

## **2.16.2023 CJWG Meeting Notes**

### **Meeting Commence ~12:08pm**

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

#### **Agenda:**

- Roll Call
- Methodological Review
- Timeline
- Next Steps

#### **Panelist/CJWG Members:**

- Alanah Keddell-Tuckey, EJ Director, Office of Environmental Justice, (DEC) Department of Environmental Conservation
- Chris Coll, Director of Energy Affordability and Equity Program, (NYSERDA) New York State Energy Research & Development Authority
- Neil Muscatiello, Director of the Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology, Center for Environmental Health, (DOH) Department of Health
- Jill Henck, Clean Energy Program Director, (ANCA) Adirondack North Country Association
- Elizabeth Furth, Empire Fellow, (DOL) Department of Labor
- Eddie Bautista, Executive Director, NYC Environmental Justice Alliance
- Elizabeth Yeampierre, Executive Director, UPROSE
- Abigail McHugh-Grifa, Executive Director, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region
- Sonal Jessel, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, WEACTION for Environmental Justice
- Alex Dunn, Director, Illume Advising
- Shannon Kahl, Senior Consultant, Illume Advising
- Emily Morris, Consultant, Illume Advising
- Sameer Ranade, Climate Justice Advisor with (CAC) Climate Action Council
- Andrea Linton, Public Participation Specialist, Office of Communication Services, (DEC) Department of Environmental Conservation
- Andrea Pedrick, Public Participation Specialist, Office of Communication Services, (DEC) Department of Environmental Conservation
- Craig Pettinger, Public Participation Specialist, Office of Communication Services, (DEC) Department of Environmental Conservation
- Sunny Joshi, Senior Counsel, (NYSERDA) New York State Energy Research & Development Authority
- Tyler Hepner, General Counsel, (DEC) Department of Environmental Conservation
- Leith Nye, Senior Consultant, Illume Advising
- Rahwa Ghirmatzion, Executive Director, PUSH Buffalo
- Emma Antolos, Public Participation Specialist, Office of Communication Services, (DEC) Department of Environmental Conservation

#### **Attendees Board Rooms:**

Albany, NYC, Raybrook, Avon, Region 9

**Quorum for today's meeting:**

No quorum in physical locations @ 12:12pm

Quorum @ 12:14pm, can now deliberate

**Methodology - Alex**

Methodological items to review

- proportion of DACs (35%) review [spoke about this last week, chose to stay with 35% to ensure criteria]
- multiply versus add component scores
- weighting vulnerability factors or indicators for resiliency & representation of black and Latino groups

What multiplying vs adding means

- Adding component scores would allow you to eight component scores
- Multiplying component scores doesn't let you do this, but it does align with what others have done and the theory that burdens and vulnerabilities exacerbate one another

**Eddie:** Who else has used multiplying components? What's the reasoning?

**Alex:** California multiplied component scores and I think justice40 also ended up multiplying, but I'll have to check. The reasoning is when you multiply you get a much bigger number than when you add them. They wanted to ensure that people with high environmental burdens and vulnerabilities to create a larger number because they could get a larger score since they were at a higher risk.

**Eddie:** By adding the scores, what is the policy distinction or benefit by that choice? If California, Washington, and justice40 are multiplying scores would NY be the first jurisdiction to add rather than multiply?

**Alex:** California and Washington multiply. Again, with justice40 I need to check. There's a level of subjectivity here. Just because others have done it doesn't mean it's right or wrong. We just have to choose what's best. There's not a huge different in scenarios between multiplying and adding.

**Eddie:** A few advocates have asked why Southeast Queens won't end up appearing as a DAC. It has some environmental burdens, with the infrastructure it has a poor connection to the city sewer system, and there are constant flooding problems.

**Alanah:** Parts of Southeast Queens are covered. Not all of the census tracts that are prone to flooding are covered, Snake Rd in particular.

**Eddie:** Can we see what the multiplication and addition does here? It's counterintuitive if entire multiple neighborhoods in Queens that fit a lot of the demographic and other criteria that they won't end up as DACs with our formula.

**Alex:** There are many communities that will be included regardless. There will be more communities included with addition, and with multiplying some airport communities will be lost.

**[~32:20] Elizabeth F or Emilie(not CJWG)?:** How many folks would be low income?

Alex: NYC would have a 12% increase over and above the geographic tax, that means that 60% of NYC residents, in essence, are going to be eligible.

**[33:14] Elizabeth F or Emilie?:** How many of those are low income?

Alex: It's hard. You can see that 45% of the census tracts are less than 80% AMI. It's not perfect because it's not the method that we're going to look at. You're hitting about maybe 30% that are probably income eligible in this tract. Just a guess looking at this map.

**Sonal:** A comment from NYC. We know that there are large populations of undocumented folks from all around the world and is this coming up as the barrier to having inclusion basing on a census tract criteria? Can this be one of the explanations for what's going on here and if it is, is there a way to solve for that?

**Alex:** With the data that we currently have, I don't know if there is. Pre-2020, the work that the census did was trying to get data from undocumented groups, to take the fear of them responding so that they can be included in these types of data. It's imperfect. There are a couple of indicators that we'll be looking for in the upcoming years. There's not a lot that we can do using the data that we have.

**Alanah:** In future, can see & review other data sets to adjust to hopefully add more communities that should be a DAC. In the meantime, there are other funding sources that are available to those communities (Env Bond Act) and this is specifically to make sure that at least 35-40% will go to DACs but there's still 60% of the budget left for funding.

**Alex:** This is more something that needs to see how it works to determine what needs to be adjusted, what works and what doesn't work and what needs to change

**Eddie:** It might be helpful to have a disclaimer/explanatory text on the website stating what Alanah spoke about, because people are panicking. A lot of the Southeast Queens flooding problem has to do with a major infrastructure investment and with multiple DACs and those that are not DACs, where would the funding come from? How does that relate to the CLCPA?

**Alanah:** CLCPA did not contemplate these large infrastructure projects that fall outside of what they consider to be climate energy efficiency and clean energy projects, but that doesn't mean that there's no funding streams for those projects. The Env. Bond Act has a section that does cover water infrastructure and DEC has funding sources that can cover those types of projects. We can definitely put that on our websites and steer people towards this info.

**Abby:** It looks like the addition approach is doing a better job at capturing what we've been talking about these past few weeks.

**Alex:** You do see some decrease overall, there's minute increases in some places. The only reason we're discussing adding and multiplying is to give opportunity to weight different things based on what committee thinks is important e.x. health & environment and see the effect. Also, what Eddie was talking about with infrastructure wouldn't be counted under this legislation anyway because it's not energy or energy efficiency programs so it might not matter if those communities are designated a DAC or not.

**Eddie:** What about if homeowners see this as a way to qualify for energy efficient equipment so it would help to be in a DAC?

**Alanah:** The DAC criteria will definitely help. The goal is to get as many as possible. So we will be looking to how we can steer funding, or how certain agencies are already steering funding outside of our DACs. While we are using the DAC criteria, we are also still using the potential environmental justice areas as criteria for funding as well. EJ & DAC designations are not the same. Definitions are not the same so PEJAs can still get funding through EJ grants. Reach out to OEJ if they have questions or concerns.

**Eddie:** That's a great distinction to know. I thought that the DAC designation would replace the PEJA designation so that would be good to let people know.

### **Rochester Map**

**Abby:** While viewing Rochester, I have strong feelings - blue captures the ground truthing, communities that should have been included but were left out; so I vote for the blue.

**Alex:** Let's go to Buffalo to see if the areas affected by the snow if they were included. Blue in Rochester has very low env burdens but very high vulnerabilities so they would be left out.

**Alanah:** I want to point out that in the various opportunities report also requires priority consideration for climate hazard protections in DACs so that's something else to consider.

**Rahwa:** Not sure why the 7% is showing up that way as this area has received very little investment. It's definitely a climate justice community.

### **Southern tier and mid-Hudson region of Map**

**Alex:** Whatever you choose, we should test the effectiveness of this in the coming years. We're going to be constantly monitoring this and seeing whether it's really working the way we think it should.

### **Sunset Park Map**

**Elizabeth Y:** The blue is an EJ area with a lot of working class, low income people with high level of health disparities but the yellow has sweatshops & Asian American communities so it's concerning.

**Alex:** In the future, there are a few data that we are hoping to get. COVID, etc. If people can't not work, then the yellow areas might pop health-wise in future data.

### **Statistics of the four starting scenarios**

Temp check:

- Albany: **Neil** – defer to experts in communities as neither is perfect, **Alanah** – lean towards add but look to community advocates, **Chris** – addition seems to better reflect what people are feeling with who
- **Elizabeth F** – defer to communities; for the future with updating data, we should be able to see what infrastructure projects have been happening
- **Sonal** – addition is fine but interested in changing weights of factors ex. population and health characteristics since it doesn't seem like adding and multiplying is a huge difference

- NYC: **Elizabeth Y** – adding because it appeared to include more families and those closer to burdens, **Eddie** – addition, it seems like it made a big difference for some people
- Raybrook: **Jill** – torn, if we choose addition we have to decide what to weight, no representation for Hudson or LI or southern tier to weigh in on addition or multiplication, I don't feel like I have information into full impacts
- R8: **Abby** – addition
- R9: **Rahwa** – leaning towards addition

**Alanah:** We don't have a representative for the mid-Hudson or Long Island, or the southern tier. We have someone from the Finger Lakes region but they're not on this call so we will reach out to them to get them to the meeting next time.

**Alex:** One recommendation is that if you only make a small change and choose addition but not re-weight things strongly then that can be done, and we can investigate that for the future. These are small changes. There are many DACs across the state that stay the same whether adding or multiplying.

### **North Country Map**

**Jill:** Looking at this map helps. The area that's being added is adjacent to tribal land and there's going to be a utility scale solar ray that will be built there. That's extremely significant and changes my stance, now I'm leaning towards adding.

### **Long Island Map**

**Alex:** If you're going to make one big change, the addition versus multiplication is probably it. Trying to rework different weights will be a lot if you're trying to vote next week. But if you think it's important, then it's ok to take more time to investigate and talk things through.

**Sonal:** I would really like to see weights in health & population characteristics to feel comfortable with a vote.

**Eddie:** For clarification, how many indicators total comprise the different scores? Answer: 45. I would like guidance on how to check differences to make a better decision but not fall down a rabbit hole.

**Alex:** I don't think we should change the weighting of each individual indicator, but we could look at the weighting differences within the three factors within the environmental burdens or the four vulnerabilities.

### **Map with a health weight of 2**

**Alex:** Not much difference between % designations. In Southeast Queens, it's about the same but in North Queens, there's a lot lost.

**Abby:** Can we see the map if we choose addition; addition with the weight and addition without the weight. Concerned about losing one of the two communities as the other has a large health facility.

**Rahwa:** That gain is not great to me, but the losses are pretty significant.

**Alex:** Overall there's more gains in rural areas and loss in urban areas. We can set things up for addition for the next meeting. I'm not quite convinced about the health stuff.

**Jill:** Is one of the indicators to health, proximity to hospitals? I wondered if that's one of the reasons for the change. Answer: It's in a different indicator.

**[~1:35:Call in user/Elizabeth F or Emilie:** The other thing is if those health indicators are where the health center was or where the person lived.

**Neil:** These are all the cases based on the address of residents.

**Eddie:** We don't know what health access will be bumped up with this, could be something different than what we're thinking, we might be better off leaving things at equal weight.

**Abby:** All "buckets" are equally important, increasing the weight of any of them doesn't make sense, we're at the point of making a decision to see how things play out to see what works and what changes will need to be made.

**Alex:** In summary we are ready to vote on addition rather than multiplying.

Temp check:

**Jill:** I want to echo Eddie's sentiments; I'm satisfied with the addition methodology and am ready to vote.

Most people seem ready to vote next week via chat.

**Alex:** I think I would like to talk to Sonal and make sure that she gets a chance to see the health factor maps before the next meeting. I will present to the group with what you all just saw. We will have an annual review process where we will be able to talk through these different components. And within the next month, we'll be able to get diabetes data, not in time for the vote but we will get it.

Must have physical quorum next week. 7 people present in a physical room in order to vote and everyone else can be on the phone.

There's only 4 state agency members so a minimum of 3 others in physical locations.

**Alanah:** We are voting next week but we still need to have a conversation about what our work looks like moving forward, our future meetings, how we're going to coordinate to review information or review data. At least one or two meetings to go over that.

**Meeting adjourned ~ 2:56pm**