

CJWG Meeting Notes

Webex - 8.20.24

Meeting Commence 2:30pm

*Disclaimer: *Please note this is not a word for word translation.*

Agenda:

1. Presentation of Community Air Monitoring results
2. Presentation on the Extreme Heat Action Plan
3. Next Steps

CJWG Members:

- (Chair) Alanah Keddell-Tuckey, EJ Director, Office of Environmental Justice, DEC
- Alex Dunn, Director, Illume Advising
- Jill Henck, Clean Energy Program Director, (ANCA) Adirondack North Country Association
- Amy Klein, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Capital Roots
- Rahwa Ghirmatzion, EJ Advocate
- Elizabeth Furth, Empire Fellow, NYS Department of Labor
- Sonal Jessel, EJ Advocate
- Elizabeth Yeampierre, Executive Director, (UPROSE)
- Eddie Bautista, Executive Director, NYC Environmental Justice Alliance
- Abigail McHugh-Grifa, Executive Director, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region
- Neil Muscatiello, Director of the Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology, Center for Environmental Health, DOH
- Michael DiRamio, Assistant Director, Energy and Climate Equity, NYSERDA

Margaret LaFarr: Presentation

Discussion of overall findings and phase one report to the communities:

- The Climate act required us to monitor air quality in 10 communities for a comprehensive look at air quality in DACs.
- Mobile monitoring was conducted for one year in each community
- DEC is using this data to identify air pollution burdens and the local sources contributing to them. eg) near schools
- Overview of sources and targeted pollutants
- Overview of monitoring results.
- Next steps: Community reports will be divided into phases. Phase 1 fall 2024 and phase 2 summer 2025. There will be a final deliverable air pollution reduction strategies report.

Dr. Joseph Marto report:

There is a community air monitoring initiative DEC webpage. Currently for outreach multiple in person meetings have been scheduled for September and October.

- There are 10 story maps, one for each DAC
- Each map contains:
 - a community profile providing background about the history of the community
 - historical redlining maps which are interactive
 - air pollution
 - community involvement
 - community survey

Community involvement -Adriana:

- Capacity building and community air monitoring grants
- Community advisory committees-support community involvement
- State agency collaboration with communities: form interagency workgroup
- Challenges: community participation and data accessibility

Eddie: I found using the platform difficult. I do appreciate the interactive quality of the story maps. Are the story maps intended to be the report expected from ACLIMA? Can you share with us why the results have been delayed 5 or 6 months. Is this report the conclusion of the initial round of testing?

Margaret: So this did take us a little longer. ACLIMA provided the annual block by block concentrations. This is the phase 1 results report.

Eddie: We hoped there would be comparison testing between DACs and non-DACs.

Margaret: I think we went over this when selecting the communities. The Climate Act specifically states to monitor within DACs. We have to stick to that. It does not ask us to compare DACs to non-DACs. We are looking for similarities in a solution driven study.

Eddie: The CJWG members understood the law as when monitoring the community you are comparing it to something. It's hard to see this as anything other than that.

Margaret: We've been careful not to make those comparisons and really focus on where the sources are.

Eddie: If you are only looking at these communities the natural impulse is to compare one to the other.

Adriana: I think we can work on being clearer. It's important to underscore a point Margaret made that the inequality is the presumption that the state made.

Eddie: Any basic comparative analysis would have established a baseline and this study does not. I find it troubling how the mitigation conversation will happen by including other state agencies and city agencies. eg) What happens in communities with sewage treatment plants? We're including NY city DEP even though they are responsible for polluting in these communities. What is their affirmative responsibility?

Margaret: I will answer on the story maps. We did not want to do a standard report telling you what is important. Our goal was to be interactive. Yes, we have to work with other state agencies. It's not just DEC as a state agency making this happen.

Adriana: We heard lots of different perspectives as we were building this out. The proposal we put forth is DEC stakeholders and community organizations only. This is not the final cut.

Elizabeth: It's good to hear this is a draft because we have a lot of questions. If we have a hard time navigating this we can imagine how folks in our communities will too. You say samples have been taken all day and night. What does that mean?
-Explanation from Margaret provided.

Elizabeth: If answers are buried in the data how are folks supposed to find out what the exposure is where they reside at a particular time?

Margaret: Every data point is one second. Each roadway segment is only one second of data. ACLIMA collects this data and then models it to get an annual value. DEC used that data to create these tools.

Elizabeth: How will DEC incorporate local air testing performed by grass roots organizations? eg) the champ EJ report.

Adriana: There are some grass roots efforts called out in the report itself. These are recipients of DEC's EJ Grants program. We also solicited input from community stakeholders. What this means operationally will be addressed in the next phase.

Eddie: We did see mention of grass roots organizations testing efforts in the press release. It is unclear how their testing will be incorporated. It is fair if you are working it out but I did not hear a response to my question.

Adriana: That's fair to say Eddie. We have not worked that out yet.

Margaret: The EPA's national ambient air quality standards all come with an averaging time. It's not fair to compare a one second reading with a 24 hour or annual number. Those thresholds were based on data statistics.

Eddie: Thanks Margaret. It just seems the thresholds felt arbitrary and very high compared to what research says are safe levels. - Explanation from Joseph Marto provided.

Marilyn to working group members: We are really interested in working with you so you can find our story maps easier to use.

Eddie: It appears there are a bunch of contextual pieces required for someone to properly follow all this. Is there a way to find the actual pollution being generated from specific sites?

Margaret: So any of the permitted stationary sources are visible on DEC's website under DAC info. You can also pull up the permit on any facility and it will list pollutants emitted.

Marilyn: Phase two is where we can draw more conclusions after interacting with communities. Phase one is meant to engage people which is why we used story maps.

Adriana: Thank you Eddie. Your point is well taken.

Elizabeth: We, CJWG have concerns about possible biases and limitations of this project. Documentation uses the word 'may' which does not tell us anything. People are looking for a yes or no answer.

Adriana: Thank you Elizabeth. I do not have our press release in front of me. Your point is well taken that the language which we use matters.

Elizabeth: When we get to the mitigation phase will there be monitoring of the mitigation strategies to assess their effectiveness?

Margaret: That depends on what the mitigation is.

Adriana: I think what I am hearing from Elizabeth is whether it's follow-up monitoring or not are we putting mechanisms in place to track all the recommendations so we can ensure efficacy of the programs and initiatives happening.

Elizabeth: Yes, Adriana I disagree that it depends on the mitigation. We want to show that these interventions made a difference. We want to be able to illustrate that through data. Is there an affirmative effort to monitor the mitigation strategies?

Eddie: A lot of our problems over time deal with the cumulative impact of all this. An EJ siting law connected to this recently passed. We have no sense of when the EJ siting law regulations will be issued. What's the follow up? Can you update us?

Adriana: Sure. We have a mandate to look at burdens holistically. We expect to release draft regulations in the coming months with a comment period for folks.

Eddie: I was hoping for something more definitive that in the coming months

Adriana: I would love to tell you this week but I cannot.

Eddie: At this point will we be reacting to the next draft that comes out?

Adriana: My understanding is next step DEC puts a draft out there. That is where we re-engage.

Alanah: There is no plan for another input session. Everything goes into effect December 30, 2024. We are open to another stakeholder session just not this year.

EHAP Presentation by Dr. Leo Bachinger

Extreme Heat Action Plan (EHAP) was released in June along with the Extreme Heat in NY state summary report. The report identifies 1)key climate change projections, 2)impacts and vulnerabilities, 3) vulnerable and exposed communities.

Resources for identifying impacts and vulnerabilities:

1)from the Department of Health:

https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/weather/vulnerability_index/

<https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/emergency/weather/hot/>

2)from the CDC, HeatRisk:

<https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/Applications/HeatRisk/>

3)UHI (Urban Heat Island) Mapping

Identifies exposure and models it state-wide in high resolution

Extreme Heat Action Plan (EHAP)'s mission:

EHAP aims to....

- equitably reduce the impacts of extreme heat
- help local communities adapt to extreme heat in a changing climate
- support local capacity to act.

EHAP timeline overview

Action track overview

Eddie: Is there any dedicated funding for the implementation of EHAP?

Leo: So there is no one line in the EPF specifically for this funding.

Eddie: Who is monitoring the implementation of the suggested actions.

Leo: Each agency is responsible for implementing their own heat actions.

Next Steps

- 9/10/24 will be the next CJWG

End: 4:31pm