2.9.2023 CJWG Meeting Notes

Meeting Commence ~12:00pm
Disclaimer: *Please note this is not a word for word translation*

Agenda:
- Methodological Review and Tableau Workshop
- Timeline Review
- Items of Interest
- Next Steps

Panelists/CJWG Members:
- Alanah Keddell-Tuckey, EJ Director, Office of Environmental Justice, (DEC) Department of Environmental Conservation
- Adriana Espinoza, Deputy Commissioner for Equity and Justice, (DEC) Department of Environmental Conservation
- Chris Coll, Director of Energy Affordability and Equity Program, (NYSERDA) New York State Energy Research & Development Authority
- Elizabeth Furth, Empire Fellow, (DOL) Department of Labor
- Abigail McHugh-Grifa, Executive Director, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region
- Jill Henck, Clean Energy Program Director, (ANCA) Adirondack North Country Association
- Eddie Bautista, Executive Director, NYC Environmental Justice Alliance
- Alex Dunn, Director, Illume Advising
- Shannon Kahl, Senior Consultant, Illume Advising
- Emily Morris, Consultant, Illume Advising
- Sonal Jessel, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, WEACT for Environmental Justice
- Andrea Linton, Public Participation Specialist, Office of Communication Services, (DEC) Department of Environmental Conservation
- Emma Antolos, 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
- Lisa Covert, General Counsel, (DEC) Department of Environmental Conservation
- Nance Arquiett, Public Information Officer, (DEC) Department of Environmental Conservation
- Leith Nye, Senior Consultant, Illume Advising
- Sunny Joshi, Senior Counsel, (NYSERDA) New York State Energy Research & Development Authority
- Sameer Ranade, Climate Justice Advisor with (CAC) Climate Action Council
- Neil Muscatiello, Director of the Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology, Center for Environmental Health, (DOH) Department of Health
- Mary Beth McEwen, Interim Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida and Madison Counties

Attendees Board Rooms:
Albany, NYC, Raybrook, Avon, Utica

Quorum for today's meeting:
- No quorum at the beginning of the meeting
- Quorum reached ~40 minutes into meeting, can now deliberate

Methodology - Alex
Review from last meeting:
- 4 items discussed:
  - proportion of DACs (35%) review
  - multiply versus add component scores
  - weighting vulnerability factors or indicators for resiliency & representation of black and latino groups
  - review inclusion of higher income communities (always check this one)

Percent designated a DAC – chart showing regional comparisons of 35% versus 25% designation

Eddie: What is the specific question regarding the 35% versus the 25%? Why these two numbers?

Alex: Originally as a group, we had decided how "big of a piece of pie" of the NY census tracts to designate as a DAC. There was a discussion about expanding the designation and what that would mean for census tracts.

View map showing 35% versus 25% designation
- red blocks = included in both designations
- yellow blocks = tracts included only in the 35% designation

Abby: At a quick glance, it looks like we're losing primarily rural communities, correct?

Alex: 25% would definitely lose some of the critical tracts. Proportionally speaking, losing half of the DACs. Overall, most of them are in NYC, over half.

Eddie: It looks like a lot of central Brooklyn will be left out. Which isn't good.

Sonal: This doesn't seem like the right solution (25%) based on what is seen in the other regions as well.

Alex: Since there's no quorum now, I'd like to discuss everything again and specifically make decisions about this next time. This is a judgement call of the working group on how much you want to cover and how much you want to focus the funding or not. Will package the map to "tinker" with and see what changes.

Abby: Chris, what does this mean in terms of program implementation.

Chris: It will depend on program design. Some state programs and investments will be designed with the whole state in mind while others will be tailored to specific communities and what they need.

NYC: What's the total percentage of the state population captured with the 35% to 25% change?

Alex: With the 35% scenario it would cover 2,540,031 households (with individual criteria added would go up to 3,586,000). No calculations for 25%. Individual criteria added would add 14%.

Abby: If there was a no low-income household left behind scenario, what would it be?

Alex: If you chose 35% designation and you chose to add in individual low-income households (60% AMI) you would have 3,586,208 households covered. This is based on old census numbers.

Eddie: If using 25%, would the numbers be higher?

Alex: The number would start out lower. The individual criteria numbers would be higher. If you restrict numbers of DAC, a lot of low-income would not be covered in DACs but would be covered under individual criteria. If you drop to the 25% a lot of low-income households would still be covered under individual criteria. But the goal was to target geographic areas and not individual criteria.

Abby: If we're looking for community level investment, if we're limiting census tracts, we won't lose low-income households but the community level projects may be lost?

Alex: Or they might be harder to implement.

Chris: Investments is one part but there's also rulemaking and regulatory impacts to DACs to consider.

Alex: like zoning practices/rules?

Alanah: Section 7(3), it would limit administrative action on not allowing to disproportionately burden disadvantage communities.

Eddie: To try and be more objective, the clear intent of advocates and bill sponsors is to drive as much investment communally. If we wanted to lean more towards the law (leave no DAC behind), which percentage would do so?

Alex: Last time, people chose 35% to leave no DAC behind, but include individual households. Numbers are higher but it allows for some community targeting. Will see the effects after things are implemented. Since we haven't enacted anything, we can't see the effects yet.

Map showing adjusted thresholds – adjusted to 30%

Neil: Can we see who is excluded in each of the scenarios based on vulnerabilities and burdens? Is there really a difference in the burden percentile or vulnerability percentile?

Elizabeth: Can we look at the Hamptons and the native lands that overlap?

Eddie: Were we trying to prioritize burdens versus vulnerabilities under CLCPA?

Alex: In the CLCPA, it doesn't make a case for either. It lists both. There is intersection between the environmental burdens and socioeconomic vulnerabilities.

Jill: Can we revisit Abby's question to Chris? - which % would work better in terms of program implementation?

Chris: Regardless of how many census tracks are DACs, agencies will still need to implement programs in those communities.

Discussion:

Sonal: Doesn't think that getting rid of individual criteria makes sense, but interested in seeing how changing certain factors and weights makes a difference, going back to the geographic side would be interesting

Alex: wants to keep to the 35% for now because changing too many things at the same time will be confusing. Any more thoughts on the 35%, 25%, 30%

Jill: reluctant to change to 25% due to north country only having few census tracts and half of those are most of their population centers. A lot of programs across the state are based in municipalities, and as this is based on census tracts it complicates municipal work. If lowering to 25% and relying on individual criteria will limit/complicate the impactful-ness of community programs.

Abby: Agrees that the "no DAC left behind" makes sense

Chris: We don't know where most of the investments in communities is happening outside of a few agencies. If we find out more about investments now, we can make better decisions.

Alex: Agreed, this is still theoretical and there's still missing information even with data and ground truthing. We won't know until it's implemented and after a year, seeing the results will allow for better decisions.

Methodology cont'd - Alex
Multiplying vs adding
- Adding component scores allows to weight component scores
- Multiplying does not allow weights but aligns with previous programs and theory that burdens and vulnerabilities exacerbate one another

Eddie: Why would we want a formula that would advantage communities with higher vulnerabilities versus the multiply?

Alex: Based on comments and discussions on which DACs you're leaning towards and those are the ones with higher scores and vulnerabilities but less burden scores.

Eddie: Sounds counterintuitive. Discussed burdens and vulnerabilities equally because burdens tend to capture more of the demographics that people had in mind when first writing this legislation. Feels like with higher vulnerabilities that higher income communities can be more vulnerable but not have burdens.

Alex: Define terms -vulnerabilities are the sociodemographic factors and burdens are the environmental. Show a chart of scores comparing vulnerability and burdens. Bigger scores = higher correlation.

Eddie: In this chart, climate change captures more populations that don't necessarily have disproportionate environmental burdens, right?

Alex: The don't necessarily have disproportionate environmental burdens, they also don't tend to not have less health vulnerabilities, less housing vulnerabilities, less income vulnerabilities, less race and ethnicity vulnerabilities. In this case, often these are more well off but still environmentally burdened.

Eddie: Some numbers seem off. The whole point of CLCPA was to drive resources to communities that were historically disadvantaged. While everyone is experiencing climate change risks, due disproportionate burdens that people have, there's an extra layer on top of it. Climate change affects everyone but it's impacts will not be evenly felt.

Map of census tracts – scenarios, changing factor weights
- Scenario: vulnerability components - income, race/ethnicity, health, housing; burdens – environmental exposure, land use, climate change risks
- Changed climate risk burden: scenario 1 = 2, scenario 2 = 1 ; lower factor

Adriana: Is it possible that any North Country census tracts in yellow would be added back when native land is added?

Alex: No.

Abby: With this weighting approach, how does this compare with the adding and multiplying? We probably need time to look at the different maps to compare and contrast.

Map of census tracts – adding versus multiplying, same weight on climate risk
- blue & red = added
- yellow & red = multiplied

Abby: Can you tell us what the overarching trends are in what we are/are not getting with each of these approaches?

Alex: This increases the weight of the vulnerabilities more. There are tiny changes, but they still matter.

Elizabeth: Is this data going to be updated annually? How often?

Alex: This depends on the different indicators and the data that we have. Some less often, some more often. Will be a lot of work to update annually. Will probably have rolling updates as it goes but change in a community takes time. Caution from changing things too often but keep things refreshed as possible. Need to coordinate with agencies on recommendations.

Map of census tracts – minimize climate score

Abby: Seems like philosophically, we need to know what the decision is based on. I think about Sonal talking about resiliency and making sure that the DACs include the communities that struggle to bounce back when climate impacts occur.

Eddie: Hard to quantify. What is resilience?

Sonal: Resiliency comes from hardship, a lifetime of non-investment, having to deal with multiple hardships at one time. In regard to the map, who can rebuild and who has a harder time.

Eddie: Still struggle with resiliency. Bounce back to inequity? Should build back "better."

Alex: In summary, keep 35% and adding individual criteria. Next steps are to look at the different components and show the group.

Timeline and workplan - Alanah

- is the timeline still good? Vote on the 23rd of February or add an additional meeting to vote in March?
  - Eddie, Jill, Abby: think that the 23rd is feasible
  - Alex needs there to be quorum at the next meeting before the final vote meeting for discussion
  - Sonal will not be physically present for the 23rd but as long as there is a physical quorum then there can be virtual votes as well
- Alanah will ask again on the 16th to check on timeline. As of now, will continue with the 23rd as voting date.

Next Steps

CJWG members are eligible for an Aclima Pro license. Need emails from members.

Aclima Pro training on Feb 22 from 3pm-4:15pm. Will have another training.

If someone from the CJWG will not need a license, please let Alanah know so that community groups can get one.

Next meetings will be February 16th, then the 23rd (vote). Feel free to reach out if there's any questions.

Meeting adjourned: ~2:55pm