VT EJ Law Joint Public Meeting-20251112_110624-Meeting Recording

November 12, 2025, 4:06PM

2h 53m 59s

Barrett, Kim started transcription

Barrett, Kim 0:03

And then also any additional agency staff that are on the call who may be supporting some of the IAC numbers?

And then, Juliet, if you wanted to share a couple things about the Community agreement.

Birch, Juliet 0:23

Yeah. So last time that we had an Advisory Council meeting, maybe in September, the Advisory Council had shared that they were interested in potentially changing the way that we manage the Community in grievance during meetings, perhaps even just having us like read them to ourselves instead of having.

It read out loud as a group just to save time and a lot of us are really familiar with these words.

So I just wanted to 1st offer to any Advisory Council members if they wanted to jump in.

And share any thoughts about this and then if we're comfortable with kind of taking a new approach, we can get some thumbs up and do it that way instead.

Are there any thoughts from AC members?

I can't see everybody, so if there's anyone who's just being like, no, I don't have any thoughts, that's fine.

I just can't hear or see.

Mariana 1:26

I'm fine with that. Thank you.

Barrett, Kim 1:27

So what?

Mariana 1:29
No thoughts on here.

Birch, Juliet 1:29
Well, thank you, Marianne.
Thank you.
OK so.
If everyone's comfortable with it, I think for today's meeting we'll just read these to ourselves.
Take about two minutes and make sure we're all comfortable with these agreements.
OK.
Let me know when you guys are ready for me to swap slides.

Barrett, Kim 2:28
OK.
I think we're getting.
I think we're getting thumbs up.

Birch, Juliet 2:33
Cool. And if everybody can sense through these community agreements, can we get another thumbs up just to make sure we're comfortable moving forward?
Great seeing some thumbs in the room seeing some thumbs on the screen. Mariana gave a heart.
Thank you for that.
That made me smile.
All right. I think we're good to move on.
I'll pass it to Kim.

Barrett, Kim 3:02
Thank you.
All right, so here's our agenda. We're gonna start with introductions, and we'll take an hour to do that, which is great.
So you all can get connected again.
And then we're gonna do a quick reorientation to the community engagement plans

deliverable.
We've met with the Interagency committee last week.
So we'll do a quick share out for that, you know highlight.
And then later on we have an unstructured environ.
Ment and so the purpose of that is, you know after we have the orientation and after you hear about the interagency committee.
Then you all can take time to either discuss as yourselves.
Or ask dedicated questions like that. Session is for you to lead in whatever way. If you have questions that you'd like us to answer.
That's great.
And then we'll move into the working session.
Where both the Advisory Council and the Interagency Committee will work together.
After that, we'll have a debrief in case there are any next steps or things that we identify that need to happen to move forward and then we'll end the meeting with.
Updates so just wanted to know if that works for everyone and then also we'll do a separate vote to approve the meeting minutes from last year.

TM **Trey Martin** 4:52
I'll make a motion to approve the Minutes.

RH **rich holschuh** 5:02
Seconded by rich.

TM **Trey Martin** 5:08
I'm sorry. That was Trey.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 5:14
Mm-hmm.
All right.
Quite good there.

BJ **Birch, Juliet** 5:26
Oh.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 5:30

We just have that one slide with the.
Introduction.

Birch, Juliet 5:39
Sorry, I was trying to see everybody who's in the meeting.
I can't see the full list with my current technology, so sorry about that. OK.

Barrett, Kim 5:51
OK, so for introduction, if you could share your name and then you know what community you represent or the agency that you represent. And then since we're talking about community engagement today, it it would be great to hear from everyone.
What community engagement challenges you navigate that way we can.
All learn from each other and then one thing I'll say is that.
There, there.
Maybe focus on this call who are not actually, you know, in the interagency committee, like, you're not sitting.
Or fulfilling a seat.
And so we ask that we initially prioritize folks who sit on the Advisory Council and sit on the Interagency Committee 1st. And then if we have time left, we'd love for other folks to introduce themselves.
But that way it's clear to the Advisory Council.
Who they're working with.
Directly.
I think I saw a hand from Carla.

Raimundi, Karla 6:59
Hi, yes. I just would like to close out the prior portion, which is the the approval of the Minutes.
There was a motion to approve and a second, and if there are no.
I think we should move to approve the motion to approve the.
The Minutes from the last minute from the last meeting. Sorry.
So if.

Barrett, Kim 7:29
Thanks Kyle.

Raimundi, Karla 7:30
If everyone.
If everyone can say yay or thumbs up, then we can then move to the next portion.
Great. Just wanted to close out that portion. Kim. Great. I see a lot of thumbs up.

Barrett, Kim 7:45
Yeah, baby.
Yeah, I'm seeing them now.

Raimundi, Karla 7:49
No names.
No abstentions.
OK, no abstentions.
Minutes are approved.
Take it away, Kim. Thank you.

Barrett, Kim 8:03
No, thank you.
Thank you for that.
Now at this point, we're doing introductions.
So I can put this question in the chat, but we're gonna stop sharing our screen and then start with the Advisory Council and then.

rich holschuh 8:26
I volunteer to go first.
Endelo, Uzzi Lizal and Daiyuan tashtagak talisukuk.
I'm called Rich Holshu in 1000. Goku, which you know is Brattleboro today.
I am representative on behalf of the Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs.
And in terms of community engagement challenges?
The various communities that are connected through the Commission.

Are sometimes a challenge to engage a lot of the folks, and I'm probably not the only one to note this are not very digitally engaged.
They're not checking emails.
They're not going to meetings.
And they can be difficult to reach. So I do report on a monthly basis to the Commission itself, with a written report there.
Their meeting this month happens to be today.
So they'll be reviewing that.
So I I do that monthly report and I depend on some of those Commissioners to reach their own communities to the degree that they're able. And that's kind of the lay of the land for me.
Any questions?
I'm happy to answer them.
Otherwise, I'll I'll tag Mariana.

Mariana 9:57
Thanks rich.
It's nice to hear from you and to see everyone.
My name is Mariana and it is also Mariana. Depending on how you like to pronounce it same person.
I work for hunger free Vermont and I am a Member of this Council as the good security or insecurity representative.
And one of the challenges that I am, I guess this is something that I am feeling and perhaps others are feeling as well.
I think we're all overwhelmed by the amount of communications and information that we receive.
And it makes it harder to engage and you feel like, oh, goodness, I am all done with the whole thing.
So I guess there's this feeling of giving up or just being tired and being disempowered from from the from the amount of, yeah.
Opportunities.
Mixed information.
Excessive information and excessive media around us and ways to engage so.
Yeah, that's how a little bit of how I am feeling in a way. And I feel like many communities and many people are feeling the same way and they are having a hard

time to to engage at the same time.
All this could be inspiring to chess, Hyper focus and engage in chess something.
So it's kind of a challenge, but also I see an opportunity.
So anyways, tagging Victor.

VD **victor davila** 11:42
Hi, my name is I am the.
We I'm representing the environmental justice chair for nonprofits.
I'm a slingshot and nonprofit organization.
I think in a lot of my work because a lot of my work is direct community engagement and trying to help get like trainings and workshops, people who want to organize for specific cause.
I think there's a lot of areas.
In specific parts of Vermont.
That are self siloing a little bit, but there's like people kind of like move out to certain regions like Shaftesbury because they want a level of independence away from others. But then suddenly they all get a common enemy in like pollution in the area.
And it's hard for.
Them to climb out of that and reestablish bonds because the goal was to not have to deal with people at some point.
So dealing with communities like that is a little tricky, and having the things that.
Slingshot has been doing is trying to like make those meetings fun through facilitation and we also have trainings that help with effective teams building to like help people in the sound. Like how do you build internal democratization?
How do you make sure no one is actually quite the leader, but we respect people who are taking on more responsibility and those kinds of things are not perfect selves to those issues, but.
They help mitigate fallout.
Which I think is the point.
Like, how can you maintain a group long enough to actually get across to the other side as an entirely separate thing?
Then how do you want to campaign and how do you do all these other things?
But it's critical to getting communities to work together that may not be as tight as certain other areas, like I don't see this issue being as big of a problem in like WINOOSKI, for example. But in some positive amount you get a little more difficult

when people truly.
Value independence.
But paradoxically, they got to come together in order to.
Protect their independence.
And I will pass it off to.
Trey.

Trey Martin 13:50
And everybody.
Trey Martin on the conservation director at the Vermont Singing Conservation Board and.
Our organization's representative on the advisory committee and I use hehim pronouns.
I'm I'm calling in from Montpelier today.
And it's nice to see everybody.
Let's see. I I would say the the thing I'm observing right now is similar to what what I think Carla may have said.
That that just the amount of the amount of communication, the number of different things that are going on for for folks in frontline communities and and across Vermont just generally is that there's so many.
There's so much happening and it's a lot of it's very complex. And so if you add in some of the other challenges that Rich mentioned of reaching people or of, you know, what have you is that it's really hard within.
These statutorily driven timelines with really broad complicated material.
To really do the work, to educate people who are often don't have the time and and ability to meet something over and over again, that is has the complexity and and.
Durability of some of these processes.
That's you know how to compensate and take care of people and to bring them in and to feed, feed them both literally and figuratively.
So that they feel kind of part of something. I think that's just across the board, I'm seeing that.
VHCBS work and and in partner work.
And let's see.
I can pass it to Jennifer.

Birch, Juliet 15:46
Hey, Jennifer, I don't think that your mic is working right now.

Byrne, Jennifer 15:51
Is it?
Is it working now?

Birch, Juliet 15:53
Yes, that works a lot better.

Byrne, Jennifer 15:54
OK, OK. No headphones. Jennifer Byrne. I'm the Advisory Council member from.
The for the NRCC, the natural Resources Conservation Council, I work for one of the 14 conservation districts in Vermont.
Natural resource conservation districts and all 14 districts are represented by.
Council, which is actually a an agency of the state.
And the each district is a municipality that's governed by the residents of that water.
For Shader County, so we're we're really born out of the need for for community engagement back in the 30s, out of the Dust Bowl when the USDA was starting to develop their soil conservation programs and they recognized that the local farmers and land stewards knew what they needed.
More than you know, the the federal officials who would come in. And so they established the idea of this network of.
Hold on one second.
And so anyway, I I one of the challenges we do a lot of community engagement and this what I just posted in the chat is our guidance from the USDA of our locally LED work on how we're supposed to inform federal and state programs. Our biggest challenge is.
That none of that's funded. We actually exist in state law.
And I'll put the link to our state law too, so that you all know you're all residents of a conservation district.
You live in Vermont and are represented by an elected board of local people.
And then, but in terms of a strategy for dealing with some of the challenges, this is the third and final link that I'm putting in the chat is to our website around our

ongoing community engagement process that's meant to take input and inform USDA and state agencies about.
What the local community prioritizes?
In any form of natural resource.
And the big challenge being that we're trying to solve is a lot of what USDA wants, for example, is in federal lingo.
And So what?
We try to do is just like simplify and reframe what questions are being asked to make them even a little bit more broad so that we can really engage with the Community in the type of language that they speak in and and understand and.
Start the conversation there.
So this.
Yeah, that's one of the challenges.
Is that translating to the community and then taking what the Community says and translating it back into sort of the language of power and decision making? Is is what we attempt to do.
Let me see. Are there any other advisory members who haven't? Oh, Susanna.
I know you're a crossover.

DX **Davis, Xusana** 18:48
Thank you.
Yes, thank you.
I guess a good segue. Hi everybody.
So Simon Davis, Office of Racial Equity. I am on the AC and the IAC.
I'm off camera because, as you may hear I am ill and you do not need to see that.
And I think for me, one issue that I have with community engagement is actually A2, but I think that they're interrelated.
The first is the credibility.
So for an office like ours to be embedded in, in any settler, government is really difficult, because building trust is hard when you work for an organization that has historically and that continues to create harm for the same communities we're purporting to serve.
So it's really difficult to be a part of that and and also be able to say, but you can trust us though.
Because we give out candy or whatever.

So that's that's one challenge and and when and when partners in government. And I don't just mean state.
I also mean local and federal when partners in government lean on us to provide our, you know, basically St. cred to to their projects, and then they betray those same communities, it's really difficult to to repair that. And for us to feel like we've been involved in that.
The second thing that is a struggle for me with community engagement and I do think this is related to the first is.
We we tend to.
We tend to box government employee and community member separately, as if people who work for the state do not also live in communities and do not also have community concerns. And that's really tough.
Like for example you know if I go to a a meeting of the governor's cabinet, we're all gonna leave that building, and I'm gonna be the only one who's a motorist of color.
So you know the idea that that government employees don't don't also like our outcomes are not also wrapped up in or part of Community member outcomes.
I think something that that people would stand to be reminded of. And so so that's another challenge I think is is this sense that we're being artificially siloed.
And and I think it creates the impression that if you work for the largest employer in the state.
You no longer have the ability to speak wearing your hat as a resident, and I just think that's weird and I'd love for that to end, but that's it from me. Thank you.
And I'm going to send it now, I guess to an IC member, since I think we've exhausted AC Members, I'll send it over to Claire.

MC **McIlvennie, Claire** 21:25
Thanks Susanna.
Hi everyone.
I'm Claire mcclellany.
I heard pronouns.
I'm with the Department of Public Service.
I'm ardida and equity policy manager.
And so much of what folks are saying resonates with me in terms of challenges particularly done.
Affir would definitely agree with you on the translational need for translation to the

Community and then back into a language that you know can inform decision making and.
So there when I think I would add that I really struggle with is.
I feel like often in decision making there is this real bias to trust.
Technical what we perceive to be technical information above more qualitative.
Ways of informing decisions like storytelling or.
Yeah, more conversation based on others, different ways you could characterize it.
And I feel like sometimes there's this.
Believe that, like the data are the technical information is unbiased and the other side of it the.
The Community voices or broader voices are not, but I feel like at the end of the day data and models are also created by people and so I wish that sometimes we saw the nuance in those things.
And yeah, I struggle with how to emphasize that.
What we learn from engaging in community is like equally as important, I think often to the way we make decisions and informing those things.
Umm and I will pass it to Amy.

RA **Redman, Amy (She/Her)** 23:13
Thank you, Claire.
Amy Redmond. I use she her pronouns.
I am an environmental justice and HealthEquity advisor at the Department of Health.
And Clare, this this thing that you're saying around needing to center voices of those most impacted as credible forms of information? I have a resource I'm gonna put in the chat once I find it after this.
This is a really.
Timely question, which is I'm sure why you're asking it and it's therapeutic to be in space with all of you.
So thank you for this and what you've shared, I think my barrier is.
Right now, really more being a state employee at a moment of, I would say excessive caution in the state and in the federal in this federal climate.
And I feel like I'm trying to be patient in the state and with colleagues to like, say, don't turn away from partners when there's a lot of funding has been taken back and to try and help and learn myself, but try and help colleagues understand what partnership means.

And how important it is right now in this, particularly in this moment, like without funding, what does partnership mean?
So I think that's the thing, I'll I'll say.
In this space.
OK.
Thank you for listening.
Rebecca. Hi. Can I pass to you?

WR **Walsh, Rebecca** 24:47
Hi, thanks, Amy. So I'm Rebecca.
I'm representing the Agency of Commerce and Community development.
I don't personally hold the seat.
That C is occupied by my supervisor, Grace Vinson, who was unable to make it today.
So I'm here.
In her place, I'm personally the environmental specialist for ACD, particularly that the Department of Housing Community Development, but.
I've only been in this position for four months, but in my four months.
I would say, as with my new perspective as a government employee, a barrier to community engagement has been.
The technical and very hyper specific language that is surrounding communications from the government. If you're not super in the loop on internal systems and how things get handled in the agency, it can be a little bit difficult to comprehend and.
Communicate through things.
So yeah, that's what I would add. Thank you for listening.
I can tap Bob.

DB **Donohue, Bob** 26:00
OK.
Good morning, everybody.
I am Bob Donohue.
I work with the Agency of Education and in the capacity of school facilities program manager.
And I share many of the collective thoughts expressed thus far.
So I have really nothing to add in terms of frustration with communication.
It just would be wonderful if the bureaucracy of government and the pace at which it

moves would allow us to actually move quickly on the things that we all speak passionately about and are ardent about but are constrained by many real factors.
And that frustration, I'm sure, is shared by many people.
But when something is so critically important as this.
It seems as though if we do agree and maybe we don't, that budget reflects priority.
It seems if this is the priority, we say it is, the budget doesn't seem to reflect it.
It's not meant to be negative, it's just the reality of the fiscal constraints in Vermont.
Thank you.
And I'll pass it on to Sarah.

MS **McIlvennie, Sarah** 27:04
And you got to me. And I I I will defer to Abby at the IAC member for the agency that 'cause. I'm not actually.

WA **Willard, Abbey** 27:13
I'm Sarah.
Hi, good morning. I'm Abby Willard.
I am the IC member from the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, and I am joined by Sarah Mcelvanie as my colleague.
Thanks for passing it, Sarah.
I use she her pronouns.
And my position at the agency is director of our AG Development division.
I would say the challenge that I observe and see.
Within a hour, agencies work around community engagement is.
Related to much of what others have shared around kind of like the government culture of feeling.
Free to.
Be transparent about the feedback that we might receive through some of our community engagement efforts.
When that may not align with current policy or current kind of like leadership thinking or our current.
Culture.
Within government.
And.
As an agency, that's.

Open and willing to try to make improvements to our community engagement efforts.
This kind of stalwart work culture around community engagement really feels like it's holding us back.
And complicating.
Our our growth and movement forward.
So that's what I'll share.
Janet.
And Jenny, I can't actually remember which, which is the IAC Rep, but on the.

RJ **Ronis, Jenny** 29:08
I'll defer to Janet.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 29:09
Yeah, like you, Abby, I'm the Rep now. And Jenny is my my right hand associate.
So I am the chair of the land Use Review Board that administers the State Act 250 land use permit.
And the board is newly constituted as of January.
We are tasked with implementing a new jurisdictional framework.
Work for Act 250 as well as several other tasks that ACT 181 of 2024 gave us.
We are a covered agency under the EJ Law.
And I feel that.
It's. I feel like it's it's really important for this program, which probably never thought too much about community engagement beyond doing.
Some brochures to explain what Act 250 was, you know, a couple of times through the decades.
And with the new board, we have planners such as myself who worked as regional and municipal planners who who did community engagement in the development of plans a lot. One of the things that the new that the new board has been tasked with is to approve regional plans.
And one of the things that we are tasked with looking at is.
Did the regional plan?
Is it a result of?
Of meaningful community engagement.
So I'm looking forward to bringing a community engagement.

Focus to this program.
Even though the you know as as I can't remember who mentioned the, you know state, maybe it was Bob, yeah.
That we we didn't necessarily get any budgeting to do community engagement.
So.
There's some trepidation about how we're going to accomplish this, but I'm looking forward to doing it. And Jenny, do you want to add anything from from your perspective?

RJ **Ronis, Jenny** 31:32
Just briefly that you know for the long, for the majority of the Lady of Act 250, we've been sort of a quasi judicial organization and thought of community in terms of party status.
And I think that that's gonna be something for us to really reexamine internally, you know, and I think I think we haven't engaged with community engage like broader community engagement because there's been an assumption that the work that we've done to to reach interested parties.
Has been.
It is sufficient for due process and that may be true, but I think we can do better.
And I'm excited about this. Thanks, Janet.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 32:12
Thank you, Jenny.
I will pick.
Let's see who's left here.
I think we have everybody on this screen.
Let me go to the second one.
How about?
Ricarda.

ER **Ericson, Richarda** 32:38
Thank you.
Hi, I'm Ricarda Erickson and I work with the Department of Public Service with Claire and I am new to my role as outreach program manager.
Two months in and I, boy, I've been really appreciating everything everyone is saying

about challenges in community engagement and I think what comes to mind for me is.
The the tensions that arise within when I.
My personal values are in conflict with.
The kind of engagement work I need to do and.
My, you know, personal.
My top three personal values are authenticity, connection, and creativity.
And sometimes that means doing things a little outside the box and differently and.
That feels like a challenge in, especially in in the realm of state government.
Where we do have boxes, we need to check and, you know, public transparency and.
And.
There are ways, historical ways of doing engagement into so to be my authentic self and step outside of those those ways feels like a challenge.
But I appreciate that there's a lot of openness within my department, and I'm grateful to work with great people like Claire to to help.
A step into kind of a new way of connecting with our communities.
Thank you.
So should I?
I'm wondering.
Sarah, if you want to go, you passed it before.

BJ **Birch, Juliet** 34:23
Is there we have Dave here in person who I think folks just can't see 'cause the screen's really dark, can I?
Could we pass it to Dave first?
Cool. Thank you, Sarah and Ricarda.

Dave Pelletier
Thanks Dave Pelletier from the Agency of Transportation. I think technically I'm, I'm filling in for the seat that Michelle Boomhauer, director by division.
Policy planning and intermodal development holds.
And.
I guess.
All I think pretty much everything that I that I heard from from folks prior resonated in some way, shape or form where I went initially though was definitely with this

paradoxical kind of overwhelmed with the amount of information and the means of delivering information and collecting information.
And yet.
Feeling like that may make.
Things more difficult to cut through in some ways and and engage in in, in public involvement in community engagement, and then the other thing that really resonated for me was was Bob's comment about the just the pace of change, agency of Transportation was a huge kind of.
Lumbering organization that I think of, of all the state agencies.
Maybe left?
Certainly left. So now.
Now just because of the passage of time and a lot of turnover, but it's a it's an institution that's been around for a long, long time and doing things differently takes it takes time for it to really develop and and meaningfully take root.
I'm heartened with what I've seen over the past several years, just in terms of new people coming into the agency.
With broader views and and how we should do our work and thinking more creatively.
Not only in terms of the systems that we develop and maintain and operate, but also in how we deliver those services and care about how we're doing and and gain input into how we we go about doing it.
But it's slow and kind of from working from the inside and being motivated and wanting to to see that change happen.
It's it can be just a challenge.
From that standpoint as well.
So thank you.

Juliet Birch
Marcelo, would you also like to introduce yourself?
Sorry, I can quickly.

Marcella Dent
I'm tagging along.
My name is Marcella Dent.
I work for the planning section at VTRANS as well and I'm tagging along with today

because we're working on our community engagement plan.
So that's my main challenge right now is just make sure we do the job on that revision. And so yeah, appreciate that.
You have to listen in. Thank you.

Dave Pelletier
Oh, I think that puts me in the the seat that has it on to someone else at this point, right?

Juliet Birch
Yeah, I feel like it's mostly just us and Carlo left.
Should I just?
I'll hand it back over to you, Arlen.
You wanna introduce yourself then?

RK **Raimundi, Karla** 37:36
Yes. Thank you everyone.
And Juliet and Kim.
Were facilitating.
Yeah, I've been paying close attention to everything that Yuval said.
And I do have to say that.
That you will captured.
You will captured concerns that I have regarding Community engagement.
Let me introduce myself. I'm Karla raimund.
She her are my pronouns and I'm the director for civil rights on environmental justice, for the Agency of Natural Resources and enactment 54, the Agency of Natural Resources, was tasked with providing technical assistance to the Advisory Council and the Interagency Committee and is the lead agency for.
The implementation of AG 154.
And having said that, I would like to add.
But before is I would like to echo what Bob mentioned regarding budget and legislative actions that do not necessarily allow for the time that is needed to do good meaningful.
Community engagement.
The timeline sometimes are are so strict that they do not allow for agencies to

consult the way that sometimes.
Agencies would like to do now that we are tasked with developing Community engagement plans, I would like.
To you know, for the legislative body to perhaps consider, as we do more engagement and I would like to invite the Advisory Council to consider, perhaps communicating some of these concerns to the legislative body, as you know, the the best suited entity in the state, I would think.
To communicate that to the General Assembly.
So that's a big concern that I have.
It's just allowing the time that's needed to do good, robust, meaningful engagement.
Definitely. There's a component that has to respond to this load change and pace that you mentioned. Dave and I would like to.
Highlight that that is also another reason why.
Timelines that are reasonable.
Should be further considered and really centered in any further actions by the General Assembly.
And I would like also to 2nd what Claire mentioned regarding the expertise that.
Lies in other areas that are not necessarily.
As privileged, within the scope of our work.
But and also what Susana mentioned.
I think is particularly important.
For me and resonates with me.
As I find myself in those rooms sometimes questioning whether I should even share my point of view as a Community member, so that was very poignant and I'm just gonna leave it there and pass it on to Juliet and Kim. If they have further reflections.
And again I.
Want to thank you all.
For being here and doing this work on behalf of Vermonters.
Thank you.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 41:33
Yeah, go ahead, Sarah.

MS **McIlvennie, Sarah** 41:36
Sorry it's it's a quiet moment, so I'm thinking now's my chance.

Hi everyone.
My name is Sarah and she her pronouns. I work with Abby at the Agency of Agriculture.
I just wanted to.
Offer I don't think a challenge or well something I think a lot about is.
That sometimes I think we use the term community engagement interchangeably with like meaning being in relationship with communities and in.
Practice as my experience as a state employee.
Like that's really different and.
Try and afford the balance of responsibility for how statue is written and timelines and budgeting, and then on the other side are not necessarily the other side, but also our responsibility as state employees to build cultures internally.
That's the expectation that we're in relationship with the communities.
Whose program?
Like who utilize the programs that we are administering?
To ensure that they are.
Hey bro so I continuously participate in review of those programs and giving feedback to those programs.
So holding the tension between long term relationship and.
And I have to hop off and go to run by and nice to meet everyone.

BJ **Birch, Juliet** 43:05
And if I could jump in and then pass it to you, what I was gonna share is very similar to what Sarah just shared.
I'm Juliette Burch.
I'm of the environmental justice coordinators from the agency of Natural Resources, and I would say that.
The big challenge that we hear here at ANR is that our staff do a really wide variety of programs that touch on the community in.
Unbelievably varied ways.
And it's it's really, really cool to see the full breadth of everything that we do at this agency. And you know, I think Sarah really spoke to kind of like the need to haves like the legal minimums that we need to achieve when it comes to meaningful partic.
And community engagement versus those nice to haves of like going above and beyond and really developing a culture where we're in relationship with

communities.
And I'd say across the board, I'm speaking in generalizations, our agency wants to.
To exceed those minimums and like do the kind of nice to haves where we have really impactful relationships with communities but across the board we're hearing no matter what type of engagement I'm doing, I could always use more time, more staff, more money because it's really hard to.
Reach those like legal minimums. Those the need to haves, and then exceed them if I don't.
Have any of the things that I need to do it and so?
So I think there's a lot of there's like there are a lot of things to be figured out when it comes to making more meaningful community engagement at the state.
And unfortunately, the dollars are like kind of the foundational thing that needs to be solved, or else a lot of it.
I don't know it. It may not like we we could come up with a lot of really cool things to do and there may just be no one to do it.
That was a really grim.
Wait, am I?
And my comment, but I'm just gonna pass it to Kim.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 45:10
Thanks. Thanks, Juliet.
My name is Ken. Pronouns is her.
I'm the other environmental justice coordinator.
At the Agency of Natural Resources, and yeah, I can truthfully say that everything folks mentioned resonates. What I will add is I'm reflecting more on how versatile the environmental justice coordinator.
Their position is and in supporting the community engagement efforts like at our agency, but also having to show up in this space.
And balancing that while also I think there's always room.
To improve with building and maintaining relationships with you all on the Advisory Council.
So those are things swirling around in my head.
And I also want to acknowledge that we have two additional Advisory Council members who've been appointed and they've been able to come to previous meetings.

But Shawn Shawn Moran.
He couldn't be here today.
He represents the mobile home community and then there's Matt Wallace, who is unavailable today.
And he's the municipal government.
Representative. And then I also think I saw.
Brittany, hop back on the call.
So Brittany, if you're still here and you want to share, we're doing, we're sharing our name.
The agency we represent and then also answering the question of what challenges are you navigating with community engagement?

Watson, Britaney 47:08
Hey so my name's Brittany Watson. Is she her pronouns?
I am a steering committee member with the environmental justice network and I also am the digital equity officer for Vermont Community Broadband Board.
I have like a dual interest in this group and I would say I think the question was.
What challenges?
I'm navigating with community engagement.
I think.
The burnout that you see with when there's not, like coordinated efforts amongst multiple agencies.
And sometimes seeing if, like, do work that feels repetitive.
Or maybe even duplicative. But I also think just the the general climate of what's happening is further increasing this distrust.
In particular.
Government is is an area.
I'm seeing it and also.
Being a part of.
A organization that values seem to be.
Different than the current administration has been also.
A challenge in just also having like the sense of panic and this need for developing like resilient plans to get through and and how to best reach people.
In all of that. And so yeah. Thanks.

Barrett, Kim 48:49

Thanks, Brittany.
And then I'll also mention Miriam, who's not on the call.
She's also an Advisory Council member, and she's in the thick of finishing up her PhD research, but will join us again in January.
So I think that's everyone and we're we're right on time.
So does anyone have anything else to share?
Are we ready to?
Get back into the presentation.
Right. Cool, Juliet.
Whenever you're ready to share your screen again, that would be great. No rush.

Birch, Juliet 49:27

OK.

Barrett, Kim 49:42

OK, great.
So here's what we're gonna do in our reorientation to the community engagement plans. We're gonna talk about the legal requirements, and then we're also gonna talk about the core principles of community engagement and what role those principles play in the creation of the plans. And then we're also.
Going to.
You know the outcome is for both the AC and the IAC to understand.
And the role that each of you also play in the development of the Community engagement plans.
Alright so.
The remind me J law has five key areas and we also call them modes of influence.
You might remember community engagement is one of them. So it involves developing policies and procedures.
So members of the public can meaningfully engage with state work.
So the plans are just one piece of that puzzle.
All right, so here are the legal requirements, the Community engagement plans must describe how each covered agency will engage with environmental justice focused populations as it evaluates new and existing activities and programs.

They must describe how each covered agency will provide meaningful participation in compliance with Title six of the Civil Rights Act.
Be informed by the core principles and then also be developed in consultation with the Advisory Council and then the the statutory deadline is July 1st, 2027.
Yeah. Next slide please. Thank you.
So here's the role of the Advisory Council.
So the law states that the Advisory Council must advise state agencies in the development of the Community engagement plans.
Some examples of what this could look like, and obviously you all will discuss this more.
Are two provide advice and input on the engagement plans in public meetings?
I AC Members can participate.
In a community engagement plan working group and then advisory members, Advisory Council members cannot vote to approve or disapprove each agency's community engagement plan.
And we're just making that clarification.
Because the core principles of community engagement that is a deliverable that the Advisory Council and the interagency had voting power.
So you all voted to approve the core principles of community engagement.
And so although the community engagement plans are informed by the four principles, the Community engagement plans are a deliverable that gives each covered agency final decision making power.
And that's just simply because the agencies understand best what their constraints are, what their strengths are.
And they can also.
Better determine what they can commit to doing.
So any questions about that?
Next slide please.
The role of the Interagency Committee is to coordinate the development of the state agency, community engagement plans required under the subsection examples of that include participating in the public meeting working sessions.
IC members or some of the supportive covered agency staff can participate in a working group and then also interagency committee members.
Facilitate their internal work to their agency.
OK.

So what is community engagement? Just so we're all on the same page and we're using the same terms, those are opportunities to connect and interface with community members.
Meaningful engagement ensures that community members have opportunities to inform and also participate in decision making, and these opportunities must not be burdensome or cause harm.
And a lot of that came up in our previous conversation about what it looks like to do this work.
And actually be in community in relationship while also not causing that harm and then systemic barriers. They're built into the structures, policies or practices of institutions and organizations.
They're also perpetuated by all of us because we are baked into that, and so you know, each covered agency, you know, we might.
Share some of the same systemic barriers, or rather be.
Navigating those and then, each of us also might have specific systemic barriers that our community engagement plans will have to.
Inform.
And yeah, next slide please.
I think I'm actually gonna pass it to you, Juliet, to talk about.
Some of the why we're doing this, why we have these plans.

BJ **Birch, Juliet** 55:40
Thanks Ken.
I'm also just going to say that the IAC just sat in a meeting last week where we shared a lot of these same slides. And so we're almost done. If this feels like redundant to you.
But the Advisory Council, this is the first time in a while that we've talked about community engagement plans with them.
So this is a good chance to get them up to speed with what was discussed last week.
So why our community engagement plans important for the agencies?
To do, I mean, besides the obvious, we do have some legal requirements that we need to be in compliance with first civil rights.
We're all required to comply with the title six of the Civil Rights Act, which requires that members of the public can meaningfully participate and access all of our programs, benefits and services.

This did come up last week that there are some covered agencies that don't receive federal funding.
But for those of us that do, you may also have some specific.
Public participation requirements from your federal partners.
And while we can't necessarily provide you with legal advice about how to navigate your relationship with your federal partners, or even how your agency should go about complying with the Civil Rights Act, it's just important for us to acknowledge that this is a key part of the commun.
Engagement plans.
And then the second sort of legal mandate we have, which we are all keenly aware of is environmental justice.
So the EJ law firms the right to self-determination, fair treatment and meaningful engagement for all peoples and all of us are here because we are somehow involved in the implementation of ACT 154 of 2022.
Conversely, we'll talk a little bit about what a community engagement plan doesn't do.
It's just really important to make this distinction so that folks don't get kind of carried away around like what?
A community engagement plan is supposed to achieve for their corporate agency.
So for example, a community engagement plan is not a public relations campaign.
It's not some sort of way for us to improve the optics of our agency.
Rather, this is a way to again.
Create meaningful participation for members of the public and you know, perhaps even develop meaningful long term relationships with members of the public.
It's not a way to get buy in for decisions.
Rather, it is a plan to ensure that community members are included in the decision making process.
So rather than going to them after a decision has been made to get buy in, you're going to them before a decision is made.
It's also not an extractive effort.
Ideally, the goal of the community engagement plan, especially as you know stated in the core principles of community engagement, is that we really want to try and have develop more of a reciprocal relationship with the communities that we serve and engage with as opposed to just kind of.
As we put it last week, helicoptering in taking what we want and then leaving, right?

That's very extractive in nature and is not what we're looking to do.
It's also not a top down directive at your agency if you're not at the agency of Natural Resources, maybe it will be.
I don't know how everyone's agencies work, but at A&R our goal is to really have this to be more of a collaborative venture where we're building staff by end through the development.
So the goal, I think is for this to be not as much of A top down directive, but rather have it be sort of built.
More in like a, quote UN quote, grassroots sort of way.
And then finally, it's not reinventing the wheel.
We have an entire Council.
Of wonderful folks, the Advisory Council, who have a lot of extensive expertise in community engagement, who have a lot to share with us.
We also have a lot of meaningful research outside of the Advisory Council about how to do meaningful engagement. And so we're not asking any of the agencies to sort of develop a new framework for engagement.
But rather to build off of what we know works and what and to sort of try and fix that which does not.
So I'm just gonna share again for those of us that I think most of us in this room are are familiar with the core principles of community engagement.
But I'm gonna give an opportunity for us all to read them to ourselves quietly just for a couple minutes to get grounded in what these principles are. As many of you will recall, these principles were developed by the Advisory Council and Interagency Committee in a collaborative process.
And we're just past like a year and a half ago or maybe slightly less than that.
But yeah, really good piece of work.
So I'm just gonna share two slides, each of which have a set of six of the 12 principles.
So let me know when you guys are done reading these to yourselves and then to the next slide.
I see a thumbs up from Trey.
I see a thumbs up from Rebecca.
I can't see basically anyone else, so if someone else wants to let me know we're good.

Barrett, Kim 1:01:43
Yeah, you're good.

Birch, Juliet 1:01:44
OK, great. All right, here's principals 7 through 12.
Yeah, I'm starting to see some thumbs up from folks.
Are we feeling the room great?
What do you think, Kim?
You have a better vantage point than I do.

Barrett, Kim 1:02:37
Yeah, you're good.

Birch, Juliet 1:02:39
Awesome.
So now that we're we've kind of re familiarized ourselves with these principles.
I just want to remind folks, these are the principles that our Community engagement plans should be built on.
And so when we have kind of a discussion amongst you all.
Maybe you guys can chat about what it means to really be able to achieve these principles in your Community engagement plans in the Advisory Council.
Can weigh in as well.
Umm.
As mentioned last week, we had another three hour public meeting with just the Interagency committee. So the Interagency Committee is very fresh and has spent a long time thinking about this just in the last week on community engagement plans.
So I think if there's a community engagement, I mean, jeez, my my brain, if there is an interagency committee member or two who would like to maybe just provide a quick.
Summary of like hey.
This is what we learned in those three hours.
Here's some things that here are some good takeaways that would be super appreciated if you could highlight challenges that you guys ran into in your conversation.

That's definitely something that the Advisory Council, I think.
Is keen to weigh in on if you want to share some of those highlights.
I know it's a big ask to ask one of you to speak on behalf of your entire committee, but if there's anyone who wants to jump in.

Dave Pelletier
I'll show. I'll just jump in and plant a couple of seeds for folks to to follow on to.
I think several of the things that we spoke about last week actually came up in some of the challenges that were offered at the beginning of this meeting and one is, is the the resources factor and and the fear of standing something up that we can't actually ult.
Deliver on either because of budget or.
Flexibility or or?
Or several, you know other reasons.
So that's one thing that stuck from last week with me.
There's some other discussion about the other. I guess the other thing that I would offer that that resonated and I'm still kind of mulling on myself, is what level of uniformity.
Might there?
Might we strive for from 1 covered agency to the next in terms of the content, the outline and content of our community engagement plans?
Acknowledging that uniformity will make them.
Hopefully it's more approachable and consistent.
For users of and for, for anybody that's on on in whatever role in community engagement they're playing, whether it be an employee or someone wearing their citizen hat wanting to participate, but acknowledging what what I think Juliet alluded to earlier and that is that each of our AG.
Does slightly different or in some cases radically different work, and delivers very different deliverables, whether it be programs or projects or so that it might be awkward to try to strive for a format that's that's completely uniform for one agency to the next.
So kind of how to thread that needle I guess.
Was.
For me, it needs to be take away from from that discussion last week and that I've been kind of mulling on.

Thanks.

Abby, did you want to weigh in too?

Willard, Abbey 1:06:33
Now Ken briefly, I think.
Think that was a really good summary of some of the same takeaways that I was thinking about.
Maybe the related and kind of additional pieces.
Acknowledging the limited.
Experience.
Expertise.
And in some cases capacity that we and state agencies may be operating from to be able to.
Conduct.
The non extractive, meaningful community engagement that we believe in and know is the best and right.
Way of engaging community and really acknowledging that some of that expertise exists outside of.
Our agencies and certainly outside of I can speak for myself, but I heard this from other IAC members outside of me, but outside of the IAC representatives, maybe more at large, there might be a few exceptions and kind of exploring with the AC with you as AC members.
Like how you can.
Kind of like.
Guide and direct and offer insight to us was something that I was really kind of both inspired by and was clarifying about kind of like what our relationship could be.
Going forward.
And the trust and relationship building that needs to happen within that for that to occur.

Birch, Juliet 1:08:14
Amy, do you want to jump in?

Redman, Amy (She/Her) 1:08:17
Yeah, I was just gonna add the tiny bit that we did during our meeting start to brainstorm possible, like, common content areas. While we grappled with this question of how we might or might not use existing.
Plans or pieces of plans that have been developed.
So I was just gonna add add that piece and also I'm just I'm thinking back to Sarah reminding us more than once about and Abby, I think you're touching on this this like deeply relational.
Aspect of these, like we're making plans, but they're so deeply relational, so I'm just reflecting on that piece too. Thank you.

Birch, Juliet 1:08:57
Thanks for sharing that, Amy.
I'm gonna drop in the chat. Actually, the list of common like potential common components that were brought up during the last ISE meeting, just so that everybody can see them.
Is there anyone who wants to weigh in one last time before we move on?
Oh, we got two hands.
Sorry, I looked away from the screen for one second, Janet.

Hurley, Janet 1:09:25
Just briefly, I mean, I think we also some of our discussion reflected on some of the challenges that everybody put forth just a little bit ago as we introduced ourselves and one of the one of them is even when you do.
Provide childcare.
Provide translation services, provide food.
In and compensation, it's.
Still hard to.
To meet people where they are and get them involved in a meaningful way in our processes. And so I just wanted to acknowledge that.

Birch, Juliet 1:10:10
Thanks Janet and Clara.
It'll be our last comment before we move on.

McIlvennie, Claire 1:10:16

Yeah, I just briefly, I think one of the concrete outcomes of our conversation, we had wanted to touch base with AC members on.
Was that there is interest amongst the IAC of having a small working group.
I know Kim mentioned this as like a way AC members could participate, but.
Yeah, having a small working group and Juliet, Sarah, and Ricarda have graciously volunteered so far just to keep flushing out.
Out and having conversation about some of the work we brainstormed on which Juliet put in the chat. And so I just wanted to say that was something we had wanted to bring to this meeting, asking and certainly inviting if there were any AC members who may be int.
In participating that, there's obviously no expectation or obligation to, but we in terms of thinking about different ways we could engage with you all on the development of these plans, we had wanted to to mention that and hear your feedback on on that. So thanks.

Birch, Juliet 1:11:23

So thank you for sharing that everyone.
I'm gonna stop sharing my screen just so I can see folks. The purpose of sharing those IAC meeting highlights was really to just share with the Advisory Council members some of the findings that the IAC had in terms of like, here's what we feel comfortable with. Here's what.
Maybe stuff that we still need to learn more on.
And you know, I think the next section of our agenda when we get to this, what's called.
Unstructured AC LED discussion on the agenda is an opportunity for all of you folks to just like start chatting about, you know, what the Advisory Council brings to the table in terms of community engagement, expertise and maybe start problem solving or sharing some things that they that the.
AC would like to see from these community engagement plans, so I hope that.
That like quick little summary of what last week's meeting entails.
Was helpful.
Are there any questions before we maybe do public comment in a break?

Byrne, Jennifer 1:12:36
So.

Birch, Juliet 1:12:36
I'm seeing thumbs up.

Willard, Abbey 1:12:36
Sense to capture Jennifer's comment about civil rights and community engagement.

Birch, Juliet 1:12:43
Oh oh, cool.

Willard, Abbey 1:12:44
Now.

Birch, Juliet 1:12:47
Could you repeat that?
Abby or Jennifer? Sorry.

Willard, Abbey 1:12:50
Yeah, I just I just wrote.
I mean, Jennifer just wrote a comment that she'd like to share whenever possible around civil rights and community engagement.
Maybe before we go off.

Byrne, Jennifer 1:13:02
Yeah, just super quick.

Willard, Abbey 1:13:02
Change topics.

Byrne, Jennifer 1:13:03
Just a resource and some context for.
Yeah, I guess I'll. I'll do it really quick, I promise.

But I wanted to share, like just in case anyone is getting pushed back or, you know, is dealing with their federal agencies around civil rights and really like in preparation for any future defense of your actions. I just want to share first if if any, if anyone hasn?
Seen this is.
A state guidance that was signed by the Attorney General of Vermont in collaboration with a bunch of other states just reaffirming the importance of environment and legality of environmental justice work.
But I want to also share like just to prepare you for what may come in case you haven't seen this, this was out of the White House.
Signed an executive order.
And.
I.
I.
I'm part of the something called the Title 6 Alliance, so this is where I'm getting some information like from across the nation around and organizing around.
You know, there's a lot of overreach going on right now and a lot of people, you know, in positions of power that that really, truly don't actually understand the law or how it works. So just to clarify.
It The you know what, what the Trump administration is doing with civil rights right now is basically completely reinterpreting it, interpreting it.
And so that's what you'll see.
They're highlighting the use of certain phrases that they're calling legally risky, including cultural competency, overcoming obstacles, anything with diversity statements and even geographic regions.
Now what the kind of lawyer group and the people who organize around this and the attorney general's are, you know, basically saying is it the?
The case that the Trump administration is citing was around using race as a factor in college administration, and then they're really, you know, way over applying this one legal determination to it.
You know, basically try to eliminate a lot of community engagement type of efforts, but but the the truth of the matter is the court did not say that it's illegal to address racial inequality.
There are plenty of ways that we can address, like in any.
Qualities and that's not being limited by the courts.

So right now this this guidance document is like riddled with error that wouldn't hold up in court.
And it will probably come down to the states having lawsuits against the federal government, and the states will likely.
They have a good case for winning, but it just, you know, just to flag it that that this is something that at least the Attorney General of Vermont is is aware of and watching and hopefully will have, you know, be able to support your agencies.

BJ **Birch, Juliet** 1:16:04
Thanks for sharing those resources, Jennifer.
That's really helpful, Carla.

RK **Raimundi, Karla** 1:16:13
Hi, thank you, Jennifer.
I just would like to share that as the lead agency for interpreting language in the 154.
And our general Counsel's office, they're following very closely and in close conversation with our attorney General, we've collaborated in the past.
To advance the position of the state of Vermont with regards to environmental justice.
So we will engage, continue engaging our general counsel's office in any efforts that pertain to environmental justice or civil rights as they impact the implementation of the EJ law.
So what?
I also would like to share is that as you saw, we're gonna enter executive session.
Where is the goal that we're gonna enter executive session in a future meeting.
The next meeting I'm actually.
And we will have an opportunity there to address very directly any concerns that may exist and we will have general counsels staff there to answer any questions pertaining to any communication from the federal government that impacts our implementation here in the state of.
Louisiana.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 1:17:40
Thank you, Carla.
That was really helpful just in case anyone is wondering, Carla, is that an opportunity

to? Is executive session going entering into executive session an option for folks after the meeting on the 17th?
Like if someone's not available or if folks still want to continue that conversation.
Is that available?

RK **Raimundi, Karla** 1:18:10
Yes, the goal for that meeting is to enter executive session.
To have a conversation about any concerns that any of you may have.
And also there will be an opportunity for us at the Agency of Natural Resources to share with you some of the challenges that we've been encountering when thinking about the implementation of the deliverables.
The EJ law, given the current federal scenario.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 1:18:48
Thank you, Janet.

HJ **Hurley, Janet** 1:18:51
Is this for the EJ committee or the?
And and would. Would this be attorney-client privileged?
Conversation with just the ANR general counsel or?
What? What's the?
What's the thought there?

RK **Raimundi, Karla** 1:19:15
Yeah, it will be open to interagency committee members and Advisory Council members.
And the general counsel's office.
The Agency of Commercial Resources will participate.
And Kim and Juliet will participate as.
People who are actively engaging in the implementation of the EJ law.
So Janet, we can talk about if you would like Jenny to participate.
Or any other folks here today we can talk about other folks who are interested in participating from the agencies.
So yeah, we will have an opportunity to talk about this.
I just want to flag that, given the sensitivities around the subject matter, this

conversation is best had in that.
Setting.

Birch, Juliet 1:20:13
Yeah, when we.
Get our office. The General counsel will explain, sort of the process to enter into an executive session and there will be an opportunity to perhaps you know, the groups consent to having other people outside of the groups present in that conversation. But it just has to be. You know, there needs to be a movement made and people have to jointly agree that they will have folks from outside of the ISE and the Advisory Council.
In the executive session, we'll talk.
Next week, it's not too complicated.

Barrett, Kim 1:20:49
Yeah. OK.
So I think we're running on time really.
Well, let's see if there any members of the public here. If not, we should take a 10 minute break.
Yeah, I think we're good.
So we can return back.
At 12:40.
We'll see you then.
And hi everyone.
Give us a thumbs up or come off of your. Come on your camera if you want to let us know your back.
We're just gonna look at.
The slide with the information for the unstructured AC time and then we'll come back off and then we can move into that section.
So Julia, I know it's annoying to share your screen for one slide, but I think it's worth it.
Just so we can be clear on outcomes for this.

Birch, Juliet 1:35:26
Not annoying.

Barrett, Kim 1:35:28
OK.

Birch, Juliet 1:35:28
Oh, I skipped this slide.
Hold on.
Sorry. OK.

Barrett, Kim 1:35:31
That's OK.
Alright so.
The purpose of this section is for the AC members to offer any initial insights, reflections and also have the time to pose questions.
They can be questions to individual IAC members based on what you heard earlier, or just questions in general.
A lot was shared by all of us around challenges and opportunities, and so.
You know, in the past, we've gotten feedback from the AC that sometimes when we offer a bunch of information and then ask you all to provide feedback or provide consultation, sometimes even in the same, you know.
Discussion it can be difficult, which makes sense.
So we're just trying to add in unstructured time for you to do whatever it is that you need to do.
And then feel like you can walk away having what you need to provide your consultation in the working session.
So we have.
I think we have.
Let's see how much time.
35 minutes allocated for this.
So we're gonna be hands off and just pass it to the AC and.
Whatever you need, just let us know.

victor davila 1:37:18
Sorry, This Is Us responding to everything we just heard from the IAC.

Barrett, Kim 1:37:22
Yeah, you're more than welcome to use the time to respond with your thoughts. Whatever feels good.

victor davila 1:37:31
And is this still in public session or is this? Did we enter executive?

Barrett, Kim 1:37:35
No, it's still part of the public meeting, but this will be uninterrupted.

victor davila 1:37:38
OK.

Barrett, Kim 1:37:40
So that means this is your time to speak.
If you have questions that you'd like, you know our unit to answer, or if you have follow up questions for any of the interagency Committee members, you're more than welcome to ask those questions. If you have thoughts that you want to run by other Advisory Council members, you.
More than welcome to do that, but this is.
Uninterrupted time.
No one is like no one from our team or any of the interagency committee members will lead in the discussion, but we will respond.
If you want to share or ask questions, does that make sense so that you have time to like regroup as an Advisory Council before you move into this working session with the Interagency Committee members, where it'll be more collaborative.
Does that clarify?
Thanks.

Mariana 1:38:44
So this is a time for us to discuss, but everybody is kind of on the listening.
OK.

Barrett, Kim 1:38:52
Yep.

Mariana 1:38:53
OK, got you.

Raimundi, Karla 1:38:57
Yeah, if my if I may offer this is Carla and the meeting, the meeting agenda is revolving around community engagement and the Interagency committee had a meeting about community engagement.
And so the idea is that you all have an opportunity to talk about in aligning regarding Community engagement plans and then have an opportunity for us as Interagency Committee members.
To hear and understand your thoughts and concerns regarding the deliverables that we need to work on so that we consider your input.

Trey Martin 1:39:44
Well, I have AI have a reflection or a question if I could go ahead.
Carla and Kim and Juliet. I just get us started.
I'm. And you saw from my note. I'm. I'm not staying on so.
Wanted to ask this before I have to hop off it.
It seemed like I heard two.
I heard a lot of really interesting and thoughtful things that not that I ever do things, but two things I heard that I wanted to ask about is that one hand really incredible dedication to this work and and like.
Got a real like a deep understanding and holding of the spirit of of EJ work from the IAC members as they were reporting out like it.
It just it was a really authentic and and you know, sort of meaningful description of how engagement's going to happen. I also heard that there are like capacity barriers that there is some leadership barriers that there may be time constraints like what?
If is that, is that right and and if?
And if if that is correct, that if there's like a gap between what people want to be able to do with this and the amount of time and the sort of like authorization they have for this.

What can we all do to create more authorizing environment for for the work in the agencies?

Schilling, Elizabeth 1:41:05
Oh, I can really start a response to that, right?
I think one thing that came up in our last meeting was support from the Advisory Council in advocacy before the legislature for funding for all of the street entities to do this work, because this is currently an unfunded mandate and we wanna do the work, but there's not.
Specific funding for it and so expanding our capacity.
By getting more money.

Trey Martin 1:41:40
And I think that was on the that was on the table or that was part of the discussion when the law was being passed was how many positions should be in state government. And then that those positions didn't really.
Outside of Anri, don't think that those positions landed.
So I think that's been.
A definitely something I heard Elizabeth, but curious if other people are like is it is it?
Is it just that capacity and and the need for somebody who can be on point within the agencies or is there?
Is there more to the authorizing environment?

Barrett, Kim 1:42:17
I see you, Victor.
You have your hand up. Would you like to share first?
Is it a similar question to today or?

victor davila 1:42:24
Oh, I'm I'm interested in hearing the second question get answered.

Barrett, Kim 1:42:27
OK, cool.

Trey Martin 1:42:34
I think maybe Janet is is ready to jump in with.

Hurley, Janet 1:42:37
Sir, I mean, there's definitely a capacity issue for the land Use Review board, no doubt about it.

Trey Martin 1:42:39
A.

Hurley, Janet 1:42:43
We have our hands full.
Completely full, at least through the end of next year.
And which you know, if we wait, gives us only six months to develop and adopt A community engagement plan.
And so I don't intend to wait, but we definitely have capacity issues.
And we also don't have any budget to do community engagement.

McIlvennie, Claire 1:43:19
This is Claire. I would just.
Jump in and add one other constraint that I don't know. I've heard folks mention is.
I think outside of budget and staff capacity, sometimes not always, there are challenges with deadlines and timelines that are out of our control, like legislative reporting and.
That doesn't apply across the board in every situation, but it it is certainly one that I think can be quite challenging and and I think that relates to to like legislative advocacy when those timelines are being set, but wanted to name that one as well.

Barrett, Kim 1:44:07
Yeah, go ahead, Janet.

Hurley, Janet 1:44:10
Sorry, I just before we move on, I think that's part of why we the discussion we had last week about combining approach and strategy and resources is so important.

Because I'm sure the lurb is not alone and not having the budget or the capacity to do this and to in a way that really will result in meaningful engagement.
So.
So this coordinated approach is going to be really important, I think.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 1:44:52
Great question, Trey.
Victor, you have your hand up and then.
Also, I saw in the chat that you have to hop at 1:00, so I also just wanted to open up space after victory.
You there, if you. Susanna would like to share any thoughts or questions before you hop.

VD **victor davila** 1:45:13
Susanna can go before me.
I'll be here the whole time so other people have more limited capacity.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 1:45:21
Thanks, victor.

DX **Davis, Xusana** 1:45:23
Thank you.
That's real generous.
I I don't have anything actually distinct from what's been shared so far that I want to add. Thank you for asking.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 1:45:33
OK, great.
Victor, go ahead.

VD **victor davila** 1:45:37
Yeah. I just.
I think my question revolves around getting a better idea of.
Which parts of this development?
Are are critical ahead of others.

So what I'm hearing, like the community engagement aspect of this?
And like the difficulties, folks having a community engagement because they want to do deeper engagement.
But time is shifts make that more difficult.
Is like like. I guess this is a two-part question and the first part is.
How critical is the community engagement to which aspects of our deliverables?
Right. And then the second question is for the Community engagement. Parts of the work that you guys are on, what does that actually end up looking like in implementation that is making it difficult?
Is it trying to act as the single point of intersection for make for made community may have of individuals and trying to figure out how to gather those pieces together.
Is it a complication in finding partners who have already done that leg work that can act as a trusted station within those?
Communities, what does that complication actually look like in practice?

RK **Raimundi, Karla** 1:47:19
1st I'm gonna yield my turn to you and then I can go after.
Thank you.

WA **Willard, Abbey** 1:47:26
Yeah, I mean, I can just share like an example, victor of how I see some of the kind of like challenges kind of existing in like real time state government I think.
Can sometimes depend on like what it which aspect of Community meaningful community engagement we're talking about, but.
Could be an example. Could be the fact that similar to how Janet described like we don't at our agency and I don't know how many agencies are in a similar circumstance that are kind of on the IAC, don't have a staff person that has capacity within their SC.
Of work to engage in community engagement work.
So it's added to program management Staffs responsibility and program management.
The program management staff are primarily focused on doing some sort of promotion of, you know, advocating in agriculture for, you know, supporting local food or local farmers.
Or running a granting program which is making financial investments in businesses.

At least this is our example and.
And then there's the side of regulatory and compliance where we have rulemaking and we have regulatory responsibilities, many of which are outlined in statute. And so a lot of those either program requirements or regulatory requirements often have timelines associated with them which.
Are, especially if they're created as a one time A1 time program.
Or there's annual reporting requirements. It's difficult.
To build into the timeline, the meaningful community engagement to sort of like hear how would be the best way to engage the community in receiving these funds.
Or feed receiving this regulatory compliance feedback.
So sometimes the timelines are set by statute and so and we have a lot of history of those timelines not being very flexible.
And those timelines not including.
Capacity for engagement. So it's the staff person didn't have that kind of task built into their scope of work.
The timeline for the project or the program didn't have built in, you know, multiple months of engagement with the community's impacted to ensure that kind of what worked best for them was taken into consideration.
And then when we, at least again for my agency's perspective, when we do engage the Community.
We don't often have either a mechanism or the budget to compensate people for spending time sharing with us their feedback.
So we either you know, go to them in the community or we ask them to respond to a survey or they share information with us and.
We might host a meeting, but we don't provide food or we don't provide the support for, you know, families to be able to show up for an evening meeting.
And.
Again, culturally we would love to be able to provide that support, but we don't have either the budget to do it, meaning it's not associated with that positions program or that that particular appropriation.
And then oftentimes it's been complicated for us to figure out how do you actually pay people in government?
You have to have a W9 associated with someone that the government pays or engaged in some sort of an agreement with them.
So there's I think there are potentially some workarounds and some solutions that

people have.
You know utilized, but I'm not sure that I understand how they've been able to do that.
So that's that.
Like collective sharing piece that could be helpful.
Or maybe there's even like a statutory change to be able to make it possible for state governments to offer offer compensation for people attending meetings and sharing their insights and expertise.
I think those are a few of the examples that I wanted to offer.
Yeah, go ahead, Carla. If you want to follow up on something, I might have missed.

RK **Raimundi, Karla** 1:51:51
See if he wants to order.
Yes. Thank you, Abby. And I see, Jennifer, that you have your hand up. If it's OK, I want to share what I wanted to share earlier and then pass it on to you.
Yeah, Abby, in response to Victor's question, I think you captured really well. One of the components of Victor's questions. Victor's question, I think.
I think there are two different.
Path that I think perhaps.
Arose from Victor's question, and it's our different areas and one is that programmatic.
Work that the agencies do.
Right. And yeah, you identified big challenges right now, right?
The providing childcare to incentivize folks from actually coming and participating.
Laws that get passed without appropriations for, for example, creating materials and and creating good sound, plain language, technical assistance materials.
Enough time.
Line in enough time to actually develop.
A.
A.
A plan for how to engage.
The members of the communities that are will be impacted or are intended to participate in the implementation of that particular piece of legislation.
Yeah, compensation 2 is is is a big.
Factor.

Yeah. So I think you did a really good job in capturing that. And then the other part of that is.
With regards to this one law agencies of 2022.
How does community engagement, factoring to all of this and?
In terms of the implementation of this law, the intention.
Of the General Assembly was that we would engage.
Members of the communities through the Council, through the Advisory Council.
And so therefore there is an assignment of certain seats that are intended to represent.
Underserved historically.
Marginalized most impacted individuals in terms of environmental justice in Vermont and those are the seats that the Advisory Council members occupy.
Now what that means is that the the way in which we.
Create efficiencies in the implementation of this.
One law is to engage with the Advisory Council in a way that allows for that representation capacity to be.
Fully occupied and Wholesomely occupied by you all.
And so that's sort of like the the avenue that the law created for US, interagency Community, Interagency Committee members to inform the deliverables in the law.
Each of the deliverables in the law.
Each of the deliverables in the law, as you may have seen, include consultation.
Or a certain role for the Advisory Council.
And so the consultation process is the way in which we imbued community, engage communities, perspectives into the implementation of this law.
And we are very constrained in that because.
We don't have any other appropriations assigned other than the $500,000 to.
The creation of the mapping tool work.
And community engagement to inform the mapping work which we're in the process of.
Of selecting the community engagement contractor.
So I hope this you know sort of like captures a little bit of that other portion of your question, Victor, with regards to the implementation of the EJ Lloyd itself.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 1:56:20
Jennifer, go ahead.

Byrne, Jennifer 1:56:25

So much was said, but I'm only going to comment on one thing.
There's so much to to say to all of that. I was trying to like, hold on to the thought from before.
So there's a lot of discussion, I think that we need, we can have and, but it relates. So you know I hearing from most of the agency representatives you know funding.
Like explicitly the work of community engagement, which of course is the same.
Saying that all the community engagement professionals in the community say.
And need and I guess I just want to say this one point, which is the reason that you know, we even bring up the Civil Rights Act and like existing, you know, mandates for community engagement is really to point out that it's actually funding or not required by.
Law of all of us who receive federal funds.
And are tasked with distributing it, and so it doesn't matter if it's part of your budget or your like. It's it's. It's something that you have to do.
And so it's really this like for us maybe you know over the next year or something to you know really step back and think about a holistic approach that you know addresses like this is going to have to alter every agency employee just having a community engagement special.
At your agency isn't going to cut it.
But the way that we do our work, like it's like a systemic change.
Which is huge.
But but just. Yeah, just to say that that it it truly doesn't matter whether it's in your budget to do, you still have to do it.
I know that's crazy to say and and it comes down on me as well where I don't have a budget to create a community engagement plan. But I did because I know it's the law.
And we yeah. So that's all I wanted to say.

Birch, Juliet 1:58:19

Jennifer, thank you so much for saying that, because I think it's really really, really important.
I it's like, even if it weren't for the EJ law, the Civil Rights Act has been the Civil Rights Act of 1964. OK, 61 years ago.

Right, this is something that we need to be compliant with.
So you're so right.
You're right on the money and I just want to say that we I think what we're talking about is like.
A lot of agencies are doing their best.
To be minimally compliant with some of these things, but it doesn't feel good to be minimally compliant and like it that it doesn't actually create any good meaningful engagement with communities.
And so I think what I I'm not like, I don't want to speak for anyone, but I think when folks are saying like, wow, I wish I had more funding or resources for this. It's not necessarily in order to achieve minimal compliance, but in order to actually like.
Get across good engagement. Like what's?
What is in the core principles right like.
There, there is nothing that there. There are no resources that the state provides us to, for example, provide childcare to people who join our engagement activities, even though we know that that's like a huge barrier to engagement.
And so I agree, like we need to do this regardless of if there's funding, regardless if of if there's separate staff.
This is like point blank period, absolutely a necessity that we like.
No, I don't think anyone wants to like wriggle out of or anything, but at the same time it does say I think a lot that this is something that is so explicitly important in like every foundational law that upholds public service. And yet we don't fund it like.
It is so I'll get off my soapbox.
Mariana.

M **Mariana** 2:00:17
Yes, thank you.
Let me put my hand down 1st.
Oh, there you go.
This is amazing.
I am so excited about so much being said and there's so much room for discussion, likes Jennifer said.
And so I'm gonna try my best but.
When communities impacted, when people that don't have resources have to do something, they get creative. They come up with crazy solutions.

They they, we, we do things in new ways because there's not that funding available. So. So when you engage with people, they will. There should be more engagement and less planning for engagement.
And there should be more of other things that you are doing on your agencies and more room for engagement because from that engagement, the solutions, the creative solutions will come and that will solve a little bit of the funding issue.
So impacted communities don't ever have funding for anything.
A family that is poor, they don't ever go ask.
Someone to oh, I need my need to feed my kids.
No, that's not going to happen.
So you have to feed your kids with a creative solution.
So how do you do you go to your neighbors?
You watch each other, kids, you exchange things.
You I don't know.
It sounds crazy, but that's how they do it.
That's how we do it when we don't have money.
You come up with a creative solution, so if we don't have the funding and if the legislature through all these like structures.
Keep on telling US unit funding to do things we have to respond.
No, we don't need funding.
We need creativity.
We need to get together and come up with crazy ideas and that is what people will tell you if you engage with them and then you'll feel like, oh, interesting, I can do this.
You can be creative.
We can all get creative.
It it is in us. So the more that we stop thinking on the traditional ways of doing things and the more we engage with communities.
You come up with solutions. The more those solutions will come and the one thing that came to me as an impacted community or representative of an impacted community while we were all the agencies, the representative of the agencies were saying all these amazing things that were so true.
On how to engage and and I want to validate any of the things that were said because they were so powerful and so true.
Yet at the same time, perhaps we can respond by instead of creating one plan by

each agency, why don't we all unite and create only one plan?
That somehow can be adjusted.
Or flexible to collect and to create relationships for each agency in a meaningful way and then.
We could request.
If there is room to request funding, we can request funding, but maybe we don't even need it because all our synergy will create those resources that we need.
You know, you come up with one meeting with all of us there.
What? How many people we are 16 right now say that we engage 2 * a year with certain group that we decide that this is what we're gonna do and you organize a great event with with people chipping food.
You don't need a catering service.
Let's do a padlock.
And then you don't need childcare.
We will watch each other kids while we talk and discuss. You don't need a professional babysitter. They are paid by the hour and like that you start by 1 by 1.
What do you need?
Who puts it? All right, you bring it.
You you become more resourceful and I'm sure that just within among us we can we can create that and I'm not sure if this sounds too crazy or revolutionary.
I don't mean that in any way, but I feel like.
This is the only thing I can contribute because I actually kind of get get lost in in some of the.
Solutions that seem so simple to me and then I'm like, am I crazy or this is simple? Or are we complicating it or I don't know, so maybe this is too simple, I don't know.
I am already even lost in my own thought.
But what I'm trying to say is that I think it's it's it can be easier than we think of if we just start doing it and we collaborate with among each other. I mean, I mean, what a bunch of creative people and we have so many hours to.
Let's use them to develop the plan in a creative way.
And start engaging in a creative way.
I'm sorry, I got emotional.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 2:05:20
No, that was beautiful, Mariana.

Thank you so much for all of that. Resonates completely with me.
Also want to name the conversation is moving fast and I think we're all getting really excited about this topic, which is exactly what we want to happen.
But I'm gonna.
I have a couple of requests, so if there are any ISE members.
Who?
Want to share or want to respond? Want to resonate?
If you could hold that, write it down and fold it for your working session, and then that way you can say, hey, Mariana, that point that you made XY and Z I'd like to talk about it more.
In that way, we keep the ball as much as we can in the AC members court to continue the thoughts and the progress and information that's coming through.
Jennifer, you also mentioned that you had a lot of thoughts from before that you felt like you had to hold. And I don't think you've had a lot of time to speak.
So I wanted to Victor, if that's OK to kick it back to you, Jennifer, and see if you had other thoughts.
If not, we can continue and certainly ISE Members definitely respond to questions.
But just wanting to make sure that we keep the the stream of consciousness going.
In a way that's supportive of the unstructured.
Time for the ACA. Thank you.
Victor, I think you're up, Jennifer had said.
She didn't have any other thoughts to share.

VD **victor davila** 2:07:14
I I think.
I would be interested in hearing.
Any like I think I heard one example of like in a kind of top top down perspective of like when a implementation was attempted for community engagement to try to like get information. And I'm wondering if.
I I am curious if there have been attempts to tie into having a single point person connect to another point person from a larger community group that was more potentially capable of actually doing the direct gathering of people to gain those resources.
What I'm hearing is that a lack of desire to not.
No one wants to be extractive.

You want to be able to compensate people but can't.
But in my experience from organisers, everybody from the past.
Like in the Bronx, when we had to do these things, we partnered with community centers that were already offering things in the community.
So when those community centers asked community members to pull the survey, it did not feel extractive because they were already gaining things from that group.
So when I think of like Burlington as an example, is because this is where I am.
I know for a fact that there is a boys and Girls Club.
Call straight from me and several blocks down the other way. There is a YMCA, and those are both groups that tend to be very, very friendly towards agencies, at least at this level.
That are usually have capacity to like post an event that a on these days we're doing this come by and it's already kind of a a chill point for where they're all families gathering that are representative of the actual community base. And I'm wondering how often there is.
An attempt to create.
Kind of a partnership of finding a single point person and then scheduling a day where you can be down there to table at community events and get some of that feedback as well, even if it's just like once in X amount of months or helping them to be.
Able to better facilitate that on their own, to then give you that data.
Because I think as far as like I remember being involved in a lot of community groups like that having a full explanation as to.
How that survey will benefit the people you are already serving and the longer.
The long arm effects making your work easier because your community is now getting support in addition to what you're providing.
Tends to be enough motivation to help with the engagement process.
So I'm wondering, has connections like that have connections like that been made?
Has there been an attempt to do that in the past, and if so, what was the kind of like struggle to get that off the ground?

BK **Barrett, Kim** 2:10:33
Carla and Claire.

RK **Raimundi, Karla** 2:10:41

I think mine is a hand from previous.
I just wanted to.
Take the time to reflect back some of my thoughts based on Marianna's comment.
So I think maybe, maybe that moment went by and I just want to pass it on to Claire.

MC **McIlvennie, Claire** 2:11:05
Sure, I.
Well, I don't actually have an example from my agency. I feel like this is something we've struggled with in the past in particular.
Having the capacity to and time to invest in those or develop those community relationships because we haven't had them historically and I think that's something that Ricarda in the few short months she's been with us has really helped think about and I hope that we'll be able to.
Do more of what you're talking about in the future.
The example I wanted to offer you, and I'm happy to put some links in the chat, is actually from the Climate Action Office at the Agency of resources and they have really invested.
And showing up where folks already meet and I think.
Have put together a newsletter that I personally have found really insightful, reviewing and reading through around climate action and actually just published a map of all the different places they've shown up over the last couple years to begin building the relationships you're talking about. So.
I guess I want to.
Not necessarily. Something that we've been successful at at our agency, but I do think there are people thinking about it and trying to show up in the way you're talking about.
It's just a work in process. I think for many of us.

SE **Schilling, Elizabeth** 2:12:30
I guess I could show next and I don't know if this is entirely responsive, but I'm with the public utility Commission and we've been working on a report to the legislature that was required by Statute on energy burden, in particular with a focus on Vermonters, that low and.
Moderate income and.
Their we receive requests to do more community engagement and you know didn't

have the budget or capacity to to do it the way we might have hoped, you know in.
In total alignment with the core principles of community engagement.
But in kind of jumping off from Marianas Point about being creative.
We worked.
We we reached out to the Community Action agencies who.
Provide support to Vermonters with both income when they're having issues with energy issues.
And so we we talked to them and we developed a survey to get feedback from clients that they work with.
And did end up getting responses from folks. And then we also we ended up having a virtual forum in the evening. I guess it was back in October.
To hear directly from folks, and we did actually get a fair number of people who were showed up and were willing to provide comments and feedback.
So you know.
I share this example because we, you know, we we wanted to do more.
And we didn't.
We didn't feel like we had enough of the support to do as much as we would have liked, but you know, we also tried to work creatively to figure out ways to engage with people, with with the tools we had.
And so, yeah, just sharing that that as an example.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 2:14:35
Tell who had their hands raised, but feel free to just jump in.
I wanted to say that it probably works to move more into the formal working session, which really just involves focusing on solution building, but also on the name that we've already.
Came up with some solutions to problems that were identified like around making children part of the focus of these meetings, so involving them, making sure they're present.
Is you know that they're welcomed into the space.
There were some other solutions that were brought up as well, so we're already off to a good start with that.
Just wanted to name that for you.

VD **victor davila** 2:15:21

The last time I wanted to make after, after hearing all that I think is also me having a solution.
School oriented question as well, which is.
Given that there are several different parts of the agency that have been like kind of tooling individually to figure out how to do creative muting engagement outside of what you have a capacity for budget for and manpower for, I'm hearing at least one example so like 1/10.
Of that and actually got some good feedback, at least in in person meetings.
Would it be helpful to put some heads together to develop a kind of modular checklist of how to do that so that it's not a bunch of agencies kind of recreating where on like? How do we look?
What are the qualifications for what we want to look at when partnering with the Community organizational Community Center and then what kind of outreach and to who?
So that it's not being too over thought.
Like, how do we begin starting that relationship?
And potentially even just how do you develop your individual pitch?
Because it has to. When you're the biggest thing is that when you're engaging with like agents, that folks who actually run these community centers, they're not as they they can understand long term positive impacts potentially. But it being described to them in these kind of like more D.
Packed. Here's what The thing is.
But they they have time and capacity for a pitch.
And then to be told.
What would be required of them and if that can be more succinctly organized, it does make it easier to reach out to more folks in the same amount of time. So I'm wondering if that would be something.
I guess I'm trying to gauge if there is an interest for that.

RK **Raimundi, Karla** 2:17:08
Thank you, Victor, for that and.
Interestingly enough, that's something that the IAC discussed in our last meeting last week. I think I mentioned that perhaps an approach could be to focus our resources into engaging meaningfully with this Community leaders who are already embedded and have the trust of communities.

And consider how to do that.
So I don't know if Juliet, if you can find in the transcript when that part of the conversation was had.
But yes, so I I what I am detecting here is a lot of synergy.
Some of the things that the Advisory Council members have shared are things that.
Some of us, if not all of us from the IAC have thought about.
And the reality is that we are working.
Against a system that resists those kinds of interactions.
And so I think where we're at right now is at that moment.
Of reckoning where we have the Advisory Council and we have these individuals from agencies that are committed to doing this work even when it is frowned upon at certain levels of government.
So then I think the approach and I do appreciate your solution oriented question.
Victor, I think the approach right now should be one of investigating with curiosity.
And creativity.
What things we can all do together as a collective to make strides in the right direction, recognizing that we are operating within a system that is not built to allow for these types of conversations.
And so I invite a vastri council members to, if you have not already done so, to.
Watch the recording of our last meeting and you'll see that some of the things that have been discussed today.
Word this calls at that meeting and we we left off is really just being in a position to hear from you how we can all work together to put together the best community engagement plans that we have and something that we briefly discuss was to include at the.
Beginning of our community engagement plan.
A recognition of these barriers.
But that we will.
Use these plans to hold each other accountable.
And this was discussed at that last meeting.
So please, if you have not done already that, please go to the either the transcript or that meeting. And I think you will be encouraged by the conversation that we all have.
We all had last week, I believe.
And then let's let's from this moment, you know, now that we've identified that

there's a lot.
Of commonality here in this group.
Let's think about creative ways, Mariana.
To to further leverage the resources that we have and think about what can we do together to give ourselves a real opportunity to improve the practices that are already taking place.
In all of our agencies and what can be done to create comprehensively across the IAC?
And beyond best practices and standards that could lead us and may cause.
It make us realize that.
There are places that we can go because we have you all working with us to inform our plans and to capture the points of views that have not until this moment.
Been able to be centered through the creation of this EJ law.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 2:21:41
Thanks Carla.
It also looks like some other potential solutions are being put in the chat.
Any other thoughts and ideas?
Go ahead, Sarah.

MS **McIlvennie, Sarah** 2:22:02
Yeah, I sorry for missing. It seems like it was a really good conversation.
I just wanted to respond to Jennifer in the chat. The IAC members heard about this last week, but there is.
Myself and a colleague have started the community of practice across state of Vermont around community engagement, and one of the things that we are trying to figure out how to build would be some kind of inventory of community engagement that's happening. We have initially thought about it being.
Internal to support like cross understanding so that you don't go into a community and not understand what's been going, who has already come back to me asking questions.
But this feels like it is a very similar functionality and so I I think I can speak for my Co facilitator in saying that if this space would benefit from that, I'm happy to kind of connect those two dots and keep that conversation connected.

Here, as we build that out.
And get it back, if that's helpful.

Byrne, Jennifer 2:23:07
That sounds like a great effort and probably really challenging.
And I'm I guess I'm wondering sort of what I was writing in the chat was thinking about like even just for example, like your agency knows there's going to be a public comment period like what?
At whatever point you know, you know we have some kind of calendar to look ahead.
That would be one thing.
I'm not sure if you were thinking like community engagement events.
It's like is that what you're looking into at the agency specifically like or? Yeah, there could be a lot of things to gather.

McIlvennie, Sarah 2:23:46
Yeah, I think I think we have been initially thinking internal focused just like I think maybe part of Julia's question was so like after the fact to like colleagues can learn from each other's community engagement and that can help like better contextual understanding of what, how.
The state has worked with communities we had dreamed of an external facing version, but I think that felt a little bit scarier to start with, but I think.
Collaboration with the AC makes that feel far more tangible and practical.
To start there as well with things like, we know there's a public comment period. We know we're gonna need input before this.
Legislative session.
2nd so I feel like that could be on the table as well.

Barrett, Kim 2:24:56
I'm just holding some space.
Any other thoughts or questions? I think we we have about 15 more minutes allocated to this before we move into a debrief and then update color.

Raimundi, Karla 2:25:15
Thank you, Kim, and thank you Sarah for sharing.

I would also like to offer part of the discussion that was had last week with the IAC regarding community engagement generally and the Community engagement plans more specifically.
And that was.
Around the conversation that involves strategy and how to move forward.
Forward with identifying a path that could.
Have different fronts and we discussed that perhaps the Advisory Council.
Because of the position that it occupies, could be a very well situated entity to advocate before the General Assembly for resources to do this work.
For the EIAC.
And so I would, you know, like to have perhaps a conversation about what resources.
Exist that would allow for that engagement.
I know Jennifer has mentioned in the past, advocating before the General Assembly as an important aspect of this work.
I know Mariana has expressed interest in that as well.
And I know other folks within the Advisory Council have mentioned that, you know, there are things that could be done.
To improve were the agencies find themselves with regards to the deliverables in the EJ law and specifically around the conversation regarding community engagement we talked about perhaps that as a great opportunity.
To speak broadly to the General Assembly.
About the implementation of this law and what the Community engagement plans really need to be effective in the way that it was envisioned by the legislation.
So I would like you know, to hear reflection from the Advisory Council, whether this is something of interest.
And you know, thinking about that aspect, Victor, the solution building.

VD **victor davila** 2:27:42
I I think advocacy is at Paramount for sure.
I think that that also requires a campaign planning meeting.
There are many ways to communicate to legislators. Figuring out which is going to be the most effective way to communicate.
I think it'll require strategic planning because we want to have a plan, a A Plan B and then a module that allows us to then revisit what went right, what went wrong and what we can do again.

And I don't think that requires more than one.
Campaign planning meeting.
I suspect it will be something that will be communicated through letters or potentially even lobby, but it's possible and trying to attach other community leaders external to the ejc to to try to sign on to that kind of a thing.
But that's, yeah, that's the whole thought is I I would be open to that. But I do think that it would have to begin with a campaign planning meeting.

BJ **Byrne, Jennifer** 2:28:44
And I would just add, I think like legislative advocacy is only appropriate if we've done the work to really build our holistic context.
So in terms of some of that background research, Carla, that you just mentioned, I think that's definitely a worthy effort from you know the these groups.

RK **Raimundi, Karla** 2:29:12
I agree.
I agree and I do have to say that.
I feel very encouraged and feel that this conversation.
Is so important.
For both these groups to align, align and identify.
What the goals are with regards to community engagement specifically, but also generally the implementation of this law.
Right. We're doing this work.
On behalf of Vermonters, all of us here, and so this forum is very unique in that sense and the Advisory Council, as I put on the chat, I think it's uniquely situated.
To to.
Help the the committee.
Making or informing decisions.
That can actually be grounded on something tangible and then further taking that beyond and before the General Assembly advocating.
And that is a space that we cannot occupy.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 2:30:34
Mariana.

Mariana 2:30:41

Yes, I just wanted to mention that I would love to hear.
Other members of the Advisory Council, if they haven't had a chance to.
Share How this conversation is impacting them, how they're making them feel, how they're following.
Just yeah, naming that I I'm not even sure if I'm seeing everyone.
This meetings are tricky for me. If I try to move things and and the view, I may close the meeting accidentally and then don't find you again.
So I'm not sure if whoever is here have a spoken. Maybe everybody has spoken so, but if you are a member of the AC Council and you didn't get a chance to say anything today or share how you feel about all these conversations, I would love to hear.
From you.

Barrett, Kim 2:32:09

Thanks for that, Mariana.
I think most people have spoken.
But again, feel free to jump in.
So it's almost 140. I think this could be a good.
Time to pivot to thinking about next steps.
Yeah, try to make things a little bit more concrete or at least find the pieces in the conversation that that we wanna move forward.
Or revisit as well.
Jump in.
Go ahead.

McIlvennie, Claire 2:33:14

We haven't talked a ton about this directly today, so maybe it's just something to put a pin in for future conversations, but.
I think having further conversation about how the AC would like the IAC members to engage with you all as we develop community engagement plans.
Would be really helpful and.
Definitely.
I don't expect you all to have like answer to that question today.

I think that having both bodies represented in the small working group feels really positive, but if there are other ways that you would like us to engage with you or specific times in that period between now and when this plan is due in July of 2027. I think would really be helpful.
I don't know that we touched on it today, but a lot of the agencies I think are beginning to develop work plans for how we're going to do this work over the next year and a half, so.
Put that one in there.

BJ **Birch, Juliet** 2:34:23
Just to clarify, Claire, are you asking like?
In the context of like a public meeting, potentially or in some other way, how best to like further consult the Advisory Council as you are developing your Community engagement plan and maybe trying to make some synergy in that way. Sorry.

MC **McIlvennie, Claire** 2:34:42
Yeah, no.
Great question.
I think like the small group seems like a great way to develop it for developing guidance around core elements. But if there are additional ways like whether that's having specific joint meetings where we've done some actual development of our plans for the AC to review or.
If there are other mechanisms that the EC would like to be involved particularly, I think I'm thinking of drafting.
As as what I was thinking of, I know for like my agency milestones can be really helpful. So knowing like we've committed to have something done so that we can have a conversation with the EC.
Would be really helpful if that's like having a draft of our plan X number of months in advance of the due date or or something like that.
So I don't have anything specific in mind. I guess just wanting to have further conversation about how best to work with the EC.
As we dive into this work over the next year and a half.

WA **Willard, Abbey** 2:35:51
My question could kind of dovetail with Claire's a bit. I'm really curious what.

AC members and other IAC members think about the possibility of taking the core principles to create one community engagement guidance plan.
Maybe that incorporates the common components and then.
There could be like a most efficient investment of the small groups efforts.
With input from others.
Around creation of the guidelines of a plan and then think about.
Whether there's a way, whether there's ways for each?
Agency and department to.
Actually, practice the act of community engagement, meaningful community engagement and that where effort is spent or collaboration is spent.
Or brainstorming solutions of real examples.
I'm I'm just having a like a an image of like everybody breaking and going back and sort of like writing relatively duplicative plans when we're talking about the lack of capacity and resources and expertise that we have.
And still yet not practicing the act of meaningful community engagement. And so wondering if there's a way.
To use resources in time over the next year and a half plus to do the plan components as efficiently as possible, and then something that's more action oriented.
Productively.

VD **victor davila** 2:37:43
It does feel like that this would be kind of the point of a subcommittee on this committee engagement action would be to like, bring that question as a part of the agenda and not leave it until there is a a solved solution for it.
Because it it does feel like the A subcommittee on this exact thing would be the kind of clincher, assuming that we have both AC members and I the the EJC members and the IAC members in one room working on it jointly, it means that everyone's concerns can.
Be cross referenced live.
Yeah, I it.
Yeah, it it seems like that subcommittee is a larger scale solution and.
Assuming that we can put out deadlines for that and then a time frame to revisit what is and is not a hiccup because there's a reality in which.
They'll be part of us that always want to do more and always wish that we had time

to do more and there'll be parts of us that want to do less because it's more work than that we would have otherwise done, fortunately. And that's a reality.
But I think that a subcommittee would allow us to get to the the best in perfect solution possible, to then move on because as soon we can get through all these deliverables effectively, the sooner we can kind of get ahead and instead of just being responsive.
To things that are on a timeline, start trying to build out to make sure that we can create better arguments for getting the funding that this thing needs to be the most effective.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 2:39:28
That makes sense.
Does anyone have any follow up questions or thoughts on that?

M **Mariana** 2:39:34
I I just wanted to.
Name that. I got a little bit lost.
In the word, I don't even know how to say where I got lost, but.
Are are we?
So are we creating a subcommittee of us to to halt the inner agency?
Committee try to come up with one plan as opposed to each agency. Create their plan.
Is is that what we're doing?
Is that what we're talking about about the subcommittee would be doing that?
And and Abby, this is a response to your question about, like, not as catering and which I completely agree, as opposed to each of us start working on your own plan.

WA **Willard, Abbey** 2:40:20
Yeah.

M **Mariana** 2:40:30
Doesn't it make more sense to compile as much as possible into one plan and then just maybe each agency adds something that?
Is appropriate for the specific action and capacity.
Within to each agency.

And that will reduce the amount of work that we would be doing for this deliverable. Sorry I don't if I make sense.

Willard, Abbey 2:40:54
I ask that as a question to for the Subcommittee or the the small Group to consider. I don't think that we've made there's AI, don't think a decision has been made around whether.
A unified.
Plan or some core components of a unified, unified plan is the the path that we're taking forward for the Community engagement deliverable.
But the hope is that my hope was by like by voicing that question here for that subgroup to consider that, and I think the idea is that that subgroup has both IAC and AC representation and that they would kind of like meet and talk and share thoughts and.
Bring it back to another joint meeting or bring it back independently to an AC meeting and an IAC meeting.
Somehow, whatever the schedule kind of allows for.
For us to have a larger conversation based on some of the.
The guidance that they might want to consider or ask us or recommend or ask us to consider.
That's what I see.

Mariana 2:42:01
Thank you.

Willard, Abbey 2:42:01
Kind of what the next steps are, but I don't know.

Mariana 2:42:01
Yes, thank you.
I I think I follow.
Yeah, I think I follow. And I I know where I am now. Thank you.

Willard, Abbey 2:42:06
Yeah.

Mariana 2:42:09
Great. Seems like that would be a good idea.

Raimundi, Karla 2:42:22
When I got there I.

Barrett, Kim 2:42:29
Go ahead, Carla.

Raimundi, Karla 2:42:31
Get up informer. Lean on.
OK.
Well, I have a hand.
I.
I didn't really notice that I had a hand up.
I cannot see myself on the screen all of the time, but yes. Then I would like to.
Then bring the conversation that's being had on the Chad to the full group so that there is awareness.
Jennifer proposed to bring back the body system as a way to organize.
I don't if this is perhaps part of the governance effort.
So for folks to know that that conversation is happening on the chat.

Mariana 2:43:19
Yes, I I couldn't find I I was trying to listen to the conversation.
I didn't read the whole chat, so there's something about the body systems that if somebody wants to bring it all up, that would be great.
I know that we've spoken about that before, but I don't know what.

Byrne, Jennifer 2:43:35
Yeah, I just mentioned we should try it.
We've never actually implemented the plan to do it, so I think we should we, you know, it could be a great way to move forward with developing in between these large group meetings, developing the interagency AC connection.
And yeah.

It could just be like meeting once you know every couple months and and talking and whatever you know organically comes up.
But I think.
It could really focus around this community engagement piece and maybe be something that this subgroup could help build, like any necessary structure around.

Barrett, Kim 2:44:15
Yeah. I just wanted to stay with that.
I it would be helpful to know exactly what's needed from Julia and I if anything for that I I know last year we tried to take a lot of the responsibility on to do that and and also I recognize that that there's a desire on both AC and.
IC to collaborate Better Together.
And so I don't.
I wouldn't want for us to.
Stand in the way or be a barrier.
To that, and so if there's any work that you all feel like would be helpful just to connect like just to have, you know, more opportunities is what I'm trying to say where we don't have to be sort of sort of the middleman in the middle of your.
Relationship.
Just putting that out there.

Byrne, Jennifer 2:45:06
That makes sense.
Could you share the what was created in the past about the buddy system? I remember like the previous coordinators kind of made like an exit packet with a bunch of different.
Sections relating to sort of what we thought of as a plan moving forward.
So yeah, that would be, I think helpful.

Raimundi, Karla 2:45:28
Yeah, we can. We can check.
I believe, but I want to corroborate that what was produced previously was captured by Kim and Juliet in the materials that they provided last year and I appreciate, Kim, what you mentioned I put on the chats, some of the things that the AJ coordinators are focusing their ATT.

On and you know they have held multiple.
Conversations about the body system.
So I think at this point it would be great if this could be an AC LED initiative and also it could be folded like you said, Jennifer, into the community engagement work.
But it would be really great if you know there is some development of the idea how it would be implemented, how it could be informing the Community engagement plan development.
That would be fantastic.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 2:46:34
Thanks Sarah.
And then victor?

MS **McIlvennie, Sarah** 2:46:39
Yeah. I just wanted to share. So from the IAC.
So Ricarda and I and then Kim and Juliet, right, are from the IAC for a sub group. And I just wanted to confirm that at least for Ricardo and I like our understanding is that we are working collaboratively with.
To identify and flush out like 4 centralized components that would go across at least go across plans. If not, one plan.
And I would also offer that I can offer that I personally.
Have capacity to support like Buddy System coordination as it's related to that deliverable, because maybe that could help move some of that stuff along if it's part of the community engagement plans.
That so that's what people were comfortable with. And that is our understanding that would be working with some of the ACC folks to do that.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 2:47:34
OK.
Victor. And then I think we need to just finish up with updates really quickly.

VD **victor davila** 2:47:39
Yeah, well, I was.
I was gonna say could we name some next steps now that we've said all this so that we could make sure that there is a kind of so that we don't lose some of these points

like we're going to have to schedule some figure out where we can.
Get a pull out to see what we can schedule the subcommittee meeting for. We're talking about sooner than later.
We're also gonna wanna probably have a excel sheet that has the contacts for both groups, so it's easier for us to get to a buddy.
Dynamic 'cause I don't have the direct contacts for anyone in IAC here and I don't even have contacts with some folks in the EJC so.
That they may be good to just have like a a spreadsheet of shareable information so that we can then implement the buddy system for whatever that looks like.
But like whatever, if we could just name whatever are the next steps we've heard that we might want to act on.

BK **Barrett, Kim** 2:48:36
Yeah, it sounds like those are the two main steps.
It it really sounds like the sub groups gonna connect and then we figure out how to move everyone else in in addition to the buddy system.
If I'm missing anything, please put it in the chat.
But I think we're on the same page, so perhaps to you all for that, just a couple of updates, the mapping tool.
The Community Engagement Selection Committee review is underway.
With the GIS component, we're still collaborating with ads, the agency of digital services on creating the statement of work.
So more on that later, but the the main update that we want to talk about is so for this meeting on November 17.
We mentioned that one option could be for you all to go into executive session and the purpose of that would be to talk more specifically around the environmental justice focused population definition.
And all of the things that are involved in that and we talked about earlier why going into executive session would be helpful for that.
So that's one goal.
Of the meeting on the 17th.
We also mentioned in a previous Advisory Council meeting and the Interagency Committee meeting that there's this other deliverable under the law called cumulative environmental burden rule making, which is a whole long way to say that there there's a process that we need both of you both bodies to.

Support with and.
There's.
We want to take a staggered approach to provide support and technical assistance for you all.
So a portion of next Monday's meeting is going to be just to do a basic introduction into that deliverable.
So we'll have folks there to support in that and then you'll need quorum if you want to vote.
To move into executive session.
To talk through at least start the conversation around.
EJFT.
And the way that I so I've just looked at the tracking for the invite for the meeting on Monday and it looks like we should have quorum from both bodies, is very exciting to me.
And then the 3rd update is that you know we all kind of mentioned in previous meetings the desire to have and the need to have as many more joint meetings by the end of the year. And so the reason we sent those additional scheduling polls for December, the.
Goal is to have two more meetings.
And so with the.
Availability that folks provided on those scheduling forms I sent out invite.
So one meeting is for Wednesday, December 3rd from 2:00 to 5:00.
The next one is Wednesday, December 10, from 1:00 to 4:00.
I do.
I saw that, you know, at at this meeting two or three more folks went ahead and filled out the scheduling form.
So it's pretty much impossible for me to know who's actually available for those two meetings in December. If you haven't accepted those invites or declined them, please do that so that we can get a feel for.
If we're gonna meet Quorum.
So I hope that that makes sense to everyone, yeah.
Other than that, other than that, that's it.
I think I just want to personally say thank you to everyone for this meeting 'cause I feel like.
I was really wanting us to connect in this way, Mariana.

Mariana 2:53:11
No, I think I made a mistake, although I do have a question about.
So is there any action that we need to take into the bodies body system or we just wait to see if we hear from someone organizing that?

Barrett, Kim 2:53:27
I don't think there's any action needed at this moment.
Yeah, very good.
So please come to the meeting on Monday if you can so that we can go into executive session and talk about this really important topic.
So thank you all very much.
We'll see you next time. Take good care.

Redman, Amy (She/Her) 2:53:52
Thank you. Bye.

Mariana 2:53:55
Hi, thank you.

Barrett, Kim stopped transcription