

Notes on Environmental Benefits Spending Guide Portion of the EJ Interagency Committee Meeting

Date: July 8, 2024

Time: 12:10 pm – 1:00 pm

Notes prepared by: Emma Ramirez-Richer – Executive Assistant to the Secretary, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

- Began with a report out from the task group with their understanding of the Environmental Benefits Spending work that's to be done by Vermont state agencies, according to the Guide to the Guide.
 - Bob Donahue (AOE) and Elizabeth Schelling (PSD) both expressed that this will need to improve as time goes on, because it will be hard to do a perfect job the first time around.
- Abbey Willard (AAFM) was curious about what has changed in the time line. Karla adds this link to the chat: [Interim Due Dates for the VT EJ Law - ADOPTED 12.18.23.pdf \(vermont.gov\)](#) (row above the yellow row are the proposed dates, to the Legislature).
- Bob Donohue expresses that the task group has talked a lot about how to start quantifying the environmental benefits spending. He says that for any agency spending, like grants, will have to be categorized into what sort of environmental benefit its offering and what environmental justice community its going to.8
- Juliet reminds everyone that the the Advisory Council still needs to revise the definition of an environmental justice focus population. As of now, environmental justice focus population are defined in relation to census blocks.
- Bob Donohue predicts that the bulk of environmental benefits spending reporting work will come down to the business offices and tracking the spending.
- Bob Donohue believes that something will have to give if we do this work. Either core responsibilities will take a hit, or EJ responsibilities.
- Dave Pelletier (AOT): requests to hear the changes to the definition of environmental justice as soon as possible, as this would be pivotal and IAC members would need to know that.
- Karla: Asks the IAC to please start having conversations with Agency business offices.
- Abbey Willard: Suggests that the IAC holds an office hour for business office staff. They could come and hear what's being considered. However, the updated timeline would be important to know how to approach this.
 - Karla seconds this and indicates that CR-EJ will set this up.
- Elizabeth Schilling: comments that even with the revised deadlines we'll still have to work really hard to meet all of the EJ goals.
- Karla discusses the need for language access plans before the community access plans. And we need to do an EJ complaint process. Time before revised

deadlines will be filled with lots of projects. However, teamwork will be key, don't want agency staff working on these projects in a void.

- Juliet discusses the desire for a uniform process to comply with the law but acknowledges that each Agency has existing intake processes that can/should be used.