CJWG Meeting

WebEx- 02/24/2021

At a Glance:

- Discussion of public engagement
- Discussion of indicators and associated data snap shots
- Information regarding meetings and materials can be found on www.climate.ny.gov

Participants:

CJWG Members -

- Elizabeth Yeampierre, Executive Director, UPROSE
- Sonal Jessel, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, WEACT for Environmental Justice
- Eddie Bautista, Executive Director, NYC Environmental Justice Alliance
- Rahwa Ghirmatzion, Executive Director, PUSH Buffalo
- Jerrod Bley, Clean Energy Program Director, Adirondack North Country Association
- Amy Klein, Executive Director, Capital Roots
- Rosa Méndez, Director, Office of Environmental Justice, DEC
- Chris Coll, Director of Energy Affordability and Equity Program, NYSERDA
- Neil Muscatiello, Director of the Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology, Center for Environmental Health, DOH
- Joseph McNearney, Director of Stakeholder Engagement, DOL

Presenters –

- Amanda Dwelley, Illume Advising
- Alex Dunn, Illume Advising

NYS DEC –
- Commissioner Basil Seggos
- Alanah Keddell-Tuckey, Office of Environmental Justice

Meeting Start: 3:05PM

Welcome & Roll Call

Business Items

Working group members received a draft of the meeting minutes. Discussion on draft.

Vote to approve minutes as final: Passed

Discussion on Public Engagement

- Rosa: Required to do six regional public hearings on the draft. Also, should consider virtual given physical distancing requirements. One idea to kick off discussion. Have three education opportunities where we update the public on the work of the working group, the indicators, and how we are applying them. Then have separate sessions using traditional public comment style were the participants have a few minutes each to give comment.

- Elizabeth: Like the idea of education piece. People need to know what's being discussed. Find communities get marginalized. Suggests we have a presentation or framing on Climate Justice. Presentation should include which communities are impacted. Would be beneficial to distribute the materials in different languages.

- Amy: Also like the idea of education and agrees with Elizabeth that framing is important and language considerations. Should keep in mind that language needs differ depending on the community. Also, the length of the meeting is a factor and we should consider how long the meetings are to encourage attendance.

- Sonal: Let's be mindful of community availability. Details such as not scheduling meetings during working hours. Let's have meetings be more than just regional specific.

- Joe: Suggest we consider having a time limit of 3-4mintues for people to sign up to speak.

- Rosa: We've also done public comment meetings with call in options for those not using computers or without internet access.

Discussion on Indicators and Data

- Alex:

1)Where we are in the process?
Discussion of slide illustrating:
    Objectives>screening criteria> scoring approach> DAC designation> Evaluate results> stakeholder and public review

2)Updates on Indicators
- Downloaded 49
- Still need to download 75
- Needs GIS transformations 13
- There are a total of 124 indicators

3)Next steps:
- Continue downloading data
- Make sure data are good enough
- Working Group to explore snapshots
- Explore how indicators work together
- Start narrowing down the list of indicators
- Provide Working Group with examples of combinations to ground truth

Illume has been getting its information (data) from the census tract specifically.

- Elizabeth: Example of Census data not being complete enough is the term 'Hispanic'. It is too general. Would be a beneficial improvement to break it down so it reflects all people who fall under it. The way information is being collected is insufficient. Government needs to move away from generic terms that don't tell people's stories.

- Alex: Could create or add multiple layer points to address some inefficiencies.

- Alex/Amanda: There are also limitations to document. Statistical limitations as well. Also need to assess the data and document the assessment. Need to be careful how we weigh things we have doubts about. Working on getting low birth weight info and other health data.

- Alex: and recommendations on how it can be better collected. We don't have data on COVID for this iteration. But is on list for things we are interested in. Highlights community that are still at risk.

- Sonal: Have we discussed using some indicators in one area of NY state and using other indicators in other areas?

- Alex: Will get to that question in the next few slides.

Indicator Data Snap Shots

- Alex: Want to talk next about correlations. Correlations are not causal.
- Benzene example: name of the indicator, the variable name (internal), pillar, factor or concept, and metric.

- Assess data sufficiency. How many zeros? Could be reasons for the zeros but we don't want 1000s.

- Histogram visual helps us see how data breaks down.

- A lot of the indicators are geography based. We need to assess that. Looking at top 25%, where are they?

- Trying to break down a little bit more. Top 25% by REDC region. Also are looking at urban/suburban/rural.

- Box plot – shows shape of data. Where do most of the data lie? Dots are extreme values.

- Rahwa – is in learning mode but a narrative will help explain.

- Alex – trying to build a story. The statistical tools help show us the story including the regional differences.

- Elizabeth – do you also look at the combinations with other pollutants and what that results in?

- Alex – to a certain degree yes and will have visuals. Still needs assessment. Only have correlation right now. Still at early stage.

- Elizabeth – knowing combination can inform intervention

- Eddie – at what point is task done? Indicators and methodology. Then what? When this is settled, will a map be created? If yes or no. Possibility of people, because of synergies of indicators, not understanding that this is central to how we identify DACs. Pitch is to make sure there is public confidence need explanation of this in laymen's terms.

- Alex – can't just be a statistical exercise. Needs to be assessed and groudtruthed and explained.

- Eddie – need a public health person. Is DOH working on medical impact?

- Rosa – we have Neil on the CJWG and a state staff team helping us understand the data. Also, CJWG will be annually evaluating the criteria for effectiveness.

- Amanda – example of CA and how they assessed pollution and health data. Why did they select certain pollutants over others? Something we are diving into.

- Rosa – any maps created would be public.

- Sonal – use some indicators in one part of state and not in another?

- Alex – we will be discussing with you.

- Neil – happy to try to answer questions on strengths and limitations of data.

- Alex – correlations. What is related to what?

- They vary from 0 to 1. High number means very correlated. Low numbers means low correlation.

- Open invitation from Alex to walkthrough and explain the snap shots.

- Eddie – NYC EJA recently released a study on air quality. Used hyper local testing at street level. Found that PM2.5 20 times higher than monitoring network. Air monitors from state are 20 feet above street level and averaged. Air quality monitoring system is flawed. Is there an opportunity to use local air quality? Like in NYC. Is there a way for different measurements to be incorporated.

- Commissioner Seggos – think answer is es. DEC monitors gave generic info but in South End we did an intense community level air monitoring. Link: https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/108978.html.

- Gave us real time picture. And used cameras to understand what fleets were associated with highest emissions. And we are working with the fleets now to reduce impacts.

- CLCPA requires community level air monitoring in at least four hot spots in 2022. Recognize we need to modernize.

- Alex – want to make sure its apples to apples across to use the data together.

- Amanda – not using actual values of a location, but the relative order of communities. Looking at whole distribution so as long as measured same way we can use them for comparison.

- Q: What is Y axis? Alex: it's the frequency of that measurement (histogram)

- Critical Points Where We Want Guidance:

- Example of Interim Approach – nothing was done with the data, was a data driven approach.

- A fixed approach would be taking NYC top 25% and then top 25% of rural and then top 25% of suburban.

- Other approaches are available. This a place where the working group will have discussion. Could be a policy driven focus.

- Need some examples to clarify.

- Rosa – might be clearer when we have examples using the indicators the group agrees on.

- Eddie – a few dynamics here. People will want region they live in to be represented. EJ is about disproportionately burdened communities. But shouldn't be a zero sum equation. Will need more time to understand. Useful to know what the options are. Don't want to exclude communities that are DACs.

- Alex – theoretically difficult to explain. Examples will be helpful. Goal is to get to "truthiest truth" of what is a DAC. Some places where data may not be enough. Groundtruthing is important in this context. Need the best set of criteria that we can.

- Sonal – not end of discussion? Wanted to explain about different indicators because some have better data in parts of the state. How are we factoring in that issue?

- Alex – will be looking for that issue and some may be better than others.

- Rahwa – question for today?

- Alex – not a decision for today. More of a plug for when you see the scenarios. Didn't want to surprise the group when we get to data visualizations.

- Next steps – review snap shots. Discuss with any experts. Give us your subject matter expertise. Alex will be downloading data and number crunching. Think about the decisions of how we are going to use, combine, operationalize the data.

Meeting End 5pm