

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SUBCOMMITTEE

Draft Meeting Summary: July 24, 2024

<p>EJ Subcommittee Members in Attendance: Hon. Dave Snyder, Co-Chair Hon. Kristin Mink, Co-Chair Hannah Ashenafi, DOEE Hon. Kenny Boddye, Prince William County Hon. Tom Dernoga, Prince George's County Julie Kimmel, ACPAC Danielle Sims, DEQ Noble Smith, MDE Elder Dr. Jacqueline Norris, ACPAC</p> <p>Additional Attendees: Tauhirah Abdul-Matin, AECOM Charles Brown, Equitable Cities Gwendolin McCrea, Virginia DEQ</p>	<p>COG Staff: Alissa Boggs, COG DEP Leah 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, AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Dave Snyder, Co-Chair

Co-chair Snyder called the meeting to order, introductions were given, prior meeting summary was approved, and public comment given.

Public Comment Summary

One member of the public joined the webinar, and expressed the following viewpoints:

- Acknowledged the co-chairs' leadership and dedication, noting the frequency of the EJ subcommittee meetings.
- The public participation process needs to be refined before focusing on substantive comments for the Action Plan. The May 22nd MWAQC meeting set a record for public comment, but the public comment process was restrictive. Since then, there have been notable improvements in how COG is handling public comments.
- There should be an effort to engage additional members of the public, as other members of the public are not on today's call, yet public participation is crucial and ought to be prioritized.
- Mr. King clarified the limitations of the WebEx as the webinar tool being used, and said COG is looking into other webinar formats. To give a sense of other public participation at COG, COG's TPB will not allow verbal comments, only written. For the

MWAQC committee and EJ subcommittee, COG staff are striking a balance between the desired public engagement and allowing sufficient time for the EJ subcommittee to do its business.

- Councilmember Mink thanked staff for allowing time for public comments at the end of the meetings and the beginning. She asked how we can improve public turnout for meetings.
- Mr. King said COG is logging public comments and will make a concerted effort to send out notices of EJ subcommittee meetings in advance. COG staff held one evening public listening session and may do this again since daytime may not be optimal. Mr. King learned from the evening meeting that health was the main reason for their interest and involvement.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Robert Christopher, COG Staff

Robert Christopher provided an update on several dozen comments received, which fall into categories like public engagement, air monitoring, emission sources, air pollutant risks, the action plan, control measures, and permits. Key points include:

1. **Public Engagement:** Emphasis on the importance of public involvement, timely meeting notices, and building on existing relationships.
2. **Air Monitoring:** Suggestions for community monitoring centers and hyper local networks.
3. **Emission Sources:** Focus on specific sources like diesel, highway traffic, idling and truck traffic.
4. **Air Pollutants:** Highlighting metals, toxics, black carbon, VOCs, and particulate matter and dust as critical pollutants.
5. **Community Health Risks:** Concern about severe pollution in areas like Ivy City and Cheverly.
6. **Action Plan:** Calls for leveraging existing networks, enforceable actions, real-time emissions reductions, and strong community involvement.
7. **Control Measures:** Encouragement of clean technologies and stricter regulatory controls.
8. **Permits:** Ensuring unpermitted sources are addressed and permits include mitigation plans.

Overall, there's a strong demand for increased public engagement, targeted emission reductions, and immediate actions, especially in communities of color, underscoring the need for a robust environmental justice action plan.

2. MDE PRESENTATION ON HYPER-LOCAL MONITORING PROJECT

Noble Smith, MDE Staff

Noble Smith, the Environmental Justice Coordinator for the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the Air and Radiation Administration, provided an overview of his work, which includes acting as a community liaison and facilitating process changes within MDE to better connect community advocates with department personnel. He focused on a partnership initiated in 2021 between MDE, the town of Cheverly, and the Community Engagement, Environmental Justice, and Health (CEEJH) Center at the University of Maryland. This collaboration aimed to improve understanding of local air quality, particularly in environmental justice communities.

The initiative began with the deployment of low-cost air sensors across Cheverly and neighboring areas to collect community-level air quality data, which state-level monitors often miss. This effort

was supported by an American Rescue Plan (ARP) grant, which allowed MDE to enhance local inspections, particularly in areas with numerous permitted and unpermitted facilities contributing to air pollution. The partnership also focused on addressing illegal idling, with MDE working alongside Maryland State Police to enforce anti-idling laws and engage the community through educational outreach.

Smith highlighted the challenges of expanding these efforts statewide due to limited resources, emphasizing the need to build capacity at both the state and community levels. He discussed ongoing efforts to continue enhancing air quality monitoring and enforcement in Cheverly and the importance of empowering communities to take an active role in these initiatives. The presentation concluded with Smith outlining the next steps, including continued engagement with local communities through bi-weekly calls with the Community Advisory Board and CJAT, local officials including the Cheverly mayor and DC officials, expanding partnerships, and addressing specific air quality concerns through targeted actions.

3. ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY PRESENTATION, PART 2

AECOM Staff

Charles Brown, representing AECOM and Equitable Cities, provided an update on the stakeholder engagement plan for an action plan aimed at improving air quality in the region. Based on feedback from the committee and the public, the team updated their approach and compiled a comprehensive list of stakeholders across the region. They are using the EPA's EJSCREEN tool to identify underserved communities most affected by poor air quality. Despite some technical errors in the initial data, the team corrected the mapping and added new variables such as nitrogen dioxide for better accuracy.

Brown outlined the structure of the engagement process, which includes setting up virtual listening sessions divided into clusters based on geographic areas.

Cluster 1: District of Columbia

Cluster 2: Prince George's and Montgomery Counties

Cluster 3: Fairfax and Arlington Counties

Cluster 4: Prince William County, Manassas Park, and Loudoun County

Cluster 5: Metro-wide meeting

These sessions will gather input from stakeholders, including environmental justice groups, air quality advocates, and local organizations. The team aims to reach 134 organizations and individuals, which would represent over 115,000 people through these sessions. They have prepared templates and key messages to facilitate stakeholder participation and ensure broad representation in the engagement process. Brown has created social media and flyer templates for sending to the stakeholder groups to invite them to the listening sessions.

In response to a question from the EJ subcommittee, Brown emphasized that the virtual sessions would allow participants from outside of cluster to join that listening session, ensuring that all voices are heard, but those within a cluster's geography will be prioritized. The feedback from these sessions will be incorporated into the draft action plan, with follow-up meetings planned to show how this input was used.

In response to a question from AECOM, Chair Snyder said the goal is to create a robust, actionable plan that Chair Snyder cautioned that the action plan should stress the air quality issues that are actionable today, under standards from the three-state air regulatory agencies. He also requested that COG elected officials be notified that the listening sessions are occurring.

Supervisor Boddye cautioned that local officials may need General Assembly enabling to implement some environmental justice actions.

4. DISCUSSION ON ENGAGEMENT APPROACH, INCLUDING PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Dave Snyder, Co-Chair

Chair Snyder invited public feedback. The same member of the public from earlier suggested that to improve public engagement, the committee should invite community members to co-present with officials, which could enhance trust and provide a more authentic perspective. The member of the public also noted that the air quality monitors are restoring trust and local air monitoring data shows improvement in air quality in Cheverly due to the partnership's efforts. Additionally, it was recommended to supplement the EJSCREEN tool with emissions density maps and local air monitoring data for a more accurate reflection of air quality issues.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Dave Snyder, Co-Chair

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

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

<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2024/7/24/ej-subcommittee/>

The next EJ Subcommittee meeting is August 28, 2024.

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