

Potential Action Steps for the EJ Advisory Council

Prepared for the [August 21, 2023 meeting](#) of the EJ Advisory Council. Action steps were compiled by the EJ Coordinators based on EJ Advisory Council feedback on the [July 18, 2023 meeting](#) of the EJ Advisory Council and Interagency Committee. The proposed action steps are divided into three categories based on the needs expressed by Advisory Council members: 1) Community engagement, 2) Bridging public input and agency action, 3) Governance and meeting approach.

1. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

How do we meaningfully engage the public throughout the EJ Law implementation process?

- Short-term approach (what can we do with existing resources?)
- Long-term approach (what can we do with a contract to support engagement?)

Needs brainstorming (from July 18, 2023)	Proposed Action Steps
Funding for community engagement meetings, liaisons, stipends, language translation, etc.	<p>Pursue contract with community-based organization that can distribute stipends, support logistics, and be liaisons to communities.</p> <p>Clarify what ANR can purchase directly from \$110k budget and agree to an approach for ANR to execute spending requests from Advisory Council members.</p>
<p>Outreach to communities to let them know this Advisory Council exists.</p> <p>Plain language framing in outreach.</p>	<p>EJ Coordinators create content to be used for outreach purposes (with Advisory Council guidance).</p> <p>EJ Coordinators organize a schedule of outreach opportunities that Interagency Committee and Advisory Council members sign-up to cover.</p>
Logistical infrastructure to organize engagement events (e.g., listening sessions, public forums).	EJ Coordinators coordinate engagement logistics and identify outreach staff in covered agencies who could be a resource for engagement efforts.
Listserv or other open communication platforms to share information.	EJ Coordinators maintain email listserv and website (Advisory Council guides what information is shared and when).
Surveys based on needs assessments.	EJ Coordinators support survey creation and distribution.
A means of receiving and responding to concerns from the public in real time.	Create regular opportunities at Advisory Council and joint meetings for hearing concerns from the public (any other forums?).

	EJ Coordinators post public comment forms and surveys on the website and share collected comments with the Advisory Council.
Staff time to collect and synthesize feedback.	<p>Activate the EJ Coordinators to synthesize feedback as needed.</p> <p>Coordinate with state agencies as they review civil rights and environmental justice complaints (annual process starting January 2024).</p>
Information for how to access resources for the public.	Keep up-to-date list of resources available from state agencies for Advisory Council members to share with the public, including contacts at state agencies for follow-up.

2. BRIDGING PUBLIC INPUT AND AGENCY ACTION

How can the EJ Advisory Council help hold agencies accountable to public input?
 How can the EJ Advisory Council help address barriers between the public and state agencies?

Needs brainstorming (from July 18, 2023)	Proposed Action Steps
Need buy in from covered agencies and need EJ ambassadors to educate agencies on why community engagement leads to better policies and outcomes.	Buddy system: match Advisory Council members to covered state agencies / Interagency Committee members.
Deference to positional power and subject matter expertise of Advisory Council members and the public on real solutions.	When Core Principles are complete, host a forum to introduce state agency staff to the principles and why community engagement matters (kick off to engagement plan development phase).
<p>Iterative process of reviewing public feedback and policy changes.</p> <p>Input from consultation should be visible in the final product.</p>	<p>EJ Coordinators work with Advisory Council to ensure annual EJ Action Reports from state agencies promote a culture of responsiveness / visible input.</p> <p>During Advisory Council consultation, EJ Coordinators make it very clear how and where input was incorporated.</p>
Advisory Council offerings include support with policy interpretation, processes, and government	EJ Coordinators and Interagency Committee members identify specific opportunities for AC engagement in policy discussions within agency

relations and buffer between public and agencies (neutral).	they are matched to and elevate AC member voice.
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3. GOVERNANCE AND MEETING APPROACH

How do we want to approach Advisory Council meetings?

- Do we want to hire a facilitator?
 - If yes, this requires a contract and bidding process. EJ Coordinator can facilitate this process.
- Do we want documentation of our approach to consensus (discussed in the July 18, 2023, meeting)?
 - If yes, the EJ Coordinators can draft a document for review at the August 28, 2023, meeting.
- How can members of the public engage in our public meetings? What is our approach to public comment?
- What meeting rhythm do we want for 2023 (see suggestions below) and into 2024?
- How can we facilitate smaller and more frequent group meeting opportunities? (see suggestions below)
- Do we want chairs / co-chairs?

Suggested meeting schedule for the rest of 2023:

- August 21
 - Advisory Council meeting (3rd meeting of 2023)
 - Virtual
- August 28
 - Joint meeting (4th meeting of 2023)
 - Hybrid (location: Agency of Transportation, Dill Building at 2178 Airport Road in Berlin. Conference room 135.)
- September 21
 - Joint meeting (5th meeting of 2023)
 - Hybrid (location: TBD)
- October 19
 - Joint meeting (6th meeting of 2023)
 - Hybrid (location in Bennington)
- November 16
 - Joint meeting (7th meeting of 2023)
 - Hybrid (location: TBD)
- One additional meeting can be held (the 8th meeting of 2023). When should that meeting be held?

Ideas for how to meet more frequently than 8 times a year:

- Meet without reaching quorum (5 or fewer members).
- Meet on an agency basis.
- Meet on a topical basis.
- Meet in person on a geographic basis.

EJ LAW BUDGET

The following [budget](#) is available to support action steps related to VT [EJ Law](#) implementation:

Budget for the Environmental Justice Law

Sec. 4. APPROPRIATIONS: "There is appropriated the sum of **\$500,000.00** in fiscal year 2023 from the General Fund to the Agency of Natural Resources for the cost of **developing the mapping tool** ... and for **conducting community outreach** associated with the work of the Environmental Justice Advisory Council."

Proposed Allocations

<h4>Developing the Mapping Tool</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject Matter Experts (up to \$50,000)• Contract to Build EJ Mapping Tool (\$300,000) <p>\$350,000.00</p>	<h4>Community Engagement</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessible Public Meetings (\$40,000)• Community engagement led by Advisory Council members (\$110,000) <p>\$150,000.00</p>
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TBD: \$150,000 carry-over

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