

MEMORANDUM

TO: Environmental Justice Advisory Council
FROM: Nicole Dubuque, COO of Agriculture, Agency of
Agriculture, Food and Markets
DATE: March 13, 2025
SUBJECT: Environmental Justice and Civil Rights Complaints Report

The following is a summary of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets' (VAAFMM) process for receiving and responding to external civil rights and environmental justice complaints, as well as improvements in progress, and relevant complaints received 2022-2025.

Process for receiving complaints: Currently, VAAFMM receives complaints under multiple categories on our public facing website linked here: [SUBMIT A COMPLAINT](#) as well as via email at AGR.Helpdesk@vermont.gov. VAAFMM will also accept oral complaints and/or other forms of written complaints. The VAAFMM communications team reviews complaints submitted to our website or email and contacts the appropriate division for follow-up. If the complaint lacks adequate information and/or there is no way for the Agency to contact the complainant to follow up, the Agency may not be able to investigate the matter.

Total VAAFMM complaint submissions by year:

- 2022: 40
- 2023: 60
- 2024: 94
- 2025: 191

VAAFMM addresses civil rights and/or discrimination complaints related to its statutory authority. Also, as a recipient of federal funds, VAAFMM is subject to the anti-discrimination requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. *See also* Act 154 at Sec.1(12). Of the complaints received, 0 in 2025 were related to Civil Rights or Environmental Justice.

Improvements completed: VAAFMM has increased collection of complaints by making sure to include complaints that have been collected outside of the web form or email. Our number for 2025 now includes complaints received verbally, which is why the number has increased so much over the last year. VAAFMM launched a new Vermont Environmental Justice Law Implementation portion of our website. The web page provides details about Act 154 as well as equitable access to environmental benefits, public feedback and input, and equitable share environmental burdens. The web page also provides information on what the law requires of covered agencies, including VAAFMM, and a timeline of upcoming deliverables related to Act 154.

Improvements in progress: VAAFMM intends to publish a Civil Rights web page with a specific contact email for civil rights complaints that will be received and managed by an attorney on staff.

The Agency welcomes the Environmental Justice Advisory Council's feedback and recommendations on how to better capture and respond to future complaints.

