Transcript

June 24, 2025, 5:07PM

Juliet Birch 0:11

I still haven't mastered the art of smoothly getting slides up on the screen once you start sharing so.
You guys all saw on my desktop for a minute there.
Welcome everyone to this public meeting of the interagency environmental justice committee.
This meeting is recorded and it'll be posted to our public resource library.
So we've got the EJ committee here today the environmental justice unit.
And maybe some community members will join us later.
Do we want to start just by going through the community agreements?
If someone could if they want to volunteer to read a community agreement just say their name?
What agency they're from and then read the agreement and then popcorn it on?

DX **Davis, Xusana** 1:01

I can start Mrs. Susanna, Agency of Administration, Office of Virtual Equity.
Community agreement #1 be present with yourself and one another. Be present with your body and feelings. If you need to take a break to take care of yourself, please do be present for one another by listening deeply.
I'm not going to call anyone, just someone figure it out.

RA **Redman, Amy (She/Her)** 1:23

I'll go.
I'll go, I'll go.
This is Amy.
I am at the Department of Health.
I do environmental justice and HealthEquity work there.
I'll do #2 calling in and calling out to assume best intent, but attempts to impact we can stop things that are being said that are harmful and be curious and create a space for learning.
Tools include using oops Ouch. To indicate a pause is needed.

Abbey Willard 1:52
I can do number 3 so Abby Willard I'm the Vermont agency of agriculture food and markets on the iac.
Community agreement number 3.
Expect and accept nonclosure.
We are unlikely to leave here feeling 100% ready to go or to have everything on our agenda wrapped up especially if we are committed to moving at the speed of trust.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 2:15
I can go next.
This is Janet Hurley. Land Use Review board chair.
Number four of the Community Agreement center respect be respectful, intentional, and work to build trust and create a safe and inviting space.

SE **Schilling, Elizabeth** 2:38
And I can go Elizabeth Schilling with the Vermont Public Utility Commission.
The last one is share verbal and other space.
Mindfully consider the balance of taking and making space. Move up. Move back.
Tools to do this include the acronym WAIT Weight. Why am I talking?
And vocalizing support for another person's comment without repeating the same point that already been made.

Juliet Birch 3:00
Awesome so can we get a round of thumbs up from everybody in the room if you can send to these community agreements for this meeting.
Great great great seeing lots of thumbs awesome.
I'm also just gonna note here that we have quorum I think we've got 10 of the 11 iac members here so that's great.
Moving on this is our agenda for today.
From one to 110 roughly we're gonna be doing some of these this intro work and then we'll head into some EJ law updates.
Next.
We're gonna take a portion of the agenda to talk about the civil rights and environmental justice complaint summary reports and we can talk through how the

interagency committee wants to develop their response to the Advisory Council 's 2025 recommendations.
Then we'll take some public comment and a break and then we'll move into the meet of today's agenda which is related to community engagement.
So we'll do an introduction to the community engagement plan deliverable.
Take another public comment and a break and then our last substantive section of the agenda will be some strategizing like an UN facilitated discussion where each covered agency you guys will have a chance to talk with each other about how you're planning on doing your community engagement plan.
Work.
And then we'll do next steps and wrap up.
Is everyone happy with that agenda?
If so please give a thumbs up to consent to this agenda?
I was afraid.
If we need to go around up introduction?
Yeah OK.
I'll we'll do meeting minutes and then we can do that.
Does that work Karla?
Yeah OK cool.
And then the last thing here is approving the March 7th meeting minutes.
You should all have access to them through the public EJ resource library.
And those are the meeting minutes from our last meeting if we could get a thumbs up to consent to approve those meeting minutes that would be very helpful.
Awesome.
Great thank you.
We'll also just take a minute here to do like a round of introductions because I think we have some folks who maybe never been in this meeting before and some folks who are somewhat new.
So if we could just go around and briefly.
Introduce ourselves where we're from and yeah maybe what's a good ice breaker.
Maybe a good like 2 word response icebreaker.
Your favorite thing to eat when it's cold.
I mean when it's hot OK.
You wish it were cold.
So anyone who wants to get started.

Hurley, Janet 6:12
I'll start and maybe what I'll do is pick the next person and each of us can pick the next person.
Based on who we see on our screen or something.
But Janet Hurley, chair of the Land Use Review Board.
Somebody gave me a a free seed less watermelon the other day, and it's pretty good when it's hot.
Jenny.

Ronis, Jenny 6:40
Hi, I'm Jenny ronas.
I'm associate general counsel for the land Use Review Board, working for Janet, and I'm really into the creamy stands that do like strange flavors.

Karla Raimundi 6:52
Hmm.

Ronis, Jenny 6:53
Yeah, like so, if you have any good tips, please reach out.

Karla Raimundi 6:59
Well where is first.
I would like to go.

Ronis, Jenny 7:02
Well, I'm in Waterbury, so the one in Richmond just reopened.
Oh, there you go.
Awesome, yeah.
Like backyard mint, anything, anything weird?
So anyway, I'll pass to Elizabeth Schilling.

Juliet Birch 7:13
That's cool.

Schilling, Elizabeth 7:17
Hi elisa. Feeling with the Vermont Public Utility Commission.
Yeah, I was gonna say creamy. I mean Maple creamy.
Or or any ice cream product.
I'll pop it over to clear.

McIlvennie, Claire 7:33
Thanks everyone.
Claire Mcelhenney and data and equity policy manager at the Department of Public Service.
She her pronouns and.
I'm gonna say sorbet.
I do love a creamy, but there is a period where I wasn't doing dairy where the like sorbets. And like the Italian ices really grew on me as like maybe a little bit more refreshing.
So it's my pick.

McIlvennie, Claire 7:56
And I'll pick Amy.

Redman, Amy (She/Her) 8:00
Hey everyone, it's nice to see you.
Yeah. Amy Redmond.
I do environmental justice HealthEquity work at the Department of Health.
And the thing that's coming to mind is in our freezer right now, we have Mango popsicles and also coconut popsicles because yesterday the kids got out of camp and needed to go and get these and actually doing them interchangeably, like having a mango and then a coconut and.
Then a mango maybe has been really nice.
Oh Susanna.

Davis, Xusana 8:29
Hello everyone.
Susanna Davis, Racial Equity office in agency of administration.

I think the prompt is favorite summer St. Sweet treats right?
Yeah, OK. Someone came in my office when you were saying it.

Davis, Xusana 8:42
So OK.
I'm not going to say creamy because everyone said it.
But I will.
I will add I like to make these smoothies in the summertime and I just call them brown smoothies because they have, like brown vibes.
So.
Little bit of coffee banana.
Oat milk.
Maybe some granola?
Little peanut butter.
It's obscene and delicious, and I choose to believe it's healthy because it has bananas, so that's good.
Rebecca, have you spoken yet?

Walsh, Rebecca 9:19
Yeah. So I'm Becca.
This is my second day working for the Agency of Commerce Community development.
I'm the new environmental specialist and I'm just gonna learn from you all today.

Walsh, Rebecca 9:30
But my favorite summer treat is the mint chocolate chip ice cream that they sell at Trader Joe's love to eat that out of the pint.

Karla Raimundi 9:38
Nice.
Nice you love anything trader Joe 's.

Juliet Birch
I did.
Well I do.

Karla Raimundi
You had Juliet a trade.
Is there anyone else online who hasn't gone yet?

VG **Vinson, Grace** 9:54
I'll go.

Juliet Birch 9:55
Grace.

VG **Vinson, Grace** 9:55
This is grace from Agency of Commerce and community Development environmental officer.
Like I put in the chat, I moved to Montpelier a couple months ago.
Go and woodbelly is right down the street and not only do they have amazing pizza, but their creamies are so good. Last week they had Maple with like a rhubarb drizzle. Very good.

Karla Raimundi 10:25
Bob.

DB **Donohue, Bob** 10:28
Oh, sorry, I was multitasking.
Sorry, Bob Donohue, Agency of Education, the school facilities program manager, and I like just about everything that you all mentioned.

Abbey Willard 10:41
Awesome what's it go first.
Here go Abby Willard agency of agriculture.
I'm the director of our ag development division.
I even though I work for the agency of agriculture I really can't eat ice cream at like something happened midlife where it just.
Like doesn't.
Agree with me.

So no I love these.
They're called love pops made by cookie love which is like frozen cookie dough dipped in dark chocolate and then frozen.
Popsicle stick yeah.
So that's my alternative.
Well.
So I'm I do just fine in the summertime.

Collin Smythe
Colin Smyth I'm here representing v trans.
For Michelle broomhauer and or Dave pelletier who both been mega today.
I'll just say I will also be probably joined by Marcela dent for the second-half of this meeting I think online.
Who is going to be much more in the know and involved in our kind of community engagement piece of this?
I've been working more on the environmental benefits spending reporting work so yeah.
Here to more kind of observe and participate where appropriate but we are happy to be here with you all and I think my favorite summer treat is probably Ben and Jerry 's mint chocolate cookie ice cream.

Kim Barrett
I can go.
Hi I'm Kim one of the EJ coordinators pronouns are she her.
OK.
I just love frozen fruit of any kind in the summer.
Actually.
All the time.
Just frozen fruit.

Juliet Birch
OK.
I'm Juliette.
I'm also one of the EJ coordinators along the vibes of frozen fruit I've lately gotten really into.

Like ground up frozen grapes with lime on it.
It kind of like comes out the texture of sorbet.
And it's really really good.
So if you haven't tried it you should try it because I just recently started started it.
Carla do you wanna.

Karla Raimundi
Yes I can go.
I've been actually trying to look up information on what I'm gonna share.
I love to eat limburs.
They are this Puerto Rican.
I'm just putting it here on the chat.
It's like a Puerto Rican here.
It's described as an icy but I don't think it's like an icy.
Also I'm not an expert in icy 's.
But it's and my favorite is coconut.
Another one that I love is passion fruit basically you make them.
You make the mixture and then you put it in a plastic cup and you put it in the freezer.
And then the best part is to flip it over.
You flip it over and then you eat the coconut bits in the bottom with the cinnamon or passion fruit pulp.
Oh my God so I have them in my freezer.
And then every time I'm craving one of them I just grab one push it from the bottom up flip it over eat it it's delicious.
There's also tamarind that I love but it's very difficult to find tamarind pulp on here.
But yeah I grew up eating eating limburs they were.
They were 25 cents in the ladies down the road the their house.
They she had a refrigerator in her.
Your garage you would yell limber.
She would come you would say coconut.
Give her a quarter and you would get your limber and go home.
Thank you.
And now I make them I don't have to pay the quarter.

Juliet Birch
Awesome well thanks everyone for such great introductions.
I'm sending cool vibes to everybody who's here virtually.
I hope that you're wherever you are as comfortable.
Because it's it's kind of humid here I think even indoors so.
So.
Next we'll do some just quick updates about the what we're doing EJ law implementation wise.
So I'll pass it to Kim.

Kim Barrett
Sure.
OK.
So you all received the e-mail we moved forward.
Quite exponentially with the environmental benefits spending guidance.
The public comment period is going to be from July first until August 11.
We have 3 meetings scheduled one virtual 2 in person.
And just so a quick thought on that I know throughout the last kind of year and a half of this work you all have come up with some great.
Questions about what the reporting process might look like for you and your agency you know I know one of the questions.
Abby you've asked a lot is like how far do we go in the gathering data.
You know process and how does that.
How will it?
Work with some of the entities that you're in connection with or work with.
So I think that what would be really helpful is if you know where possible you use the comment period.
As an opportunity to connect with some of those folks and see if there's a way that you can get pointed comments that you can use later on.
So I think that that would be a great way to have sort of this targeted approach for you all.
So hopefully that resonates if you have any questions.
Please let us know.
Also if you're interested or have availability at all during this time and even afterwards we could definitely use some help.

Processing some of the comments that are coming in categorizing them.
So yeah any any help would be would be totally awesome.
And then the mapping tool the environmental justice mapping tool.
We developed a selection committee which consists of 2 members of the Advisory Council marionetre.
We have Janet from the iac.
We have 2 folks from ads.
Our unit and then one person from the climate action office.
So we we've met twice and we're now in the process of just looking through some of the the bids that have come in and then we're going to regroup again in about a month and then the community engagement RFP that's in a great place but we.
've sort of been trying to figure out what's the best way to involve the Advisory Council.
This isn't open.
RFP process and so we want to be able to consult with them as much as we can.
So we're in the process of figuring out how to do that.
Yeah anything else you think we should think.
I don't know if you wanted.
To ask these questions for them or.
Yeah I guess we can float them out there.
So one question about evsg how can you encourage and support public participation in the comment meetings themselves.
How would you like to see covered agency staff participate in the public comment period?
And then to what extent would you like to be involved in the in the public comment meetings and so you all have some of the resources in your e-mail and we're working on.
Will be distributing the the translated version of those materials as well?
So yeah you all can reflect on that and if you have any thoughts let us know.
Are there any questions about any of these updates?

SE **Schilling, Elizabeth** 18:42
Yeah, I had.
Oh, Clara, you can go first.

Juliet Birch 18:44
OK.

SE **Schilling, Elizabeth** 18:44
You raise your hand.

MC **McIlvennie, Claire** 18:45
No, that's OK.
I was just gonna clarifying question the community engagement RFP, is that specific to work on the I'm assuming it's specific to work on the EJ mapping tool since it's a under that. But I just wanted to confirm because I I don't know if I was aware of that. I'm just curious. Cool.

Kim Barrett 19:02
Yeah yeah.
So.
So we kind of determined early on last year that the in order to fulfill the the purposes under the EJ law for the mapping tool that we needed to take this interdisciplinary approach.
So for us that meant creating an RFP that captures like a GIS RFP that speaks to a community engagement RFP and the ideas.
Both of these contractors will come on work together to build a tool that that resonates for everyone and just the attention to all of the data gets that we have as well.
You know we know that we need that community engagement piece to help gather more data that can be supportive and also bring community members into the process.
And so both contractors will have to work together to make sure that that information and involvement gets into the the GIS process as well.
So I hope that clarifies.

MC **McIlvennie, Claire** 20:09
Super helpful.

Kim Barrett 20:09
Yeah.

McIlvennie, Claire 20:09
Thank you.

Kim Barrett 20:11
Janet.

Hurley, Janet 20:13
I was just wondering what the time frame on that one is.

Kim Barrett 20:18
Yeah it's it's it's.
In flux but we're hoping to have it released.
Next month ideally.
So like it'll probably be more like the end of July maybe the first week of August.
But again we're trying to organize with the Advisory Council we're meeting with them.
Sometime in July as well.
So we're trying to figure that out.
Carla.

Hurley, Janet 20:48
And then how how much time will you give for responses?

Kim Barret t 20:54
Yeah so because that's a great question because.
This well this project is so unique and nuanced some of the guidance that we've gotten has been to keep it open longer than 30 days which is what it normally is.
We're trying to to make sure that smaller.
Firms but also maybe organizations or community members like folks who might be able to craft a a really good proposal.

We're trying to give them as much time as possible.
So that's also kind of part of this as well.

Hurley, Janet 21:29
And you know, just because I'm on the GIS contractor selection committee, I'm just wondering.
Whether the the respondents to that RFP know that this is being it's it's gonna have to wait probably right until.
The the Community engagement contractor is also selected.

Kim Barrett 21:58
Yeah that's a good question.
So the plan is to bring the GIS contractor on beforehand and then continue to work towards like kind of staggering a little bit and then also.
The GIS.
The.
Vendors who submitted their proposals they were made aware.
So they kind of know that that they're gonna be working with community engagement contractor and it was kind of built into the the proposal itself.
For our rsp yeah.

Hurley, Janet 22:29
Yeah.
Thanks.

Karla Raimundi 22:35
Mm hmm.
Oh I was going to mm hmm but.
Several things about the mapping work.
Regarding the GIS statement of work I would like to share with the group that the first review of the bits of the proposals is blind.
The reason is that when we present the.
The information to the Advisory Council we heard concerns regarding a potential conflict of interest.
And so we decided that we were going to engage our general counsel 's office to

help us redact identifying information from the proposals.
They did that and then they provided.
The bids to the review panel.
And that is important because we want to ensure that to the extent possible we respond we respond to the concerns of the Advisory Council.
Regarding the community engagement RFP which is a secondary.
Request for proposal that it's gonna also feed into the creation of the mapping tool.
That community engagement RFP we've heard loud and clear from the Advisory Council that they would like to have an opportunity to review the proposal before it goes out to public comment.
Now there are there are substantial concerns from the team and the general counsel 's office regarding fairness.
And ensuring that the that the process.
Does not undermine the ability of certain proponents to have equitable impartial access to information right?
So.
We have been.
About how to provide.
Either sections of the RFP or the RFP as a whole to the Advisory Council for them to weigh in.
But as I mentioned the concern is that that's the RFP that we're gonna put out.
And we have concerns regarding confidentiality and whether the information gets shared with some entities and not others beforehand.
So we are exploring alternatives.
So that we feel comfortable with the process.
And trying to keep the process you know with as much integrity as we can but also allow the Advisory Council to weigh in on this proposal so we we're still wrestling with how we're gonna do that.
There were several.
Options shared.
Uh.
And considered well we're still going back and forth regarding what the best approach is here.
And then yes and then the idea is that.
Claire to expand on your question is that the GIS contractor and Janet part of your

question also the GIS contractor will be on board at first.
First so that we can get ourselves acquainted with that team and also create a certain level of proficiency within our team in terms of what goes into the technical components of this mapping tool.
And parallel to this process with the GIS contractor we're going to be moving forward in the selection with the selection of a community engagement contractor to feed information to the contractor.
After doing the GIS development process.
And the intention is that the information that the community engagement contractor will be eliciting and engaging with communities about and around will feed and complement information that the GIS contractor is also collecting through assessments and evaluations.
Of databases and other tools that exist in the state of Vermont.
So the that's the impetus and rationale for having these 2 separate.
Teams working together.
Awesome are there any other questions or thoughts about either ebsg or the mapping tool.
Oh one is the scope of the work for the community engagement contractor.
I tried to answer that Amy OK great.

Juliet Birch
Were there any thoughts in here?
I thought you raised.
Your hand Abby OK

Abbey Willard
I did not

Juliet Birch
cool.
Yeah we can also send.
I mean as always we can send some of these updates in writing and you'll get them via e-mail as a follow up to this so if there are any thoughts or questions you know you can always reach out as well.
Are we OK to move on and talk a little bit about the civil rights and EJ complaint

summary reports?
Cool seeing some thumbs up.
So nodding great.
So as you're all aware in I think back in March you guys submitted your 2025 civil rights and EJ complaint summary reports for folks who maybe are watching this recording after the fact for reference.
This is a report that basically is intended to report on any title 6 complaints under the Civil Rights Act that covered agencies have received or environmental justice complaints and how those complaints.
Were addressed?
So the covered agencies submitted their complaints this year on March 15th and the Advisory Council provided some recommendations on May 15th.
As you all saw.
The specific Advisory Council members who provided recommendations were Mariana sears and rich holshu.
We this was not a set of recommendations from the full council it was just those individuals.
We can take some time during this meeting to briefly take a look at their response and then we'll also talk about.
What you guys will do in terms of responding the law allows you until August 15th to put a response in writing especially if there are any sort of recommendations or thoughts that you are not planning on accepting or implementing?
And then the last thing to note is we just want to acknowledge that.
In the future we would really like to take some time out of a public meeting to talk about strategizing around improving our collective civil rights and environmental justice complaint intake systems according to the ACS recommendations.
Just a reminder last year in 2024 we did receive some pretty strong recommendations from the Advisory Council that the interagency committee agreed was gonna take some time to really process and.
Build the structures to implement but that they are great to aspire to so just wanna acknowledge that in the future we should set aside some time in a public meeting to have that conversation.
But that's really just a recap of the timeline.
And during this time if you guys want to talk about.
Reflections you have or next steps that you'd like to take as a committee.

You're welcome to do that in any way you see fit but these are just some discussion and reflection questions we want to provide to kind of prime you to have this conversation so.
In reflection of the AC 's response from this year what were some impactful takeaways.
How did the AC recommendations impact your vision for future iterations of complaint reporting and what are some outstanding questions you still have for the Advisory Council around this deliverable?
And.
We really want to walk away from this conversation with a clear understanding of what are we going to do next to provide that interagency committee response by August 15th of this year.
So I'm gonna stop sharing my screen and also drop these questions in the chat just so we can all see each other better.
But you're free to take the floor.
Anyone who has any thoughts.

Karla Raimundi
Would it be helpful to put the documents in the chat?

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 31:46
I.

Juliet Birch 31:49
Yeah I can do that.

Karla Raimundi
Thank you.
Sorry Janet.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 31:53
That's OK.
I appreciated the the response from the two members of the Council.
What is what constitutes an environmental justice complaint and?
That that they feel that that's something that needs more definition. And I think it's

appropriate for us to discuss in a public meeting.
I thought the the other.
Point about.
Our approach, being human centered was.
Very interesting.
I don't know that our legislative charge allows us to open it up that way.

Kim Barrett 32:40
Mm hmm.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 32:40
In terms of.
You know, meeting the EJ law obligations that we have and maybe that's an interesting or important conversation for us to have.
Going forward to.

Kim Barrett 33:02
Amy.

RA **Redman, Amy (She/Her)** 33:07
I was grateful to read the response from the two A/C members.
I was wondering if.
I was wondering about if there might be any information on why there were only two that came together. If that doesn't feel like if that information isn't.
If that doesn't feel like it's needed, then I'm OK not knowing.
I was just wondering what what key?
Why was it just the two and I?
I checked in with our policy team and and because there just hasn't been even in the response letter because not much had changed, we were unsure. But kind of like individually how to how to respond or if if what the response would be.

RA **Redman, Amy (She/Her)** 33:54
So just wanted to add those reflections the question and the reflection.
Thank you.

Juliet Birch 34:00
Yeah in reference to your first question Amy thank you.
That was context.
We probably should have provided before.
But in March we had a meeting with the Advisory Council where this was on the docket.
We were.
We were gonna have.
We were gonna have a conversation about their response as a full group in the public meeting and then there was interest in other topics and we ended up having that conversation instead.
So as an alternative.
Team offered 2 optional office hours for Advisory Council members to come and discuss.
You know the reports convene and see if they wanted to move forward with making a response.
And rich and Mariana had the most interest and they moved forward with executing their plan they just wanted to make sure that we were.
All aware that this this response from them was not on behalf of the entire council because they didn't get a chance to consult with the entire council in the process.

Kim Barrett
Yeah we also did.
You know like obviously reach out to the AC and make sure that they had all of you know.
That they kind of that they knew that they could participate if they had the ability or interest to.

Karla Raimundi
I have a question regarding the office hours.
Who from the Advisory Council attended those office hours?

Juliet Birch
Richard Mariana.

Karla Raimundi
So I think that's what happened.
The the topic was intended to be discussed at length at 1:00 of the public meetings but the conversation revolved around the mapping tool specifically around.
The procurement process for the statement of work mapping tool the GIS component.
And the whole meeting was dedicated to that aspect of the conversation as Juliet indicated.
To to mitigate some of the missed opportunity that we had we provided optional hours that were attended by Mariana and Rich and they decided then that they wanted to provide.
Responses.
And the others.
Did not respond to the call?

Kim Barrett
Thank you one thing I also wanna add is that we also so one thing that we've been doing is passing along with continuing to pass along some of the same questions that you brought up last year around the civil rights and EJ complaint reports and just checking in.
With the Advisory Council.
They you know wanted to respond to any of your individual questions.
One thing that we spoke about as a team is that you know we're just offering that this might also be a space in you know to reach out to the Advisory Council and even just you know from a couple of you I think that one thing that we.
All spoke about in the last.
Iac meeting was kind of working to collaborate more and connect more as a as a committee but I do remember a couple of folks saying that there's interest in.
In increasing or like improving the ways that you all connect with the Advisory Council and I think that this might be a space where that could be very helpful because we also can't fully express and explain some of the the needs that you all have to move forward.
On your end so just putting that out there that I'm sure some of them would appreci.
Engagement around that.

Yeah.
Yeah Carlos.

Karla Raimundi
Yeah so then for the substantive recommendations.
What I think is?
Or maybe particularly important for this group as we think about how to improve the civil rights and environmental justice.
Intake mechanisms and processes generally is if we could get input and feedback from the Advisory Council.
So around the question of why does an environmental justice complaint either is or entail what are the elements that the Advisory Council.
Would like us to center when looking at concerns or complaints that are submitted to help us categorize those concerns or complaints as being environmental justice centered?
And then after we have that input.
Then perhaps we would be in a better position to really think through.
What kind of tools and mechanisms we need to stand up to be able to triage to be able to assess the information that's provided by members of the public so that we have elements?
To signal this is environmental justice this raises to a complaint this is a concern.
And that is particularly important for us because we don't have the substantive.
Content that exists for for example civil rights complaints that is very clearly identified for us and provided to us by the federal government we do not have that for environmental justice.
So having input from the Advisory Council on what those elements can be.
Seem to be very helpful.
So in order to facilitate that conversation.
And Juliet and Kim have been thinking about how to center that piece.
When it pertains to civil rights and EJ complaint reports?

Juliet Birch
I think there's definitely an appetite amongst the Advisory Council members who we've gotten to touch base with about this.
Specifically there's definitely an appetite to explore that question.

I think that 20 the 2024 recommendations that they provided was kind of around.
The elements of the complaint process itself and then what we're asking now is substantively what kind of distinguishes an EJ complaint from a civil rights complaint.
And I think that's going to.
Take some both you know legal support to help the Advisory Council parse through.
Kind of the difference and then we'll also probably require some support from all of you guys.
Maybe we can have this as a conversation in a joint meeting.
To figure out what's actually feasible as well.
Elizabeth.

SE **Schilling, Elizabeth** 41:11
Thanks. I just wanted to ask the other IAC members because I haven't read everyone's reports in detail.
Did any of the other agencies attempt to define EJ complaint like that was a component of our report because we felt like that was a kind of a integral issue we had to resolve in order to file the report. So like and obviously like it was.

Karla Raimundi 41:29
Mm hmm.
Yep.

SE **Schilling, Elizabeth** 41:38
A definition that we came up with based based on how the EJ.
Was written, but you know that definition isn't in the law itself.
So, like we used components of the law to come up with our definition for purposes of our report. But I was just wondering if anyone else had done a similar.
Task.

RJ **Ronis, Jenny** 41:56
Oh, we came up with a policy on how to identify potential EJ complaints versus, you know, other environmental enforcement style complaints that we might be receiving.

RJ **Ronis, Jenny** 42:06

I'm just trying to pull up the document itself to see whether we explicitly tried to come up with a definition or not.

Ronis, Jenny 42:14
See here.

Hurley, Janet 42:16
And just for newer people, Jenny is talking about the land Use Review board.

Ronis, Jenny 42:23
Yeah, sorry.
OK.

Abbey Willard 42:29
I will say from the agency of agriculture we did not attempt to define.
And frankly didn't make significant process adjustments between 24 and 25 which I think is something that like I am focused on is like yes I agree like clarifying what what constitutes an EJ complaints really important but the 2024 feedback was like.
So.
There really should be a really accessible unified statewide portal.
For comments and I I.
I'm a little bit at a loss of like how to respond to that I think very valid recommendation from the AC and what I read in the 2025 response was like everything we said in 2024 is still relevant which sort of feels like we.
A bit of me feels like we're at a bit of a crossroads of like OK.
So like.
Wanting to look at a statewide system are we wanting to like do something unified or do we want to just do some small scale improvements and and more best practices based upon the reports that you all submitted or we all submitted that we can find kind of like.
The best components from and that that feels like a more workable.
Realistic solution for the near term.
Otherwise I will admit not recognize this is a public meeting but I will admit like I don't anticipate a huge change from the agency of agriculture for 2026.
Unless we sort of like have some degree of a plan of like learning from one another

and building something better at the individual state agency level or making a commitment to a unified system.

Hurley, Janet 44:17
I I would just agree that it, and that Abby seems like a good idea, is to take, you know, the.
Good parts from our different approaches and put them together for something.
I mean it.
And it seems that you know defining the EJ complaint and concern is something that you know needs to happen before we go too far down that road.
And so, Elizabeth, if if you could share your definition, we can share ours and.
If there are others, and then we can talk about this at an upcoming meeting.
And I mean it makes sense to have an overall singular complaint process, I guess.
But I don't know what the.
The the sort of mechanistic or.
Funding even mechanisms to to make that happen would be, you know, we just have something on our website and I don't know if it would need money behind it to do a statewide, you know, administrative, the administration would have to put forth some host.

Hurley, Janet 45:39
You know, agency would have to host it so.
I don't know how to go about that.

Karla Raimundi 45:43
Mm hmm.
Mm hmm.
Yeah thank you Avi and Janet.
Both both comments resonate quite a bit just to share internally what we've done at anr is try to answer that question internally for the agency and what we have stood up is a protocol.
That's at the department level utilizing and relying.
The expert deeds that's been developed within the environmental justice network that we stood up internally to help us parse out environmental justice inquiries as

they become known.
To staff and then those get evaluated by the team lead within the department and depending on what that individual decides.
And then those get evaluated by the team lead within the department and depending on what that individual decides to do depending on the complexity of the communication.
Then that gets referred to our unit in terms of answering the question of what an environmental justice concern is vis a vis a vis an environmental justice.
Complaint and formal process behind it we do not have that that robust of a process still.
So we we have created mechanisms to be able to respond.
Internally to those questions as they arise but in terms of creating uniformity across the board in a in an agency wide procedure.
Or policy documents.
We've been waiting on the important feedback as you as you mentioned Janet that the Advisory Council may provide.
As you may imagine the agency of natural resources has covered so many areas of work.
That EJ you know arguably touches on almost all of them.
So for us it's really important to hear from the Advisory Council.
On what it is that we should be prioritizing because other than that this would be sort of like a disjointed.
And extremely bro broad.
Approach.
In terms of the process that they suggested.
And abhi I think that maybe what we should consider as a collective.
Is a combination of what you proposed looking at what each of the agencies are doing?
And then compiling all of that information and producing some sort of uniform approach.
Watch.
That is very high level to allow each of the each of the agencies to refer back when there are questions substantive questions about this is this sounds like it could be an EJ complaint but then the agency itself would have.
The ability to further expand on what that exact what that means exactly for that

particular agency just because of how different.
We all are.
So it could be you know like a little Frankenstein very high level.
And then each of the agencies can start very discretely identifying how to feed the gaps like fill the gaps sorry.
Where?

McIlvennie, Claire 49:51
Thanks I.
Think I listen a bit broader and build off of Abby's comment, but it I mean it really feels like before getting into any of the substance that we collectively need a work plan with some milestones to commit to of how we want to address this because.

McIlvennie, Claire 50:14
It's an interesting space of we have a deadline every year to submit these reports, but any other aspect of this has no statutory deadline.
So my experience in state government is that any project without a deadline is always gonna be lower priority than every project with a deadline.

McIlvennie, Claire 50:30
And it also feels like a project that we really can't move forward in silos because most of the suggestions from last year are about unified action.
And even like having a definition, which I'll say the department has not defined an environmental justice complaint.
But we have a complaint reporting system for some of our other statutory duties and we allow people to self identify right now.
But.
It just feels like even like having a unified definition is like a critical first starting point.
Even if they then have like plain language interpretations of what it means to each of our agencies. So.
So I feel like like substantively if we for example, if we were to write a response like something meaningful would be to either say we'll have a work plan by X date or even try and like come up with like a skeleton proposal by the August 15th like.
Response deadline because feels like we had meaningful conversations about.
How we supported the recommendations, but then just moved on to kind of.

Other projects with deadlines after we submitted that response so.
Yeah. So that that's kind of what it it feels like is necessary to make sure that we take collective action in some way over the next year knowing that we have a lot of other projects with hard deadlines over the next year beginning or at least one big.
One so.
Thanks.

RJ **Ronis, Jenny** 52:12
I'm just curious among the group, I feel like the land Use Review Board was sort of well suited for this kind of system because we get a ton of complaints already.
So it was just a matter of sort of refurbishing that process specific to, you know, environmental justice framework. I'm I'm wondering about on other agencies whether you guys have like robust.
Enforcement or complaint processes already.
And maybe that's part of the issue.
I'm just curious across the board.

Abbey Willard 52:48
Wait I'm sorry Jenny.
What was your question if we have other complaint processes in place?

RJ **Ronis, Jenny** 52:51
Yeah. But like, like for us, we, we already have sort of a ready made system.
I'm wondering what how other people's agencies are organized, whether you guys taking complaints or enforcement concerns from the public about other things not related to EJ?

MC **McIlvennie, Claire** 53:10
Just to respond to that, Jenny, the department does.
We have like statutory I. Well maybe it's not statutory.
Anyways, we've taken complaints about utility.
Really didn't matters. So we have a very structured system and procedure around those complaints.
Would would, yeah.

So we're maybe a little bit like you in that we already are set up to take in certain types of complaints.

Abbey Willard 53:40
Yeah I mean like so agency of agriculture we also have a system for accepting complaints.
I don't think that answers this question of like like so like for example we created a new environmental justice complaint form and we got zero environmental justice complaints.
But.
We had more complaints in 2025 as an overall agency than we did in previous years.
But so like it doesn't like somehow that's not really answering I think the question of like do people understand what environmental justice complaint is.
Do they know where to file them?
Do they know if their issue is with?
The agency of agriculture.
The agency of natural resources with the PUC like I don't think people know and I think that's what the AC gave us as feedback was.
All different systems presumably different definitions and different locations where you would go and I think that's part of the challenge and I don't I I guess I'm just saying I don't feel confident that.
There's.
That we've addressed that our approach for example is like is providing a real equitable and accessible solution.
But it's not because we don't have other systems for processing complaints I guess is what I'm trying to say.

RA **Redman, Amy (She/Her)** 54:56
Plus plus. Plus Abby on that.
I'll also just add. Additionally, Vdh does have complaint systems, but our policy team is very hesitant to do anything with this without regulatory power associated with BDH, which is why last year's recommendations of like a coordinated 1 door.

RA **Redman, Amy (She/Her)** 55:16
Warehouse that's triaging.

Where these go is really important. So I think Vdh is in the position of really signing on to that model.
Any, and maybe even the protocol of like when things come in. But I don't think our policy team at this point is ready to sign on to bdh taking any, taking any complaints as an agency or as a department. The other quick thing that I'm reflecting on is.
That I wonder.
We've talked in the space about other states, other places, even in this space intake forms that exist, and I almost wonder if we might start if there's a next step involved.
I think a work plan is a really good idea.
Maybe in that work plan, reviewing existing intake forms as a way to really dig into what the definition is, because we I don't think we have to start from scratch, right?
The state of Colorado is doing this.

RA **Redman, Amy (She/Her)** 56:08
There are systems that are set up, so maybe in the work plan reviewing existing intake.

RA **Redman, Amy (She/Her)** 56:12
Forms as a way to get to a definition as a part is maybe an action step.
We might be able to do. Thank you.

Karla Raimundi 56:23
I wanted to really quickly here and then pass it on to you Juliet to mention that what Janet mentioned earlier on is.
To the best of.
My assessment true this would really need support.
Both financial and also strategic from central administration.
And I mean and what I what I mean is the the nuanced recommendation that the AC provided last year.
Standing that up.
In some form will definitely require resources because they also mentioned that there should be a staff person assigned to that triaging and in taking.
At that level.
So what I think we have been talking about here is just starting with this group.
And thinking through a uniform way to start.

Answering the questions that we believe are important for us to have.
A.
Somewhat of a unified approach and perhaps try to capture what you mentioned which I think is super important.
The outreach awareness component and I think as a collective we may have a lot more impact in that wearing you know creating awareness.
Within the communities that we reach that this system exists and that this is what this entails.
And then work internally and by internally I mean you know the iac.
With the support and advice of the AC in helping us answer.
Those foundational questions at first and then see you know where that gets us.
Because what they proposed last year I think we cannot do as the IC on our own.

Juliet Birch
So.
Just I have 2 things.
One I think that you know what Claire proposed around you know the one of the things that Claire mentioned was potentially developing like the skeleton of a work plan by August 15th if that's something that you guys would like to pursue.
I can't envision that.
That's something that would be possible to do without having another public meeting just because having a work plan is dependent on.
Everybody else 's individual agency work plans and all the projects they're working on within their agency.
So just putting that out into the world.
Something else I wanted to put into the world is that we could move forward with the idea of having like a joint meeting where we get all the iac together we get the AC together we bring an Rs you know maybe some folks from the legal team to.
Support just like.
Here's you know what the state of Colorado has done.
Here's what's within the world of possibilities.
Here's what's feasible.
Here's what's not can you reflect on based off of what is feasible.
What meets your idea of accessible?
What is like a what is a way of what within the world of possibilities meets your you

know aspirations for this complaint intake process?
I think that it would be important to have that conversation.
What do you guys think of what do you think is a good path forward for this long term?

Karla Raimundi
If I may say so really clear here like initial reaction is August 15 is tomorrow?
Right I don't think that.
Yeah to develop even like a high level skeleton of a proposal or how we're gonna you know tackle.
This.
Task for all of the covered agencies in a uniform way I think.
Perhaps you know as is usually the first step in almost everything is assessment.
And perhaps we could.
Propose that to.
The to the AC that we're going to start.
You know that evaluation process internally to the agencies.
With the goal that we will come back together.
To share what we found internally.
And then develop a more detailed plan that captures capacity priorities because the other thing too that I am thinking is.
I don't know that is that.
A fact grounded assumption is that this is.
A high priority right now.
For all of the agencies given everything that they are moving forward.
So you know identifying perhaps the first step which is.
Let's internally look at what each are doing.
The capacity that exists.
To organize ourselves around this one task and then commit to having continued conversations with the goal being to create a work plan.
To create a uniform approach for the iac.
And just to be clear that's what would be submitted back to the AC for the August 15th.
That's what I am thinking at least for the agency of natural resources we may be able to commit to.

An timely be able to produce something along those lines.
Yes I don't know if this is something that other agencies could do but and I know I know it makes not seem like a lot but given everything that we are juggling at the same time.
You know identifying you know some sort of assessment process.
And then also with that assessment is identifying the questions that we definitely need some feedback on from the Advisory Council.

Hurley, Janet 1:03:08
So I was thinking that, you know, we're gonna have to report again in the spring, but we're gonna have to report under the same conditions that we reported this year and last year. And so maybe in conjunction with the report that we produce for the spring, maybe that.
Can be a target where we present a work plan for a new.
Way to go about this.
And it seems like the first step is to get feedback from the A/C, the Advisory Council.

Hurley, Janet 1:03:44
On their thoughts around what constitutes an EJ complaint or concern.

McIlvennie, Claire 1:04:00
That makes sense.
Jana and I appreciate Carla that August 15th is tomorrow.
I agree with that assessment, but it does just feel like the important component is that we like commit to doing something by a date.

Hurley, Janet 1:04:08
Yes.

McIlvennie, Claire 1:04:14
Because I think.
Like to hold ourselves accountable to doing something we're more likely to do it if we set a goal and at least try and make it so.
I like that idea, Janet.
A lot. I think that makes sense.

And maybe a response letter could tee that up and even identify like the phases.
Of what?
That work plan might consider that we've talked today like phase one doing an internal inventory, doing external research, phase two, defining environmental justice complaint for the state of Vermont and then maybe even like examples of what that looks like in different agencies. And then you know down the.

MC **McIlvennie, Claire** 1:04:53
Line.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 1:04:56
And then we also need to ask for funding or something, you know, somebody that.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 1:05:07
The legislature may be in and.
You know a permanent host for.
For being a clearing house for for this.

Abbey Willard 1:05:22
You go.
Thanks this is where I am.
I am struggling a little bit like I love the idea of like something tangible with some some timelines.
I think we we definitely need that and I feel like we have the capacity.
To probably pull that off.
And I don't wanna think that I can speak for the AC but my recollection from the conversation last year was like they don't.
Their job is to not care about our capacity or our budget or what works for us but like they gave feedback based on what they believe is needed.
And so again I think they could help us prioritize but I think by nature their role is to tell us that we need to do more because they know that more is needed for it to be as equitable and accessible as possible.
And so I don't want us to like.
Delay progress because we want to have a conversation with the AC for them to then likely frustrated that we haven't done anything since they gave us feedback over a

year ago and and again that what I'm I'm not saying I don't want to involve the AC I'm act.
Saying I want to involve the AC where we give them something to react to rather.
Then to ask them to do more for us.
I think it we're at the position of like we need to do something because we've done nothing in a year a year plus a year and 3 months and so and I'm not being critical of any of us.
It's just like we haven't and that hasn't been a priority.
So what.
I would.
I guess what I would love to see is for us to find the capacity to put forth some sort of suggestion around a process that we're willing to engage in and that that's what we're asking.
Her AC.
Kind of feedback on and included in that process could be you know if we don't think we can do a statewide system in the next 5 years could we focus in these ways and do you what what priorities or what directions would.
You kind of advise us to focus on.
And then like Jenna I I agree.
I think we need funding for all of this and I've sort of like I I sort of feel like I'm in the camp of like it's not going to happen.
Then like there's not going to be more resources dedicated to this right now.
So we have to somehow find the way like I've wanted to use that as a crutch.
I guess I'm gonna speak for myself.
I've wanted to use that for a crutch for the last 2 plus years and it is not going.
Doesn't not matter like the deadlines are still there.
The expectations are still before us and the capacity is not gonna be created.
And so we still have to somehow find a way to do the best that we can with the resources we have.
Regardless of.
Leadership administration and legislative support for the capacity that every agency is going to need every agency and organization is going to need as a covered entity to make this this work happen.
And again I don't think I'm saying anything that anyone doesn't know but I just.
I.

I feel like then we're gonna spend another couple of months like saying well we can't make progress 'cause we don't have capacity and I just I.
I've said enough right now.
Thanks.

Juliet Birch
So you know this is this I think this whole deliverable like and and what's implied around it.
Requires is going to require several conversations several in depth conversations both just internally in the iac as well as with the Advisory Council.
So I think you know we're kind of having 2 conversations right now one that's like long term what are we going to do to stand up making these improvements.
That were recommended to us and then short term which is just kind of my minimum goal for this meeting is what exactly does the interagency committee want to say in this response that's due on August 15th and so I was wondering with an eye towards the time for.
This meeting.
If we wanted to take a couple minutes to close out this conversation by just making intention setting intentions for how we want to meet the August 15th deadline?
Knowing that we'll have other opportunities to continue talking about this and we'll make sure that we make other opportunities to continue talking about this.

Karla Raimundi
If I may?
Chime in here and address some of your comments Abby and generally some of Janet 's too.
So as although I know that it may seem that we're not making a lot of progress I would like to state for the record that the agents of national resources has been working really hard to put together some content and process behind the recommendations of the Advisory Council.
We created an intake form for environmental justice that was translated.
We consulted our staff to do that.
We created this internal network and we are providing technical.
Systems to the group so that they can differentiate between environmental justice concerns and complaints and civil rights um.

We also stood up.
We also stood up.
You know.
Oh yes we also stood up.
Like conversations.
Regular conversations with leadership around environmental justice.
So I am now meeting with all of the commissioners so that they understand what we're talking about.
And what this entails.
So although I know it's not necessarily external facing I think it is important that we take the time to prepare in house for what repercussions.
May this standing up external mechanisms will imply internally right because we stand up an intake mechanism but our staff are not prepared to handle and manage those.
Then with it's just where.
We're not making really meaningful progress.
So the agency has been focusing internally.
And something that is very very important for me.
Is that we are not making assumptions about?
What this may look like for folks generally and so we've been hesitant to provide content and answer the question about what is environmental?
Justice concern because feedback that we've received is agencies state you produce documents you don't consult in the creation of those documents and then you give us things to react to.
But what we want is to be at the table.
Where those conversations are had so that we can center ourselves and our needs and so after those conversations then I think at least I would feel more comfortable trying to answer?
Sir the question about these are the things from now on that the agency of natural resources will consider as an environmental justice complaint.
So it's it's a different approach I feel somewhat strongly.
Regarding consulting Advisory Council prioritizing the work understanding from their perspective what environmental justice is.
What is actually meaningful and then having conversations having heard from the Advisory Council?

Have conversations about OK?
We heard what the council said.
How does that?
How does that look like for you?
Agency of natural resources in this particular program.
For you vtrans for uvh for uag right.
So it's a you know philosophically is a different approach and one that I think we should create consensus on.
Either consult and then we create substance or create substance and then share so that they provide feedback and let me also say that we've tried that approach and it has not been that effective.
Which which one?
The one about.
Creating content sharing and we have not been receiving.
That's going.
Feedback so just saying that it may be like a paradigm shift maybe needed here.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 1:14:19
So, Carla, you're suggesting that the paradigm shift would mean that we would?
We would ask for their input first on the definition.

Karla Raimundi 1:14:31
Yes.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 1:14:32
And you know what I would suggest is that maybe we do both.
At the same time that we why don't we reach out?
You know, as soon as tomorrow.
And say we want to have this conversation about the definition, but why don't we?
Prepare a response.

Karla Raimundi 1:14:50
Yes.

Hurley, Janet 1:14:51
That that sets up a work plan for ourselves.

Karla Raimundi 1:14:56
I agree.
I agree Janet and I didn't mean to imply that either or but I would condition I would condition trying to answer the question about what an environmental justice.
Concern complaints are.
On that conversation but process I think you know offering some sort of approach to how we are gonna get there.
Is important to make it tangible and to hold ourselves accountable as Claire mentioned earlier though I agree wholeheartedly that you know these are things that should move concurrently?

McIlvennie, Claire 1:15:47
Sorry, Juliet, I know you were trying to wrap us up, so I will be very brief.
I guess helpful, really helpful to hear what ANR has been implementing this year. I think it's hard to like, have visibility into what the other agencies are doing when.

McIlvennie, Claire 1:16:08
These public meetings are currently our primary venue for convening, which I think goes back to the conversation we were having at the last meeting.
Meaning about the benefit of a steering committee or Co chairs, like helping to think through ways that we can convene more often and.

McIlvennie, Claire 1:16:25
I guess I am not saying This is why we haven't necessarily implemented some of the suggestions that the department, but I just, I feel like there is some caution for us acting individually before we've discussed like what needs to be coherent across the state of Vermont entities.
Just given like if we're each coming up with their own definitions of environmental justice, that doesn't feel consistent with the recommendations from the Advisory Council that.
You know it's on us to make this.

Easy to understand from the public and then the burden is on us as the state agencies to know like whose agency this applies to and on what.
So I would just reflect back that I think that there can be there can also be harm with us acting individually as silos before we have broader conversation as a collective and.
I also am supportive of like prioritizing this for conversations with the Advisory Council, but I will say.
As a agency, I don't always feel like I like primarily an R has taken the scheduling role for both of our bodies, so I don't always feel like I have the ability to connect with like the full UJ Advisory Council outside of a A scheduled meeting. So if.
There are things that other agencies can do to support that scheduling.
Component of this work.
I think that would be helpful, but I know it has felt at times like not something that I'm as an individual have the ability to like advance outside of kind of supporting like this being an agenda item.
So just also wanted to name that.

Juliet Birch 1:18:14
Yeah I think also I'm just gonna say this even though we all know this because the public meetings are capped you know meeting for example with if you if you were to somehow convene quorum of either of these bodies.
In any other context that would be totally fine.
We would just follow open meeting law and it wouldn't matter but because we have a 12 meeting cap I think that also creates a huge constraint for us and while we're all aware of this I'm just gonna say I'm gonna say it because I think that if anyone.
's watching.
This recording in the future it's important for them to know contextually why why there is that really big obstacle there.
I would really.
I don't know.
Is feeling this way but I would really love for us to take like a 5 minute break?
But I'm also wondering you know the way that we wanted to close out this conversation was to get some like high level understanding of how we wanted to approach the August 15th response.
I'm wondering.

Would you want to take a break first and then revisit that towards the end of the agenda when we'll set like next steps?
Or do you want to get that high level intention and like action items set before we take a break putting it out to the group.
What your preference is?

Karla Raimundi
I miss that break.
Yeah.
Is anyone else like break?

SE **Schilling, Elizabeth** 1:19:34
Yeah, let's take a look.
Let's take a break and and then can we?
And then can we close the loop on this when we come back 'cause like we're on this topic now we can all take 10 minute, 5 minute, 10 minutes, whatever, and then close the loop.

Juliet Birch 1:19:40
Yes yes.
Yeah let's come back in in 5 minutes.
Also acknowledging that this would have been where we would have had public comment but I don't think we have anyone from the public here on the call at the moment.
So yes let's take a 5 minute break.
We'll see you in 5.
I'm doing the same thing taking a bit bigger bites this past.
Hi everyone.
Welcome back.
Weekend we.
Were just talking about how we were just like eating our snacks so fast during that break?
So hopefully you guys got a chance to have a snack too.
Back on the call we'll and and you just don't have your camera on.
We please give a little thumbs up.

It's just helpful to know if folks are listening or are able to listen I should say.
Great great.
Awesome.
So where we left off was that we were having a really good conversation about the ia cs response to the Advisory Council 's I guess response.
I don't know if there's necessarily recommendations in the 2025.
Paper that was just given to us by rich and Mariana.
So I guess what I would like to know to close out to close the loop on this section of the agenda.
Is how do you guys want to organize around creating a response?
August 15th.
In the past we've been able to develop small work groups of folks that don't reach quorum that could potentially be an option.
And then you know just making sure that folks are comfortable with the response we should meet before the August 15th deadline to just vote on it.
Something like to that effect I'm just voicing things Elizabeth I see you went off mute.

SE **Schilling, Elizabeth** 1:27:48
Yeah, yeah. I mean, I think the very last part of their response is reiterating the comments that they made prior year.
So I think I think we should be going back to our response from 2024 and looking at that more closely, like recommitting to that, you know setting setting like an initial deadline for like a first step we wanna take under our response.

SE **Schilling, Elizabeth** 1:28:17
You know, maybe adding to that a commitment to work on.
Like a joint definition.
You know the middle, the middle comment.
I don't know exactly how we would respond to that one.
Seems more like something to direct the legislature.
But but I I think it could be a fairly short response.
It's just us like committing to do the work and trying like setting.
A.
A.
A.

You know a date like? Oh, we're gonna have a meeting. Where, like, the only thing we talked about at that meeting is this.
And and creating like next steps for working on this.
Collectively 'cause, I feel like we we worked on this response in 2024 and then a lot of other things came up and we are distracted by those and this kind of fell by the wayside. And then we had to do our reports for 2025.

SE **Schilling, Elizabeth** 1:29:05
And you know one thing that's in front of the other.
So that that would be my proposal.
I know we're all busy.
Like I'm happy to help with drafting a letter.
I don't think it would be long.
It would be like a page.
So.
That that's my proposal.

Karla Raimundi 1:29:26
Mm hmm.
I would like to highlight something ABI mentioned when we were.
When we were?
On the break and it's including specific actions that the IC as a collective will undertake in support of advancing the recommendations that they provided.
2024 and reiterated this year.
And we were talking.
Really high level.
That includes doing an assessment of agencies actions in support of.
Organizing and structuring this work like intake mechanisms.
What exactly each of the agencies are doing and have created and stood up to support the intake and the process that they identified that the AC identified 2024 and that includes intake forms?
And perhaps develop a uniform intake form.
And perhaps think about database.
Consultation including that we would like to consult the Advisory Council.
Around the question.

Of what.
An environmental justice complaint should be and some elements that we should definitely incorporate.
And then.
In communicating that we are going to meet.
To work on this.
And that may be you know like a very high level work plan that incorporates even if not like specific dates like target month.
So I just wanted to make sure that I was sharing what was shared in this room during the break.
And get your reaction.

Abbey Willard
And I think there's a line with what Elizabeth saying which is like go back to our 2024 response and the specific considerations like there's some next steps that we may be able to commit to in each of those.
Action.
Yes.
Category not thinking of the word that we used in the report but.
What did?
We call them.
Call them recommendate like in the different state different various recommendations.
OK.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 1:32:16
I was just looking at the 2024 response.
And there were there were responses to the ACS recommendations, right?
So the A/C had four recommendations.
And there's there's.
Instead of the bulleted list here of.
Sort of.
The the ideas that might be.
Are the the things that might be involved in in addressing the recommendation?
Is a work instead of this list. Maybe providing that work plan the the high level work

plan that Carlos referring to.
So.

Schilling, Elizabeth 1:33:11
The question is, can we develop?
Can we develop that before August 15th and maybe we can?

Hurley, Janet 1:33:19
I mean, I think we we have like we just started today.

Karla Raimundi 1:33:21
I think we can.

Hurley, Janet 1:33:27
I mean, I would be willing to let a subset of this group develop it.
You know.
In between this meeting and whatever is our next meeting and.
And to draft, you know, if Elizabeth is willing, maybe with Carla to draft a letter based on that.

Hurley, Janet 1:33:51
That that would be great.

Karla Raimundi 1:33:56
I can.

Hurley, Janet 1:33:56
Good.

Karla Raimundi 1:33:57
I was gonna offer to capture what I just mentioned in some sort of like an organized fashion that is not super detailed because I also do not want to create.
Attainable unattainable expectations.
In the Advisory Council.
But I I think it is important.

And it's been mentioned here by multiple people that we hold ourselves accountable to some sort of approach with tangible.
Outputs.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 1:34:35
Yeah.

Karla Raimundi 1:34:36
So I am.
I am more than happy to develop.
A high level work plan that identifies these elements.
And then Elizabeth.
Perhaps then that this gets incorporated.
Into what you're thinking could be a letter.

SE **Schilling, Elizabeth** 1:34:54
Yeah. I mean I think that's simple.
It's like, here's our response from last year.

SE **Schilling, Elizabeth** 1:34:59
Here's a work plan we've developed to implement that response.

SE **Schilling, Elizabeth** 1:35:03
You know, we also acknowledge.
The the new comments from this year and recognize that.
A.
A joint definition across agencies will also be helpful in having like a joint system.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 1:35:19
And you could, you could say that we've already started sharing our different, you know, definitions and and are working toward.
Combining them, but that we also would like to hear from the.
Council.

Karla Raimundi 1:35:41

I was also also thinking and perhaps Susanna this is something for for you to reflect on that.
This high level work plan outline should incorporate some sort of actions towards answering.
Directly or attempting to identify a path to answer directly the question and the biggest recommendation that the AC provided in 2024 and reiterated 2025 which is the centralized.
Intake process for all of the agencies with a staff person.
You know at a level higher than the iac and you know what we've talked about is that that would need some sort of central administration role and support and perhaps something to include in.
This high level work plan is is how we are communicating that that need and recommendation from the AC to the powers that be.
To those folks who would need to be involved.
Centrally to make that a reality.
Their recommendation 2024 a reality and I don't know that.
That the AC is you know advantageously positioned to to do that sort of.
Advocacy on behalf of the Advisory Council but perhaps susana through your role.
You are.
So I'm wondering whether you have reflections about that.

DX **Davis, Xusana** 1:37:32
Yeah, I think that the biggest hurdle with that is that everyone's gonna come back with oh, but budget pressures.
oh, but budget pressures.
We're losing so much federal money, we've got to protect.
There's more.
Floods. Fema's going away.

DX **Davis, Xusana** 1:37:46
And so I think if we can make a strong case for why this either creates cost savings for the state in the long run or you know, and it might just be like, hey.
Between five of the covered agencies, we have staff time.
Totally this many hours.
Or dollars a year dedicated to this process.

But if we had one fat person, that would be centralized and it relieves that pressure and you know something like that. If there were a way that we could do that kind of ethical analysis or or to be able to show some other operational benefit, I think that. Would make it a compelling case.
For, for finance and for the governor's office.
For why that should, that should be done.

Karla Raimundi 1:38:28
And is there something.
That we could offer the Advisory Council.
As part of this high level work plan.
So that they are aware that we're also having conversations of that kind.
Susanna.

DX **Davis, Xusana** 1:38:53
I mean.
I I think that we could be as honest and upfront as possible in saying this is the timeline. This is when we're required to submit budget asks and staffing positions and it comes out of the pool and you know, we could be as transparent about that process as.
Possible and say this is who we're talking to.
This is the recommendation we're making.
Here's a copy of it. I think the question is, will A/C members be satisfied with?
That.
As a good faith demonstration that we're working on it.
Is that enough?
Is that going to be viewed as enough?
Because I think the next logical question is OK.
So then what if you don't get your staffer?
Then what we will have spent a year talking about this and we wouldn't have done anything right that that will be the next question we're asked to to answer and it's a.

Karla Raimundi 1:39:42
Yeah and what I Yep Yep Yep Yep.
I hear that.

And what I think we could say is hey Advisory Council we're in good faith advocating and moving forward several approaches.
One of them is creating awareness at this level that this was and is a priority for the Advisory Council that was stood up by the legislature and these are the ways in which we are.
Taking.
Your recommendations seriously moving forward on them and you know one of them is the high level work plan the other one is you know susana is having conversations at this level or we.
Are organizing ourselves to position?
Position the argument advantageously so that we can be successful later down the line.
So it's it's.
I don't know that the Advisory Council.
Will that this will be dispositive of what they're looking for but it would definitely show that we are doing the due diligence right that we are actually having the conversations with the folks?
Who may who may who may be able to help us make this happen?

DX **Davis, Xusana** 1:41:02
Yeah. And I think that if that kind of supports slash advocacy slash suggestion is coming from multiple of our agencies.
Then you know and it shows that we are in concert and that we're in agreement.
I think that that will hold some level of weight when making that argument to the other side of the floor.
I was gonna say something else and I forgot. So I'll be quiet. Yeah.
Oh, I'm sorry.
No, no, no.
That's what I was gonna say. We should also do an impact assessment to go along that ask.
And and of course you know I can help put that together, but I think a number of people in this room probably are familiar with them and that's going to be something that's required for our new budget and policy asks that go to the governor's office so.
To the extent that we want to do anything that requires gubernatorial approval,

that's budget or policy related, then we're going to want to make sure that we submit it with the impact assessment form and that's that. That would really be a key opportunity to be able to demon.
Not just the equity implications of.
This but also the operational and continuous improvement implications.

Juliet Birch 1:42:30
I think you're muted Janet.

Hurley, Janet 1:42:34
I think what Susana is saying is really important and it speaks to what Abby said about, you know.

Hurley, Janet 1:42:41
Here it is another year and.

Hurley, Janet 1:42:46
You know we haven't.
We haven't addressed these recommendations, but we're not going to see.
We're not necessarily going to see.
Resources coming our way.
So the key will be to show that this is the more efficient and.

Hurley, Janet 1:43:05
You know, use the least resources manner of doing it, but I'm not sure that we're going to figure that out within the next several months. I think this is more like an 18 month kind of.

Hurley, Janet 1:43:20
Endeavor.

Hurley, Janet 1:43:23
And you know, presenting something to legislature, we would have to do that by this fall. And that's not going to happen.

Hurley, Janet 1:43:32
I don't think.
At least not from the Landis Review Board's point of view.
We've got way too much on our plate to start implementing by the fall and it's just not going to happen for us.

Hurley, Janet 1:43:47
So I think that we're talking about a year and a half at least.

Karla Raimundi 1:43:54
Mm hmm.
And I&I think that having this conversation.
That having this conversation actually shows a lot of good faith and and that we are we are really considering the recommendations and it may be that as we continue moving forward because you know we are.
We are part of the executive there are certain limitations that we have regarding the things that we can put forth or not.
But we're having these conversations and thinking strategically about how to support.
The Advisory Council and ourselves in the doing of this work and it may be that as we continue having these conversations it's decided that hey it's it's best for the Advisory Council to actually.
Organize itself around this particular task right.
And then how can we support.
The Advisory Council in actually doing that advocacy for their recommendations and it may be what you mentioned susana that several agencies.
Actually provide.
I don't know how.
Maybe like a letter or.
Some sort of communication support for the Advisory Council 's recommendations and so that they feels that we support them and they get that that we are really.
Thinking very seriously about how to make the recommendations a reality.

Juliet Birch

Awesome so it seems like.

Where you know we're starting to come up with a semblance of ideas around long term how we want to approach improving this these systems and kind of implementing the ACS recommendations we've come up with a couple of different avenues?

In the short term for this August 15th response it sounds like we've got Elizabeth and Carla interested in revisiting last year 's response and you know updating it.

Being at perhaps providing a high level work plan outline Abby provided a really helpful set of bullets in the chat.

Is there anything else we want to add to this approach in the final hour before we move on to our next agenda item?

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 1:46:25

I would just reiterate in the response letter that we absolutely agree with the.

The A/C's recommendations.

Just make sure that's you know that we're not that we we support them and.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 1:46:46

And just because we haven't supposedly done anything for last year.

Doesn't mean that just because we don't have anything to show for it.

In in the last year doesn't mean that we don't.

Support.

Juliet Birch 1:47:04

Very true.

If there are no other thoughts would you guys be comfortable in kind of doing a total gear switch to the next set of agenda items?

OK.

Yes OK.

I'm seeing some nods from people.

Karla Raimundi

I just wanna gratitude for the conversation thank you.

Juliet Birch
That's always important thanks Carla.
Let me just pull my slides up.
Next we're gonna talk about the community engagement plan deliverable.
So I think I pass it to Kim to introduce this.

Kim Barrett
Sure.
We go to the page here.
I'm very sorry for this one right here.
Yep there we go.
Cool So what is community engagement.
Community engagement involves opportunities to connect and interface with community members.
That's in a variety of ways and meaningful engagement is ensures that community members have opportunities to inform.
And participate in decision making and they use opportunities must not be burdensome or caused.
OK.
So why is community engagement important for covered agencies to do.
So in part because of civil rights they require that members of the public can meaningfully participate.
And access all of our programs benefits and services.
Those are federal requirements and then environmental justice which affirms the right to self determination fair treatment and meaningful engagement for all people.
And of course that's through act 154 of 2022.
OK I think it's still there.
Oh no this is you OK.

Juliet Birch
So just to give you guys like.
A summary of what the requirements are of our community engagement plans as covered agencies covered agency community engagement plans must describe how the covered agency will engage with environmental justice focus populations or ejf PS as it evaluates new and existing activities and programs.

Describe.
How the covered agency plans to provide meaningful participation in compliance with title 6 of the Civil Rights Act?
Be informed by the core principles of community engagement which hopefully we're all familiar with but they were developed by the interagency committee and the Advisory Council and they were just made final last year.
We'll take a look at them again and then finally.
The community engagement plans must be developed in consultation with the Advisory Council.
Also one of our goals as the kind of Technical Support for this work is to create opportunities for you to you know engage with that consultation.
The last thing to note here in terms of statutory requirements is that the deadline for each covered agency 's community engagement plan.
Is July first 20?
27.
Here's just a quick glance at the core principles of community engagement just to remind everybody what they are if you're interested in taking a look at these principles in more depth they are on the EJ public resource library.
If you?
But yeah they were just made final last year after a round of public comments.
So big win for this area of work.
And.
This slide I will admit is NR specific.
I'm just gonna say that up front before I explain it but I thought that we thought that it would be important to share this information with you because what we wanna do in this meeting is have a conversation around how.
We can strategize and kind of build synergy across our community engagement plan development processes recognizing that each one of our agencies is very different in size in structure etc.
But you know.
Trying to get that information sharing going.
So what will the anr community engagement plan do.
This is a slide that we used internally a lot.
The main goals for our community engagement plan in at anr is to one capture existing practices across the agency we really want to avoid reinventing the wheel

and we also want.
Emphasize that really good work is happening across the agency already in terms of community engagement.
2 we want to enhance Technical Support for staff who do community engagement.
We know that there are obstacles that folks are facing.
Part of capturing those existing practices is identifying those obstacles and then building resources to to help overcome them and then 3 to ensure uniformity and compliance across the agency.
Knowing that if a member of the public is going to engage with us they're going to get high quality treatment no matter where no matter the context.
And now I'll pass it to Kim.

Kim Barrett
Thanks the one done right community engagement empowers community members to engage in decisions that impact their quality of life creates new relationships and build trust between communities and government identifies gaps in our services and addresses unmet needs.
And improves the quality and level of satisfaction of our work.
So now we're gonna have a discussion.
Questions are what does community engagement mean in the context of your agency 's work.
In what ways could your agency improve its community engagement practices.
What are some questions that your agency is community engagement plan could answer?
I guess one other thing.
One thought so the way that we developed the goals of our community engagement plan was to kind of identify.
What folks were struggling with but also figuring out what the strengths were as well to come together and think about?
You know what support folks need.
And then also recognizing that within our agency different departments also have different needs and also do different types of community engagement so.
Yeah hopefully that helps and supports your discussion.
How much time do we have?

Juliet Birch
5 minutes.
So sister this is the brief one.

Kim Barrett
This is the brief one OK.
Yeah so let's just take a quick pause and then folks can just raise your hand and start whenever you're ready.

Karla Raimundi
What Kim mentioned that was particularly important for the agency of natural resources is that when we started having conversations around community engagement?
We received an incredible input of or feedback of Oh my God Oh my God Oh my God what is this.
Are you gonna be asking me to re envision community engagement?
Are you gonna be asking me to do a lot more I don't have capacity?
We're doing it already and we've been doing it for a long time.
Why this?
Why now and so?
An important an important way of communicating this work internally for the agency has been ensuring that what we're doing is optimizing.
Is capturing what's being done right now eliminating the excess and the things that are not working?
And honing in on the things that are working.
And then create uniformity across the board.
And additionally because our agency is so diverse ensuring that we're having conversations with all of the divisions in the agency so that they understand that our goal is to optimize.
It's it's been going a lot better I have to say.
Just sharing that perhaps strategically it may be helpful to.
To think about how this work is presented in your agencies and we do a lot of rule making and rule making.
Entails engagement and yeah it really lowered the anxiety the anxiety levels.

Hurley, Janet 1:56:20
I'm confused.
There's only 5 minutes for this.

Juliet Birch 1:56:24
We would like this was really intended to be like a brief kind of introductory discussion and then we're going to have like a more strategy based heavy discussion a little bit later like once we get to that section of the agenda we want to take a break first.

Hurley, Janet 1:56:36
Oh, OK.
Oh so so.
We want to take a break.
I'm I'm still confused.

Juliet Birch 1:56:48
We'll take a break after this discussion and then we'll come back in.

Hurley, Janet 1:56:51
I see.
I see. I see. OK.

Juliet Birch 1:56:52
Yeah yeah sorry.
I should have been clear.

Hurley, Janet 1:56:56
I mean, I'll just say for the land use review board that we are in a period of pretty substantial change.
And.
What?
What? What?
The board.

You know the board had been certainly engaged in rulemaking like an R does. And so there are, you know, statutorily prescribed.
Public.
Input mechanisms.
In Rule making, this was a board that used to meet every other month.
We now meet multiple times a week in open public meeting.
We've also moved our meetings all around the state and intend to keep doing that.
So.
But we're also implementing a new framework for the jurisdiction of ACT 250.
And the a lot of the work that we're doing is reaching out to.
Stakeholders and getting public input on how we are going about that. But once all of that is in place, I think that's what our community engagement plan will need to be addressing and.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 1:58:12
You know, I hope that our community engagement plan will sort of reflect the the new orientation of this board as a much more public facing board and that our work will.
You know.
And that community engagement will be part of what this, what this board is about.
In a way that it probably never had been before. So.

Abbey Willard 1:58:49
I wanted to just ask are folks aware that there's a state of Vermont community engagement community of practice that exists.
I know some.
I know some are on that participate in those community of practice conversations but.
I think simultaneous to our deliverable there's.
You know interest across other elements and program areas of our work to sort of develop some best practices around how state agencies should conduct community engagement.
I have a colleague that that attends.
I I have not but I know that.
Claire and EMI at minimum and and you do too Julia.

Yeah so I think that's great to know that that space is sort of like being held.
I don't know how helpful that may be.
In our.
Deliverables but.

Juliet Birch
I don't know if Claire or Amy I saw you both leaned in and I didn't know if one of you was gonna unmute.
No I would say that it's very helpful.
I think that there's there's this like this is probably a conversation that we could.
Have?
At length at another time too but the things that the community engagement community practice is doing.
I think if anyone 's able to join it's extremely helpful and they you know there's a lot of like kind of building synergy and like bouncing bouncing ideas off of each other across all kinds of parts of the of the state including.
Parts of the state that are not included in this law but I think there's a lot of good information that we could take and apply to our community engagement plans and I also think that they're thinking about you know this is a whole can of worms developing you.
Know community engagement inventory for the state that could be extremely helpful for.
Our work.
I don't know if it'll happen.
I don't know what the what.
The timeline looks like on that but it could be extremely helpful.
So that's all I'll say about it.
If there are no other reflections off that like kind of introductory set of questions maybe we could take another 5 minute break and then come back and we'll have like a strategy discussion does that work for everybody?
Sure OK.
Great see you in 5.
Hi everyone.

Kim Barrett
OK can everyone give us a thumbs up.
We know that some folks had to hop off.
Want to make sure folks are here.
OK.
Sounds good so we're gonna move into.
The engagement plan discussion.
Juliet just put the questions in the chat for you all to look at.
So we wanted to provide a few what we're calling them as gentle suggestions to support your discussion.
They are to consider equity and air time so making sure that everyone is getting a chance to speak embracing silence so understanding that we may not always have something to say and also it can be helpful actually to give folks time to process.
And then hopefully other folks will be able to jump into the conversation.
Try.
To be solutions focused.
Action oriented.
And then dividing some queer next steps or our suggestions.
Hi marcella.
How's it going?

Karla Raimundi
You know marcella.

Kim Barrett
No I don't.

Karla Raimundi
Oh I'm like.
But I knew that.
Hola Hola marcella used to work here.

DM **Dent, Marcella** 2:08:42
Hi Kyla.

Karla Raimundi 2:08:44
Oh.
Yeah yeah she used to work here.

DM **Dent, Marcella** 2:08:44
Yeah.

Kim Barrett 2:08:48
Yeah.
Do you need everyone to do like a quick?
Random introductions would that be helpful or no.

DM **Dent, Marcella** 2:08:56
Well, I don't want to derail us.
So if maybe if if folks just mention it when they talk, that would be great, but I don't.

Kim Barrett 2:09:02
Sounds good.

DM **Dent, Marcella** 2:09:02
I don't mean to restart us, yeah.
Thanks for sorry to jump in halfway.
I appreciate being able to listen in on this portion.

Karla Raimundi 2:09:10
It's great seeing you marcella.

DM **Dent, Marcella** 2:09:12
Yeah. Nice to see you, Kyla.

Kim Barrett 2:09:19
Yes whenever folks are ready you know can start.

Karla Raimundi
The question I'm most interested in this is Carla agency of natural resources.
Is the last one how will covered agencies engage with each other on this work?
So that we are creating efficiencies we're not having to revisit you know things that perhaps are being.
Worked on expanded on in other agencies that are relevant to our agency.
I think that question because of the incredible lack of capacity.
Particularly important for the agency of natural resources just wanted to share that I am particularly interested in seeing how you know.
We we leverage each other 's opportunities and knowledge.
To put together these engagement plans for each of our agencies.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 2:10:57
One thing that we did sort of offline in between this meeting and our last meeting was.
Organize a meeting with the PUC and Public service department.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 2:11:09
Because we.
I think similarly are not as relevant to the spending questions as others because we're regulatory and we implement.
Permitting programs.
And so we're not spending money on, you know, new lands for state parks, for instance, and.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 2:11:37
We don't spend money that involves.
You know.
Health outcomes for communities, particular communities in the state, that sort of thing, and so.
I thought we had a good, you know, meeting and conversation.
We haven't followed up from that yet, but I think it's something that could be helpful as we work toward July 1st, 2027.

McIlvennie, Claire 2:12:12
Yeah, and I'll just whoops.

McIlvennie, Claire 2:12:15
Sorry I didn't raise my hand.
I was going to say I do think one of the main outcomes that I came away is when we were talking about how we engage with the public similarly, like there are things like for example like rulemaking or like other sorts of like very structured processes that are.

McIlvennie, Claire 2:12:39
Not unique to our individual agencies.
And may not be in our individual purview to change necessarily so.
Coming up with some sort of, I think.
Strategy for us to identify like where those which agencies have, what types of engagements like that in common could potentially be like a starting point to make sure that where there needs to be consistency across state government that we're not kind of operating inside.

Schilling, Elizabeth 2:13:13
Yeah, yeah, it was just going to add to that quickly.
You know, we we recognize that in the Advisory Council's response to the.

Schilling, Elizabeth 2:13:25
The complaint reports.
You know, one of their things was.
There, there's not consistency that we're getting 11 different reports, 11 different processes. And so thinking about at least, are there elements of these community engagement plans where there could be like a joint plan and and I know we have the core principles.

Schilling, Elizabeth 2:13:44
The community engagement, and that's supposed to be our guiding light, but I I

don't think it gets down into the weeds like for example clearwave, you know, rule making, we all do rule making and so you know.

SE **Schilling, Elizabeth** 2:13:58
How could we all speak to that in a united voice rather than having however many of us there are, providing you know that many different ways of communicating when it comes to rulemaking so?

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 2:14:12
I just forgot to introduce myself for marcela's sake.
Janet Hurley Land Use Review board.

DM **Dent, Marcella** 2:14:21
Thanks Janet.

Juliet Birch 2:14:25
Hi I'm Juliette Burch.
I'm from the agency of natural resources.
I'm just one of the EJ coordinators I had a kind of clarifying question.
That's funny.
A clarifying question for Claire.
So when you said you know identifying what 8 what.
Agencies or what types of engagement agencies have in common the first place I went to was methods of engagement like public comment focus groups listening sessions et cetera or like surveys but.
I heard.
Elizabeth you know mention rule making so I'm wondering there.
I feel like there's 2 directions that could be taken which is like method of engagement versus instances in which engagement is necessary like permitting rulemaking things like that.
So I was just curious what you guys felt to be more helpful or if it's valuable to make a comparison of both.

MC **McIlvennie, Claire** 2:15:22
I don't.

I remember Indiana Elizabeth can correct me if my memory's just failing me.
I remember talking more about the former, the like, more structured rulemaking that may be governed by like a procedure that is not unique to a specific state entity.
If we didn't talk about it, I also think there is value to talking about the other component of it.
I would say this has come up recently internally at the department.
I have mentioned this before.
In November, started facilitating an internal community of practice around engagement, which has membership from all of our divisions, and we've been.
At a couple meetings, talking through different, a couple different of the core principles, as we've kind of structured discussions. And so for example, like the topic of compensation came up of like do we even have like consistent guidance across the department of when and how we use comp?

MC **McIlvennie, Claire** 2:16:19
Let alone, like across the whole state of Vermont, when we do things like focus groups.

MC **McIlvennie, Claire** 2:16:25
So I think that also would be applicable, Juliet personally.

Abbey Willard 2:16:26
Mm hmm.
Yeah excuse me.
Yeah that's a great point Claire.
Trying.
To figure out how to take my hand down.

Karla Raimundi
I know it's always any tasks here.
Do you want to lower or keep it raised OK?

Abbey Willard
There we go the thing I was thinking about.
Was around leadership engagement?

So that's like something that's like very much on my mind of.
How?
We as an agency would.
Do that and then is there even like an opportunity for kind of some shared learning across?
Leadership whether.
That's at the cabinet level or elsewhere.
We've had like just some internal experiences where.
Consistency and transparency have when we've engaged in public engagement efforts and I mean in more of the like public input sessions than I mean in the formal rulemaking etc way where.
Thinking about staff capacity.
Thinking about how much information are we actually kind of expected or comfortable transparently sharing about the outcomes of our public engagement.
Feel really.
I don't know if they're sticky I think they're sticky.
Actually I think there's like I think there's some work there that like I'm not.
I didn't anticipate actually but feels still pretty relevant for.
The commitments that we would make around a community engagement process.

Karla Raimundi
I have a question.
What do you mean sticky?

Abbey Willard
I mean like yes.
Adam.
So yeah so sort of a bit jargony I guess.
Or vague sticky means I think we could create a community engagement plan.
And I think we would get pushback from leadership around some of the expectations and desires that we would like to see included based on following the core principles.
Where I think leadership would say well we don't always have to share everything that's brought up in a public meeting in a report or we don't have to?
To you know or you know compensation isn't something that we can offer and we

shouldn't use certain language you know so I I just know that there's.
Some.
Parts of this that are just very culturally different than where government has been historically and I think it's going to take a little bit for us to kind of.
Yep.
Adopt some of this.
Approach.

Kim Barrett
Thank you can support with that.
Cause like because I know part of this is strategizing and I think a lot about how there are instances across the state where some of these things are happening and I think that part of it too is that some of the members on the Advisory Council have.
Been involved in some of those things across the state and I'm just wondering how to bridge that gap.
You know 'cause even within our agency sometimes these things come up and we don't necessarily have all the examples right then and there to say these are the ways that these things have been happening or here are specific considerations that we need to think about.
Or here are the issues and the ways that we resolve them to move forward and I feel like to your point it's hard when you come up against those gaps and then there isn't a way to move forward.
In that moment.
So then it just gets deprioritized.
Oh.
So I think that that could also be an interesting space for this group to talk through.
Yeah.

Abbey Willard
Roll your hands up if you wanted.

Karla Raimundi
Oh my hands up.
Yes thank you.
Ia question came to mind.

I don't.
I don't remember who made the comment and then I failed my creative juices.
Come out and I was thinking.
Of this question is there an opportunity to identify minimum standards.
For certain types of engagements across the board.
And then have the agencies.
Expand on the minimum standards.
For this and I need to check my memory on this is the state of New York I think what's interesting about their approach is that they have a form.
That includes certain prompts and then the agencies fill out those sections.
I don't know if it's pertaining community engagement per southeast but I think it has to do with language access.
But the model is what I am interested in.
In exploring with this group which is certain areas are identified.
And then each of the agencies expand on those areas that have been identified.
Just a question for us to consider.
Maybe it's a bad idea.

SE **Schilling, Elizabeth** 2:22:27
No, Carla, I like.
I like. I like where you're thinking is going and I like. I think we need to start looking at examples and things like that. But I think the more we can all be working for like the same framework or, you know not reinventing the wheel, not having all.
These different plans and having unified approaches where it makes sense and it recognizing that we all are very, very different, right.
And so there may be lots of things where we need to have individualized.

SE **Schilling, Elizabeth** 2:22:54
Plans, but maybe those plans are shorter because we have.
And unified approaches.

Kim Barrett 2:23:11
Susana.

DX **Davis, Xusana** 2:23:13

Yeah. Thanks. I.
Am first of all, apologetic that I wasn't here for the earlier part of the discussion, so I'm sorry if this is going to be repetitive, but I think a couple of points that were raised here are really, really important and one of the ones I want to look.
Up is what Abby said.
I think a lot of the time.
People in government don't want to do engagement because they don't want to know what the public thinks, because then it implicitly obligates you to do something about it.
Or at least to act in a way that is informed by that. And I think a lot of times.
Agencies tend to come with ideas already formed and don't want to have to modify them.
And So what we do instead is not really engagement so much as it is technical compliance with notice and comment requirements.
But we're we're not really engaging because there are so many people who are going to be impacted by our work, who are not, who don't even know.

DX **Davis, Xusana** 2:24:07
That The thing is coming.
Or that they have an opportunity to weigh in on it.
So I think that.
And and I I mean, I can speak from experience. We were on a work.
I was on a workgroup maybe a year or two ago with some other people in leadership positions in state government.
Who bought us tooth and nail on doing any kind of community engagement?
It was really the most bizarre thing and.
And they said, well, why would we cede our power like that?
And.
And then I just went home and wrote in my diary. No.
You know it it.
I think that there's a sort of scarcity mindset about power and about what it means once you are aware that the public feels a certain way about an issue, it's like a box that a lot of people in leadership don't want to open.

DX **Davis, Xusana** 2:25:05

So instead they just say we're just gonna do this. We're gonna hold 3 forums, one in Burlington, one in Montpelier, one in, you know, Bennington, so that we can pretend that we really cover the southern part of the state.

Davis, Xusana 2:25:16
And then and that's it.

Davis, Xusana 2:25:18
And we shall ignore any comments that are not aligned with what we already decided we're going to do.
So yeah, I I think that there's a lot of work that needs to happen.
I I do think that it would be great if we had a centralized clay book for how we do engagement. And just like Elizabeth was saying, yes, all of our agencies are different.
So maybe it's a a menu of options approach.
To allow for those kinds of differences in the way the different you know the agencies do stuff, I think we're you know, we wanna talk about language access.
We wanna talk about engaging young people, which we never.
Or do enough of.
There are a lot of and then even things like safety, right?
I think that sometimes you know you have a public forum saying I'm talking a lot, you have a public forum on something like, I don't know infrastructure or what have you and you probably you don't expect it to get intense at a meeting like that, you have a.
Public conversation about something equity related and a lot of people don't know this, but there's a there's a safety and security element that you have to think about.
Because.

Davis, Xusana 2:26:28
That's when the bigots come out and and I think that sometimes people who work in state government don't always recognize that some of us have to make those additional considerations when we do public engagement, because the topics that we deal with are not the boring ones that get.
Overlooked.
And again, no shade to my friends who do the boring ones that get overlooked.
I I envy that sometimes, but I just think that.

Centralized guidance could be so useful and.
And yet again, you know, there is a cost to that. You talk about stipends.
You talk about, you know, should we provide the people bread and water?
You know at the at at these kinds of all of it comes at cost and those are conversations that people don't want to have and that's why we're doing it. So ad hoc and so case by case because nobody wants to commit to saying here is a fund.

Davis, Xusana 2:27:20
We have established for this kind of work because at that point it sets a standard and it's like when you don't do that, why didn't you so?
I'll be quiet now.
I have a lot of thoughts on this but.

Davis, Xusana 2:27:32
Yeah.

Juliet Birch 2:27:37
Thank you for all those thoughts Susanna.
I think that I was just gonna share like a resource that I think basically just amplifies everything that you just said.
The Dec did a report like 2 years ago.
That I think at least 2 of the Advisory Council members were supportive on.
I know Jennifer Byrne and Brittany Watson were involved in this but I don't know if there were more but.
Some of the findings from this report really were.
One the state should not approach communities with things that they've already decided on.
'cause it's just performative and it's and it's and it's disrespectful.
That was like really one of the findings that people said almost word for word.
During this report.
And then the other thing which I can't emphasize enough is that one of the communities that were kind of centered in this report was.
You know.
So.
What what?

My brain is not working right now.
Sorry people who speak languages other than English and I think that they a lot of the people who were involved in that particular focus group were young people and you know one of the takeaways was like.
You know a lot of these kids are like they're minors and they're writing down.
For example how do my parents get legal.
Legal support in the event that they've been handed.
Like a notice of alleged violation and like that's something that this is a tangent.
We should not allow children to do it you know as a state.
We have a responsibility to not put children in a position to have to take on you know adult responsibilities.
But yeah language access I think is really one of the big takeaways as well is like it's a key part of community engagement and if your agency doesn't have you know language access stood up then community engagement you know isn't necessarily.
As thorough as it needs to be I digress.
I don't know if you had your hand raised after me today.

Abbey Willard
If I did I didn't mean to?

Karla Raimundi
I have.
I have my hand up and see if I.
Can lower it?
I'll lower it after.
I was going back to.
To the question about minimum centralized standards recommendations menus of options.
I was thinking that.
In if we develop content and process.
And you know conceptualize what this could look like all of the things that we've talked about could be incorporated into that one central repository for community engagement guidance or whatever we want to call it later on.
So I think.
It would be important what Abby mentioned about leadership training conversations.

It could be incorporated as part of this whole approach.
Engagement does not necessarily.
Is limited to 2 users or beneficiaries of what our agencies produce for for for benefits right?
It's also about engaging internally with our staff to maximize opportunity and create containers.
Inside the agency that allow for an expansion of those conversations with members of the public.
So it could be that.
That we identify.
Topics like leadership trainings and touchpoints perhaps identify ideal outputs and outcomes as they as they pertain to particular types of engagements.
The safety could be a component of.
That.
Document how to engage with young folks.
So I'm thinking that there is opportunity to keep thinking about.
Getting a sense of what.
Is what applies to all of our agencies across the board?
In capturing that in a central way in developing content the other thing why the other factor that I keep thinking about that makes this approach very appealing is capacity.
This would imply.
Sharing of resources.
That I had not previously thought of and that really can help each of the agencies free up some capacity.
To to do further.
Investigation.
Inventorial activities inside your agency so that.
We're actually going perhaps a level deeper and we can also start having conversations.
About paradigm shifts within our agencies.
Which could also be incorporated in how we organize ourselves internally?

Abbey Willard
So Carla are you thinking of like.

A community engagement plan template.
That identifies areas yeah.
That that thought came to mind.
I I'm just really sharing the ideas as they come to me like I said my creative juices have been activated.
By this conversation so I'm just thinking about like a menu of opportunities that that we may have to avail to get us to where we need to.
In 2027.
And this idea of identifying minimum components of each of the agencies community engagement plans may be a way to create some uniformity ensuring certain quality.
Of outputs.
Inconsistency across the board.
And ultimately helping us to build.
Trust.

MC **McIlvennie, Claire** 2:34:32
Marysville, do you wanna go? Since I've already spoken.

DM **Dent, Marcella** 2:34:36
Oh, it's OK. Go ahead.

MC **McIlvennie, Claire** 2:34:38
OK.
Well, I'll leave you anyways.
I just Amy's not here but.
While we're talking about not reinventing the wheel, I don't know how many folks are familiar with the public of it.

MC **McIlvennie, Claire** 2:34:50
It's called a public engagement plan or involvement plan.
That Bdh has recently released but.
That is being used as one of the like, foundational.
Reports to guide the continuous improvement community of practice around engagement.

That Juliet or Abby mentioned and I I think.
For not reinventing the wheel, I personally find that a really helpful starting point.
And then coupled with like the DC report and the core principles that it feels like there are a lot of places where we could start pulling a kind of core template from.
So I just since Amy is not here, I wanted to make sure that that was flagged.

DM **Dent, Marcella** 2:35:41
And I was, I think my comment will kind of follow onto this and just quickly.
I'm marcella dent.
I am with the Agency of Transportation and I'm not normally the person that sits here. I'm sure, Colin explained all of this earlier.
We're covering for Dave Pelletier, so I'm definitely a little bit behind the ball, but.
Just two things that came to mind was regarding the. So we've just taken some very initial steps to move.
Forward with an update to our public involvement guide, which was last updated in 2017 and.
So to the template idea, I just and it sounds like vdh has one as well.
So I just wanted to be mindful of what already exists and making a template like a tool to help instead of a requirement just in case like we have agencies that have public and involvement guides that sort of fit the bill but don't fit the template, just somet.

DM **Dent, Marcella** 2:36:42
To be mindful of.
And then the second idea was the menu approach.
Again, we're in the we're, you know, just at the very beginning stages of updating our guide.
But it is sort of a menu style and we like that about it.

DM **Dent, Marcella** 2:36:56
So I think that's a menu idea is a nice way to organize something like this when you have so many different types of activities you could undertake in any given activity or situation and how you know you could picking like a little.

Dent, Marcella 2:37:14
Combination of a few of them can be a nice just a nice way to work and feels.
Easier to work from the staff perspective, I think.

Hurley, Janet 2:37:32
I I was looking through the connecting people to power community engagement pilot.

Hurley, Janet 2:37:37
That was it. Juliet put in the chat.

Hurley, Janet 2:37:42
And so I see that this was a pilot project to do community engagement for Dec and it looked at four communities around the state.

Hurley, Janet 2:37:54
And and then comes up with guidance and that one of the one of the recommendations is that.
Whenever an agency undergoes a new initiative that it develop a piip.

Hurley, Janet 2:38:10
A public.
Involvement plan.

Hurley, Janet 2:38:16
Which?
Which seems great.
So were you thinking, Juliet, that this could be part of a model for community engagement plans that we develop as as covered agencies?

Juliet Birch 2:38:34
Know if I can speak specifically to the pip as you put it but I do think that the report in terms of its findings around like what our preferred methods of engagement and our what what our preferred I guess.

Environments for engagement from these communities those to me are the really big takeaways I mean I have personal reflections about the pip that are the the public involvement plans that are still kind of like half baked that I don't know if.
Are if they're?
To share here now but I think that some of those other takeaways that substantively tell us about how to improve generally like our relationship with communities those are really important to me from that report.

Hurley, Janet 2:39:19
And also the you know there was a lesson learned in terms of translation, because even to ask for the translation, you had to understand English well enough to know what was being.

Hurley, Janet 2:39:33
You know what was being suggested to you to get translation services?
So it wasn't really working, but so there were some lessons learned, yeah.

Karla Raimundi 2:39:47
I think a necessary step in this process is and it's been mentioned before is sharing tools and tactics that each of the agencies are using to provide elements.
That would contribute to.
Ensuring meaningful community engagement and one of them is language access.
Janet we can have a conversation about about how to provide language access.
To individuals who speak other languages than English the agency developed a communications card.
That actually one of our federal partners is utilizing as a model for other States and it includes images to help bridge that communication language barrier.
So that's definitely important regarding the pim I can share that.
A way to think about.
How that internally here at the agency is is tiered engagement developing a public involvement plan for each action that requires some level of engagement is something that?
I wonder whether there's capacity to support at least at this stage so the way that.
The way that I've had conversations with our leadership about this.
Is peering engagement and starting developing?

Those those plans for those higher.
Risk or more complex engagement events.
And then facing that in into other areas and other levels of engagements and that that pip comes from comes from EPA.
They they really recommends ensuring that before you go into a community you have a very well thought plan and that plan also considers how many times.
Then what other entities have tapped that community previously to ensure that you're not overburdening and over asking certain communities over others.
So that's internally some of the.
Conversations that like I said this is very inception but those are some of the thoughts that that.
We are you know discussing internally to the agency.
Oops.

Kim Barrett
OK.
I just wanted to ask you Susanna a question because I know you had shared that you have a lot of interest and also resources and just thoughts about this.
So I just wanted to give you another opportunity to share.
And then also you know in the last conversation you had mentioned about the impact assessment and then also cost analysis is things that you might be able to support with or at least share more information about.
So I'm wondering in addition to your thoughts if you have an idea.
Ways that you could support this group.
Throughout this process.

DX **Davis, Xusana** 2:43:21
Yeah, one of the best ways that I can be supportive is just to be annoying to the right people.
So to the extent that we can do any kind of legislative stuff or legislative advocacy or before advocacy about this kind of thing, we would be very happy to do that. We've we've given, we've done a lot of browbeating of the legislature in, in general, but more around.

DX **Davis, Xusana** 2:43:46

Working groups and how to how to make work your state, created workgroups, boards, commissions.
More inclusive.

Davis, Xusana 2:43:54
And and function in a more community oriented way we we wrote down that guidance and I can share it here in the chat. But in terms of doing community like a community engagement guidance we kind of toyed with the idea for a few years and decided not to.

Davis, Xusana 2:44:05
Because we saw other jurisdictions had good guides and we didn't want to just duplicate.
But but to the extent that, I mean, you know, I see the bdh resource in, in the chat, I see the Dec report.
I think that these are really great and it's worth uplifting. They're already Vermont specific.
And and they're tailored to hear. So whatever support or we can offer on that end, we're happy to. Also when it comes to things like language access and translation, we've got millions of dollars we want to give away to your agencies to translate your vital documents.
So if you have questions about that, I'll put we have a staff person who's who's focused on that specifically, and I can put his e-mail in the chat.
So to the extent that any of your agencies have vital documents that need to be translated, or if you have other interpreter needs, I want to work as hard as possible to find a way that we can use these to cover that.
So that's another thing.
And then just, yeah.
You know if if if we can play the role of convener for some of these conversations, if they're happening either internally or or with external partners, then we we would we would participate in that as well.

Davis, Xusana 2:45:19
Really enthusiastically, I think Ori would is is at your service to help with any of this.
What we don't want to do though is be working hard to try to convince people that

there's worth and value in community engagement and any kind of nod and say, oh, yeah.
Yeah, cool.
So why don't you go do it?
And let us know.
When you're done and we can move forward 'cause, that's what happens often so.
If there's, if there's sincere. If there's sincere desire to to move on that not only in this group.
I know this group is sincere, but once it gets out of this room, then suddenly the the the excitement dissipates and it becomes harder to make the case.
So.
Yeah, I guess.
Just tell me what you need is is the short answer, but thank you for coming back around.

Kim Barrett 2:46:08
Thank you I guess with that are there folks who have any additional questions for Susanna or thoughts.
No response.

Karla Raimundi
I think something that you mentioned Susanna really resonated with me any any.
You know it's like it's twofold.
Is that role of persuading which comes hand in hand with education and just opening up forums for conversations of this kind?
And what you mentioned that I think maybe really really really valuable is perhaps convening.
Leadership agencies leadership around this topic in particular.
I.
When Avi mentioned the leadership component?
Although I you know engage with the leadership at anr frequently and I joined their meetings and share information directly to our deputy secretary and our secretary I think there is.
There is incredible benefit to actually creating a forum for all of the leadership from all of the covered agencies.

Is to have conversations are about about community engagement?
I think this topic for some people.
Maybe abstract.
And sometimes the tangible outcomes that may come from real robust engagement are not necessarily perceived at the leadership level is something that perhaps frontline staff.
Who are really engaging?
With members of the community can see and realize the benefits of it but I think leadership is so far removed.
That allowing for touch points and creating those forums may really help us.
Shift how this conversation is had at the agencies so you know convening Susanna I think maybe unimportant.
Contribution of your office to this group convening those.
Folks you know cabinet folks around this one deliberately in particular maybe maybe.
Very important for the success of this work moving forward so thank you.
I don't.
Even if others have thoughts about that.

Abbey Willard
I think that's a great idea yeah.
And maybe it's even just if I can like build off the idea of some leadership forms.
It could even just be engagement at various stages of like even just reminding around translation services and language access plans and then even.
This community engagement deliverable regarding environmental justice.
And then maybe they'll let them know that if we do go the route of a menu of services or a template to just sort of like keep leadership involved and engaged.
And.
I I think feeling like.
Yeah that this can can like stay front of mind 'cause I feel like this is something that has continued to fall.
My observation is I have seen it sort of fall to the wayside for due to lack of capacity and like it kind of used that as an explanation to say oh you know we don't have the resources or we're not a big enough agency or this can't be.
Our top priority or this will come around when they give us a deadline you know like.
All sorts.

Sort of.
Kind of like explanations slash excuses for why it's not been.
Executed.
So yeah anyway.

Juliet Birch
So acknowledging that we've got about 3 minutes left in this meeting what we wanted to do before closing out was just go around and ask folks to identify one action item for themselves related to community engagement.
But instead I think what we're going to do is just ask that you please take the time to do that independently you know I think that it's important for us to all make sure that we're committed to taking some taking some action steps outside of these meetings.
To get organized around this deliverable early.
So that's one thing.
The other thing is just to close the loop on some of the things that we covered previously in the meeting it seems like we're going to have some organizing to do with Elizabeth and Carla to get a draft response for the civil rights and EJ complaint summary reports.
And it also sounds like what we offered before about you know having your support with targeted outreach.
Around the environmental benefits spending guidance.
Public comment period.
I saw some nodding when Kim brought that up early on in the meeting if folks are interested in getting involved in that targeted outreach which I hope you are please reach out to us.
We already shared the materials with you but we would love to you know discuss if there's any ways that we could help.
With that you also might not need our help.
So if you don't need our help don't reach out that's fine.
Yes.
Yeah yeah exactly exactly.
Is there anything else that we wanna share?

Kim Barrett
Yeah going back to evsg really really quickly.
We're finding that there that we need to build in time for you all to collaborate around evsg specifically the reporting process.
You know we've all spoken about potential.
Issues that we may run into like for business office staff and coding and all those types of things.
And so I know that some of you are trying to work through those things now.
So just be prepared for an e-mail within the public comment period trying to coordinate around that.
You know we're trying to hopefully develop some guidance around it if possible for example specifically.
Around what was it Bob.
Alphanumeric descriptors.
Oh yeah.

DB **Donohue, Bob** 2:52:44
Yeah, that's right.

DB **Donohue, Bob** 2:52:45
Yeah. In the chart of accounts, if there was some way of designating.

DB **Donohue, Bob** 2:52:50
Future spending?
So the for the reporting going forward would be much more easy data query.

Kim Barrett 2:52:56
OK.
Yeah so that's a possible goal but we also need collaboration and coordination from all of you to try to get across agency.
Conversation going on that so just putting that on your radar.

Abbey Willard
And that's what's going to be in the e-mail is sort of asking for that coordination.

Kim Barrett
Yeah at some point in the next couple of weeks.
OK yeah.

Juliet Birch
I think that's everything.
Yeah well done.
Go team.
Thanks guys.
Have a great rest of your day?

Birch, Juliet stopped transcription