Public Meeting of the Vermont Interagency Environmental Justice (EJ) Committee (IAC) and EJ Advisory Council (AC)
Hybrid Meeting Minutes
December 3, 2025

Note to reader: These draft minutes were compiled by staff from the Agency of Natural Resources. If you would like to see any changes to these draft minutes, please reach out to anr.ejcoordinator@vermont.gov

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Meeting Information:
Date: December 3, 2025
Meeting Time: 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM EST

Attendees:

Advisory Council (AC): Jennifer Byrne, Mariana Sears, Britaney Watson, Rich Holschuh

Interagency Committee (IAC): Karla Raimundi, Dave Pelletier, Abbey Willard, Janet Hurley, Bob Donohue, Elizabeth Schilling, Claire McIlvennie, Amy Redman

State of Vermont: Juliet Birch, Kim Barrett, Jenny Ronis, Sarah McIlvennie, Collin Smythe, Rebecca Walsh

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2:00 PM

Welcome & Introductions

- Consent to Community Agreements
    - Consent received, no comments.
- Approve November 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes
    - Quorum not achieved, minutes not approved.
- Approve December 3, 2025 Agenda
    - Agenda approved, no comments.

2:10 PM

VT EJ Law 2025 Review

- Juliet B.: Today we'll do a recap of achievements of 2025 and the ways we built a foundation for further work in 2026. Highlighting important contributions from the AC and IAC. This presentation will be broken up by deliverable: Environmental benefits, community engagement, EJ Mapping Tool, Rulemaking, and reporting
- Juliet B.: Environmental benefits includes two deliverables for 2025 and 2026: Environmental Benefits Spending Guidance and the Baseline Spending Report
- Kim B.: Walks through the timeline of what was done to complete the EBSG and prep for the Baseline Spending Report in 2025. Highlights include the EBSG Task Group, the feedback sessions held in February, and the EBSG public comment period
- Juliet B.: Community engagement includes the Core Principles of Community Engagement and the Community Engagement Plans. Highlights include IAC discussions beginning in June, extensive collaboration between AC and IAC in November, and the creation of a VT EJ Community Engagement Subgroup
- Juliet B.: EJ Mapping Tool was advanced a lot in 2025, due on January 1, 2027.
- Kim B.: Walks through the timeline for procuring a Geographic Information Systems contractor to support the development of the Mapping Tool. This year, a Request for Proposal was released and a contractor was chosen: Stone Environmental. Also walks through the timeline for procuring a community engagement contractor to support the development of the Mapping Tool. A Request for Proposal was released in August and the Selection Committee is still working to select a community engagement contractor.
- Juliet B.: Community engagement highlights include helpful feedback from AC and IAC to inform the RFPs, efficient and intentional work of the GIS and community engagement Selection Committees, and utilizing Executive Session to collaborate on the Community Engagement RFP before release.
- Juliet B.: Cumulative Environmental Burden Rulemaking will be an important deliverable for work in 2026. Some introductory work was done on this deliverable throughout 2025. Reviews timeline, which predominantly involves CREJU working alongside the ANR legal team to understand the deliverable and prepare for Rulemaking.
- Kim B.: Rulemaking highlights include the Office of the General Counsel helping to create technical assistance materials, introductions to the IAC and AC.
- Kim B.: Reviews the Civil Rights and Environmental Justice Complaint Intake Reports, which were completed in 2025 and will be completed again in 2026. Highlights include office hours, AC recommendations developed by Mariana Sears and Rich Holschuh, and the IAC development of a workplan to improve CR and EJ complaint intake systems.
- Mariana S.: Did we get people engaged in the EBSG public comment period?

- Kim B.: We held virtual and in-person meetings for the public comment period. Groups were small but the conversations were intimate and engaging. Great verbal feedback. We also received several comments in writing. All helpful in improving the EBSG. A responsiveness summary is forthcoming.
- Abbey W.: For Rulemaking, you mentioned one of the purposes is to inform the Mapping Tool. How does this affect Mapping Tool contracting?
- Karla R.: The Rulemaking and the Mapping will be advanced simultaneously. The contractors for the Tools must create a report on how to use the tool and will also provide trainings, to help inform this element of the Rulemaking process.
- Janet H.: When is the Mapping Tool and the Rulemaking due? Will the IAC be informed and involved in development?
- Kim B.: January 1, 2027 and July 1, 2027 are the respective deadlines. The Mapping Tool contractors will need to work with the AC and IAC, as required under each contractor's respective RFPs.
- Bob D.: We could spend a lot of effort mapping and understanding the impacts of environmental burdens only to conclude that we have no resources to do anything about those impacts. We need a sustainable funding model to do this work.
- Abbey W.: Can folks with GIS expertise from other covered agencies be involved in the Mapping Tool development?
- Kim B.: Yes, it is all possible. Let us know who you want involved. Collaboration with the contractor would also happen outside of public meetings.
- Karla R.: Contractors will come to public meetings as well to collaborate with the AC and IAC.

3:20 PM

AC + IAC Meet Separately

- Kim B.: This is unstructured time for the AC and IAC to separately advance the work of their bodies. Suggested topics include: governance, collaboration, legislative organizing, deliverables

AC Breakout:

- Rich H.: Feeling lost, still noticing an attendance issue in the AC
- Mariana S.: Would love to review the governance document that has been brought to the AC in previous meetings. Not sure what legislative organizing entails
- Kim B.: Several folks have expressed interest in going to the legislature in some form to speak on behalf of the AC and advocate on behalf of the VT EJ Law.

- Jennifer B.: In terms of governance, making sure the document or the process is not overcomplicated it important. Making sure logistics align with ANR. Maybe start with identifying what a functioning council would look like and work backwards from their to find a solution
- Mariana S.: There are probably a lot of models out there, so we could base our solution on that. We are currently very dependent on a “train that is rolling” rather than independent. Taking some ownership could allow for more empowerment or structure. I spend time on this work as part of my job. If we decide my energy can be used differently, I am open to that.
- Rich H.: Three hour public meetings are long. There are things that have to be done, and there is staff that is doing that work, and the IAC seem to understand what is going on. I don’t understand what is being discussed sometimes.
- Mariana S.: Long presentations are hard.
- Rich H.: EJ refers to real impacts to real people, but this doesn’t seem very real – abstract.
- Mariana S.: Jennifer, what was the vision for this council in the creation of the Law?
- Jennifer B.: Can only speak for herself. Sees it as serving people, connecting resources to what people need, functioning as the interface between the government and the people. Encouraging public comment and compiling a list of people’s stories and problems would be a good use of time as well. Shortening and simplifying the governance document could be a helpful starting place for AC
- Mariana S.: Would be good to start connecting with communities, as opposed to waiting for the deliverables to be completed to do so.
- Jennifer B.: Adding simplified proposal into the chat

IAC Breakout:

- Karla R.: Would like to cover two topics: Baseline Spending Report and the Civil Rights and Environmental Justice Complaint Summary Report. Since February 15, 2026 – the statutory deadline for the Baseline Spending Report – is a weekend, the real deadline for this should be February 13, 2025. Office hours for the Baseline Spending Report will be scheduled ASAP to support covered agencies in preparation.
- Amy R.: Wants to work with legal counsel at VDH to help figure out path forward for this work.
- Karla R.: Rachel Stevens, Associate General Counsel at ANR, will engage the Attorney General’s office to determine next steps for covered agencies – perhaps a meeting of attorneys for all of the covered agencies.

- Janet H.: The office hours will happen before the end of the year? The LURB, PSD, and PUC could benefit from having a conversation on their own to figure out their Baseline Spending Reports since they will be unique.
- Karla R.: Yes to having a separate conversation for LURB, PSD, and PUC. Scheduling for office hours will be sent out by end of the week.
- Dave P.: AOT is working on the Baseline Spending Report, doing analysis on the programs that have been identified as important to include in the report. Working on geographic analysis of where investments are being made.
- Janet H.: Reminding group of the broadness of the current EJFP definition. Does the EJFP definition require a pause for the reporting?
- Karla R.: We are focusing on geography in this report, not tying the report to populations in order to allow flexibility around the EJFP definition
- Abbey W.: AAFM is bringing a draft version of the report to agency leadership by December 15. This will take time internally at the agency.
- Juliet B.: Please raise your hand if you are in the same position as AAFM in terms of needing to provide a draft early? A majority has raised their hand
- Bob D.: Wouldn't it make sense if we all used the same map?
- Juliet B.: The EBSG asks covered agencies to report geographies as opposed to a binary of whether or not the investment is received by an EJFP. Later, once we know more about the EJFP definition, we can connect those reported geographies to identified communities.
- Juliet B.: Abbey and Sarah reached out about fund sources that overlap between AAFM and ANR. CREJU is working on getting the answer to your questions. Answers will be shared in office hours and in writing.
- Karla R.: Civil Rights and Environmental Justice Complaint Summary Report – Elizabeth and Karla drafted a workplan to improve complaint intake systems according to AC recommendations. This workplan next needs to be shared with all of IAC for feedback and for greenlights from covered agency leadership. Next, the workplan would be shared with the AC for review. Goal to get feedback by February, perhaps after the Baseline Spending Report is due?
- Elizabeth S.: Perhaps covered agencies can also collaborate on next year's report?
- Karla R.: Karla will share workplan with full group for feedback. Idea of a joint report can be discussed with feedback as well.

3:45 PM

Break

3:55 PM

AC + IAC Meet Together/Debrief

- Kim B.: Sharing any next steps or decisions that came from the breakout sessions.
- Jennifer B.: AC simplified the governance proposal that they had before. Can we use circle process for this debrief?
- Rich H.: Ongoing attendance issues with the AC, these meetings are hard to follow, the governance proposal is an attempt to ground the council.
- Mariana S.: Hoping to break the disconnect between government and people, within the structure create some flexibility and creativity.
- Abbey W.: Feeling very distracted by the deliverables – not feeling very connected to the AC but needing to focus on specific tasks. The timelines and the tasks outlined in Act 154 feel like a race to stay on top of expectations.
- Jenny R.: Also focused on specific tasks. Wants the LURB to be thinking about environmental justice, both in terms of the Law and conceptually. Hard to keep up.
- Amy R.: Excited about the AC's circle process idea. Thinking about how confusing and complex and layered state work is, even for state employees. Work feels disconnected. Focusing on how we are together and how we do the work is important to feel connected.
- Dave P.: Resonating with what has been shared, especially the race to the next deliverable. Our greater world has been very overwhelming, even on a personal level. Having more bandwidth and less intensity around deadline is desirable, but unlikely. Doing the best we can.
- Claire M.: Feels similarly. Overwhelm.
- Karla R.: Understands how challenging the implementation of this Law is. Very hard for a three person Unit. Takes a lot to show up with heart and communicate as best as we can what was given to us. Wants to feel more connected to the AC. More regular engagements would help. Lots of things impact our ability to show up.
- Sarah M.: Picking up the buddy system, not calling it "WOEs" – or "Working on Excellence" partners. This would be a way for the AC and IAC members to get paired together and work together to build relationships and understanding of the work.
- Kim B.: Thinking about collective care in this space, perhaps something to think about for pairings. This work is overwhelming but this could potentially be improved by investing into the relationship building.
- Juliet B.: Acknowledging what works in addition to what doesn't work.

- Kim B.: Do you want to explore what the relationship between the AC and IAC could look like through circle process?
- Jennifer B.: Since there wasn't quorum, what does compensation look like for AC members?
- Juliet B.: Compensation for AC members is $50 per every 8 hours of work, which shakes out to $6.25/hour. Public meetings, regardless of quorum, can be charged as $50. AC members should submit an expense form to get compensated, this information is on the EJ Resource Library.
- Jennifer B.: Is there a limit to how much can be charged? Budgetary constraint?
- Juliet B.: The meeting cap is in part a financial consideration. Not aware of a limit.
- Mariana S.: Submits a monthly expense form, charges $50 per public meeting and $6.25/hour for every hour spent towards this work outside of public meeting.
- Rich H.: Doesn't submit an expense form because it is a lot to keep up with.
- Karla R.: CREJU can support with filling out expense forms for the AC. We have not approached a limit in terms of reimbursement, but if you provide a question and a number of hours that concerns you, we can ask the business office if that can be accommodated by our budget. We have not been made aware of any issues in terms of budgetary constraints to compensate AC members. Charge public meetings as $50 regardless of quorum.

4:45 PM

Close Out