Meeting of Vermont's Environmental Justice (EJ) Advisory Council

Friday, September 26th, 2025

11 am – 2 pm EST

This is a public meeting. This meeting is being recorded and will be uploaded to the Agency of Natural Resources' website.

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Meeting Minutes & Agenda Approval

- **11:00 AM | Welcome & Introductions:** Welcome 2 new Advisory Council members
- **11:15 AM | Approvals + Community Agreements Discussion**: Approve August 1st, Meeting Minutes; Approve September 26th, 2025 Draft Agenda; Re-visit and approve Community Agreements
- **11:25 AM | Environmental Benefits Spending Guidance (EBSG) Updates**
- **11:35 AM | Public Comment**
- **11:45 AM | Applying the EBSG**
- **12:15 PM | 9/17/25 IAC Meeting Recap + Brainstorm**
- **12:25 PM | Break**
- **12:40 PM | Unfacilitated AC Time**
- **1:25 PM | VT EJ Law Updates + Next Steps**
- **2:00 PM | Close**

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Relational Community Agreements

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.

2. **Calling in and calling out.** Assume best intent but attend to impact. We can stop things that are being said that are hurtful and be curious and create a space for learning (tools include using "oops"/"ouch" to indicate a pause is needed).

3. **Expect and accept non-closure.** 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.

4. **Center respect.** Be respectful, intentional, and work to build trust and create a safe and inviting space.

5. **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 W.A.I.T ("why am I talking?") and vocalizing support for another person's comment without repeating the same points that have already been made.

VT EJ Law: EBSG Updates

- **Environmental Benefits Spending Guidance (EBSG)**
  - Released 9/15/25
  - Public Comment Period Recap
  - Responsiveness Summary Underway
  - IAC Technical Assistance Sessions

Public Comment

Applying the EBSG

What is the EBSG, and what does it do?

- Guide agencies through an approach to create the Baseline Spending Reports by February 15th, 2026
- Evaluate past spending to inform future investments in environmental benefits
- Emphasize discretionary funds (funds we have control over spending)
- Flexible to allow agencies to tailor their approaches to meet their needs

What doesn’t the EBSG do?

- Does not decide where money goes
- Does not direct how dollars are spent
- Does not override agency budget processes
- Does not provide exhaustive information
- Does not stand alone as a deliverable

What does the reporting process involve?

Step 0: Building Capacity for the Work

- **Outcome:** Identify at least one point of contact and coordinator

Step 1: "Environmental Benefits" Assessment

- **Outcome:** Identify and categorize the ways they provide environmental benefits.

Step 2: Initiative Assessment

Outcome: Identify the source of all their direct environmental benefits.

What does the reporting process involve?

Step 3: Investment Assessment

- **Outcome:** Complete an assessment of availability data.

Step 4: Identifying Investments to Report On

- **Outcome:** Identify investments that provide to environmental benefits.

Step 5: Data Gathering

- **Outcome:** Develop a data set that meets the minimum data fields listed

What does the reporting process involve?

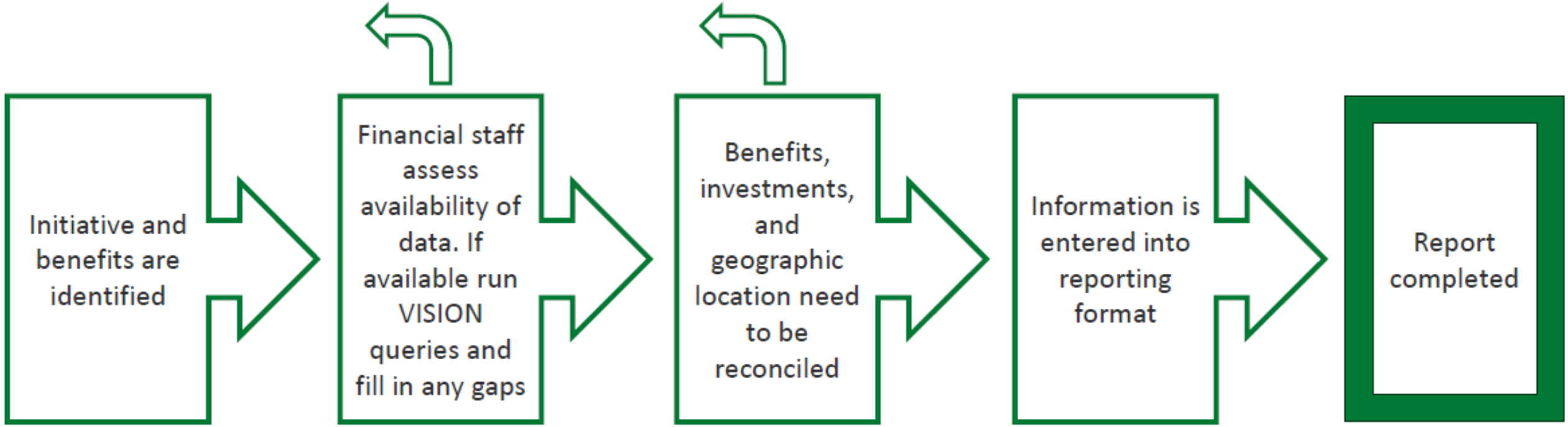
Step 6: Describing and Quantifying Environmental Benefits

- **Outcome:** Provide a description of the environmental benefits and, where practicable quantify the outcome of the environmental benefits.

Step 7: Reporting

- **Outcome:** Develop a quantitative report including all investments outlined in Step 4 and gathered in Step 5. Develop a written rationale report that outlines the rationale of each decision made throughout the reporting process.

Merging Information for Baseline Spending Report



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September IAC Meeting Recap + Brainstorm

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September 17th, 2025 IAC Meeting Takeaways

High-level Takeaways:

- Covered agencies made progress

Collective Successes:

- Teams and working groups have been formalized
- Some agencies have defined processes and approaches
- Some agencies have focused on identifying benefits and investments

Pain Points:

- Some agencies and departments are still problem-solving around capacity constraints

Brainstorm

- What are potential ways the covered agencies can best support the public in interpreting the contents of the Baseline Spending Reports?
- How can covered agencies best receive and respond to feedback from the public after the release of their reports?

Break
15 Minutes

Unfacilitated AC Time
45 minutes

VT EJ Law Update: Modes of Influence

Deliverable: Mapping Tool / Due Jan 1 2027

Community Engagement Component:

- Selection Committee formalized
- Request for Proposal released
- Bid conference was successful
- How's outreach coming?

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Component:

- GIS Selection Committee chose Stone Environmental as the GIS contractor
- Blind review process:
  - All identifiable information was redacted by our General Counsel's office
  - Firm names, names of individuals, location of firms, past project titles, etc. were all removed for the 2 rounds of review

Deliverable: Cumulative Burden / Due July 1 2027

- “On or before July 1, 2027, the Agency of Natural Resources, in consultation with the Environmental Justice Advisory Council and the Interagency Environmental Justice Committee, **shall adopt rules to:**

(1) define cumulative environmental burdens;
(2) implement consideration of cumulative environmental burdens within the Agency of Natural Resources; and
(3) inform how the public and the covered agencies implement the consideration of cumulative environmental burdens and use the environmental justice mapping tool.”

- ANR will provide technical assistance to the AC + IAC in the coming months

Deliverable: Community Engagement Plan Due July 1 2027

- The IAC met in July to begin exploring what the Community Engagement Plan process may look like for their agencies
- The Community Engagement Plans will be informed by the Core Principles of Community Engagement
- This is an area where the AC will be consulted in public meetings

VT EJ Law Timeline Needs + Next Steps

- The VT EJ Law deliverables overlap extensively
- This requires nimble scheduling and clarity across CREJU, the AC, IAC and the Community Engagement Selection Committee
- Please fill out doodle polls within one week and communicate your scheduling needs with us
- Please fill out your per diem forms

THANK YOU!

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