

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SUBCOMMITTEE

Draft Meeting Summary: August 28, 2024

<p><b>EJ Subcommittee Members in Attendance:</b>          Hon. Dave Snyder, Co-Chair          Hon. Kristin Mink, Co-Chair          Hon. Anita Bonds          Kenny Boddye, Prince William County          Hon. Tom Dernoga, Prince George's County          Julie Kimmel, ACPAC          Noble Smith, MDE          Elder Dr. Jacqueline Norris, ACPAC</p> <p><b>Additional Attendees:</b>          Tauhirah Abdul-Matin, AECOM          Charles Brown, Equitable Cities          Gwendolin McCrea, Virginia DEQ</p>	<p><b>COG Staff:</b>          Alissa Boggs, COG DEP          Heidi Bonnaffon, COG DEP          Robert Christopher, COG DEP          Jen Desimone, COG DEP          Jeff King, COG DEP          Jane Posey, COG DTP</p>
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### 1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY, FOCUS AND PURPOSE OF MEETING – DEFINING THE PROBLEM

*Kristin Mink, Co-Chair*

Co-chair Mink called the meeting to order, introductions were given, prior meeting summary was approved.

### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Public comment emphasized the presence of air pollution hotspots in low-income and predominantly minority communities and pointed out the systemic nature of these issues, partly stemming from outdated government regulations. Other public comments included those from Empower DC and environmental justice groups, who discussed the burden placed on affected communities to document air pollution issues and demand enforcement of regulations, highlighting the power of collective action in addressing these issues.

### 3. PRESENTATION FROM LOCAL EJ PARTNERSHIP LEADERS

*Ray and Julia Mosley, EJAT*  
*Anthony David, Jr., Empower DC*  
*Karen Campblin, Fairfax County NAACP*

#### **Ray and Julia Mosley (Environmental Justice Action Team - EJAT)**

Ray and Julia Mosley, from Prince George's County, Maryland, discussed the long-standing air quality issues faced by their community, which sits at the intersection of several major roadways and

industrial sites. They have worked to install low-cost air quality monitors to document pollution levels but noted frustration with local authorities for not taking sufficient action to address these risks. Their community is burdened by cumulative exposure to air pollutants from diesel trucks, concrete production, and metal recycling facilities. Julia Mosley emphasized the need for zoning reforms and urged governments to place moratoriums on new developments in overburdened areas until the existing air quality issues are addressed.

#### **Anthony David, Jr. (Empower DC)**

Anthony David highlighted environmental injustices in Ivy City and Brentwood, Washington, D.C., areas historically suffering from industrial encroachment due to biased zoning laws. Empower DC has advocated for the closure of the National Engineering Products (NEP) facility, which operates without a proper permit and emits harmful pollutants. David criticized the local government for inadequate enforcement of environmental regulations and noted that residents are often forced to report violations themselves. He also discussed Empower DC's broader efforts to improve air quality monitoring and prevent new polluting developments, particularly in Black and Brown communities already suffering from poor air quality.

#### **Karen Campblin (Fairfax County NAACP)**

Karen Campblin, representing the Virginia NAACP, discussed the broader impacts of environmental injustice on health, economic stability, and property values. She focused on the disproportionate siting of polluting industries in communities of color, leading to increased asthma rates and reduced academic performance among children. Campblin advocated for cumulative impact assessments to be part of permitting processes and stressed the importance of transparency and government accountability in addressing these environmental risks.

#### **Key Themes from the Presentations:**

1. **Cumulative Impact of Pollution:** The presenters underscored how overburdened communities face a compounding effect of multiple pollution sources, leading to long-term health problems.
2. **Zoning and Land Use Issues:** Poor zoning practices were cited as a central cause of environmental injustice, with calls for reforms and moratoriums on harmful developments in vulnerable communities.
3. **Need for Stronger Enforcement:** All presenters highlighted inadequate enforcement of existing regulations, allowing polluting industries to continue operating unchecked.
4. **Community Burden:** The burden of monitoring and reporting pollution often falls on residents, compounding these communities' stress and health issues.
5. **Government Accountability:** Presenters emphasized the need for more proactive involvement from government agencies to enforce regulations, provide resources, and ensure transparency in addressing environmental justice concerns.

#### **4. COMMITTEE MEMBER DISCUSSION**

##### *Subcommittee Co-Chair and Members*

The committee members reflected on the presentations, strongly focusing on the systemic nature of environmental injustice. Dr. Jacqueline Norris highlighted how poor zoning decisions have historically allowed industrial development to encroach on residential areas, particularly in communities of color. She emphasized that local governments must be more accountable to residents than developers and that decision-making must prioritize vulnerable populations.

Several members underscored the urgent need for zoning reform as a pivotal solution to environmental justice issues. They deliberated on imposing moratoriums on new developments in overburdened areas until regulations are revised to prevent further harm. There was an

understanding that zoning practices issues persist in concentrating polluting industries in disadvantaged neighborhoods, exacerbating health disparities.

Enforcement challenges were also a key topic, with members acknowledging that existing environmental regulations, such as those on illegal idling and dust emissions, are often not enforced in low-income and minority communities. Members discussed potential strategies for more consistent enforcement, including community-led air quality monitoring and using state resources to support local enforcement efforts.

Another discussion aspect was the intersection of environmental justice and public health. Members proposed a more direct involvement of local health departments in addressing the health impacts of poor air quality, as public health professionals could play a crucial role in assessing and mitigating risks in affected communities.

Finally, the committee acknowledged the need for greater transparency and community engagement from government agencies. They discussed how better access to air quality data and more effective communication with residents would help relieve the burden on communities to report violations and advocate for enforcement.

## **5. PUBLIC FEEDBACK ON MEETING DISCUSSION**

Following the presentations and discussions, the chair invited additional feedback from the public. Comments focused on improved outreach, enforcement, and government accountability, particularly in underserved communities. The committee acknowledged these issues and planned to address them in the forthcoming environmental justice action plan.

## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

*Kristin Mink, Co-Chair*

The meeting was adjourned.

*All meeting materials including speaker presentations can be found on the MWCOG website by clicking the link below –*

<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2024/9/25/ej-subcommittee/>

**The next EJ Subcommittee meeting is September 20, 2024.**

Reasonable accommodations are provided upon request, including alternative formats of meeting materials. For more information, visit: [www.mwcog.org/accommodations](http://www.mwcog.org/accommodations) or call (202) 962-3300 or (202) 962-3213 (TDD)