicle transportation.

Questions arose with respect to funding in communities that have been divided by highways and the potential to have funds allocated to reunite said communities. How might other states be getting guidance on Justice40 since the Federal Government isn't providing clear guidance on this initiative.

Dr. Kandis Boyd, EPA, Director, Chesapeake Bay Program Office

This presentation centered around the EPA and the Chesapeake Bay Program and the advances that have been made in this area. The Chesapeake Bay Program is streamlined by the Watershed Agreement, which was signed in 1983 and provides guidance for the Program. Strategy recommendations were discussed and how EPA plans to integrate the policies and procedures and involve the community during each step and continuously work collaboratively together.

Questions centered around EPA's resources and funding and how to include the community in this. EPA is making sure there is enough diversity within the program, constantly looking at inclusion and listening to the needs of the communities and partnerships that EPA has developed.

Jill Whitcomb, DEP, Director, Bureau of Watershed Restoration and Nonpoint Source Management (Bureau)

This presentation focused on what the Bureau of Watershed Restoration has successfully implemented to ensure not only Chesapeake Bay restoration goals are being met, but throughout the entire Watershed area and state. Numerous partnerships and workgroups are in place to accelerate implementation on the ground and make sure funding gets to where it needs to be. Moving forward, helping those partnerships succeed and flourish by making sure resources are available for all partners. Data was also shared about water quality monitoring efforts of the Bureau and the various avenues of funding available.

2023 Meeting Discussion

EJAB 2023 meeting dates were discussed, in addition to continuing having the option to participate virtually. Discussions arose traveling for the meetings and the financial hardship. Travel expense reimbursement was briefly discussed. OEJ suggested bringing travel and reimbursement suggestions to the new administration coming in the new year. A poll will be conducted to gather the consensus for the best meeting dates and times. There was also a suggestion to share speaker's presentations ahead of the quarterly meetings. This may help to cut back on the length of presentations and to streamline the question and answer period.

OEJ UPDATE

Director Dula provided an update on OEJ staff transition. Since the last quarterly meeting, Ngani Ndimbie, Regional Coordinator has left her position, creating a vacancy in the OEJ. Current staff introduced themselves, Justin Dula, Director of OEJ, Winnie Okello, Statewide Strategic Coordinator, Jennifer McLuckie, Administrative Assistant and Juan Serrat, Regional Coordinator. With the transition of the new Governor, the vacancies of the Regional Coordinators have been placed on hold, until further notice.

EJAB members discussed putting together a transition memo to the new administration. There was also discussion centered around having certain topics presented and discussed with the EJAB, before they go final, so that feedback may be provided.

EJ POLICY

Based on comments received on the EJ Policy, the structure has been updated to be more consistent with other policies and to be clearer and more concise. OEJ is focusing and working on more robust definitions of key items. A new section was added, after comments were received, to better address where the policy applies. Updates on the EJ Mapping will be provided during the CAC portion. There will be a public comment period for the EJ Mapping, until then DEP will use the 2004 definitions of the policy.

Regulatory Update

Regulatory update schedule and where they are posted on the website were shared, updates will be provided at each planning meeting with EJAB.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

There was a request from the Mayor of Scranton to hold a meeting. Rashida Lovely reached out to the mayor to discuss local environmental justice issues and possible funding opportunities. The mayor requested to meet with the comptroller first, then will be in touch regarding putting a meeting together with the EJAB.

Chairman Cutler solicited interest in forming a potential subcommittee for a transition memo. Ideas were discussed on how to start the process and what to include in a transition memo. Email will be forthcoming to get an idea of who would like to participate.

Director Dula discussed EJ in PA funding that Rafiqya Muhammed found. Chairman Cutler provided an introduction and update. During the pandemic, EJAB members organized a statewide conference. Donations and contributions were collected for funding for the conference. An organization, PERC, offered to be the fiduciary and hold the funds that were raised. PERC or Pennsylvania Environmental Resource Consortium is no longer offering to hold the funds and wants to transfer them to an organization that may be better equipped to distribute funds. EJAB is tasked with trying to find another entity. Camp Curtin YMCA of Harrisburg was suggested. Heather Bedi shared that the vision for this funding is that people living in environmental justice communities and working on environmental justice issues directly, would have funding and connections to tackle these issues.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

No subcommittee updates.

The November 15, 2022 EJAB meeting adjourned at 12:10 PM.

