

**Public Meeting of the Vermont Environmental Justice (EJ) Advisory Council (AC)
Hybrid Meeting Minutes
March 28, 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

Meeting Information:

Date: March 28, 2025

Meeting Time: 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM EST

Meeting Information: [Meeting Materials](#)

Attendees:

Advisory Council: Jennifer Byrne, Mariana Sears, Walter Brownridge, Victor Davila, Xusana Davis, Maryam Abbasi, Britaney Watson

State of Vermont: Juliet Birch, Kim Barrett

11:00 AM

Welcome & Introductions:

- Consent to [Community Agreements](#)
 - Principles read and consent obtained. No comments
- Approve [November 18, 2024 Minutes](#)
 - Minutes approved. No comments.

Icebreaker: At the end of 2025, I want to look back and say I _____.

11:10 AM

Updates

- Juliet B.: Recap of Community Engagement Mode of Influence. Developing policies and procedures so members of the public can meaningfully engage with State work. Core Principles of Community Engagement, Community Engagement Plans
- Kim B.: Proportionate Distribution of Environmental Benefits. Assessing agency spending around environmental benefits to more proportionately distribute them across populations. Environmental Benefits Spending Guidance, Baseline Spending Reports, etc.
- Juliet B.: Mitigation of Cumulative Environmental Burden. Assessing the impact of environmental burdens on populations to develop a mitigation plan. Mapping Tool
- Kim B.: Annual Agency Reporting. Regularly reporting on things like spending, actions, response to complaints, etc. to be more transparent. Civil Rights and

Environmental Complaint Summary Reports, Environmental Benefits Spending Reports

- Juliet B.: Reevaluating key definitions in the VT EJ Law to ensure these terms accurately depict the perspectives of “environmental justice focus populations”. Also turnover.
- Juliet B.: AC appointments update – New appointment to the Statewide Environmental Organization, Victor Davila
- Victor Davila: Representing SlingShot, excited to work on environmental justice with the council
- Juliet B.: There are still two vacancies – Mobile Home Communities and Municipal Government. EJFP seat is potentially subject to reappointment, more information to come.
- Juliet B.: Civil Rights and Environmental Justice Complaint Reports from 2025 have been submitted and are publicly available. Advisory Council has until May 15, 2025 to develop response(s).
- Kim B.: Environmental Justice Mapping Tool. Advisory Council involvement will be needed to support contractors in bridging the data gap to make the tool as accurate as possible to community. Reminder that Request for Proposal (RFP) has been broken into two projects: Geographic Information System (GIS) and Community Engagement. GIS RFP went out to the State of Vermont Retainer’s List in mid-April.

Environmental Justice Mapping Tool

- Jennifer B.: Was the Advisory Council consulted on this?
- Kim B.: Yes, the Advisory Council was given the RFP for review in 2024. There is a protocol for how to navigate this process with the Agency of Digital Services, which supports other state agencies in working with technical contractors. The RFP was also based around all of the conversations had in public meetings last year regarding functions and capabilities of the mapping tool and the EJFP definition.
- Juliet B.: Community Engagement contractor would have strict scope of work ensuring the data in the tool accurately depicts Vermont communities. This does not supersede the work of the Advisory Council or the covered agencies. Advisory Council members were consulted over email.
- Kim B.: Two statutory purposes of the mapping tool: 1) depict EJFPS, 2) map environmental benefits and environmental burdens.
- Jennifer B.: Unhappy with the process that has been chosen, wishes there had been more consultation with the Advisory Council on this. Does not agree with the need for the Community Engagement contractor. Concerned that this process is repeating other previous ANR processes.
- Kim B.: Community Engagement RFP has not been released yet and will be sent to Advisory Council for consultation.
- Mariana S.: Looking for clarification. Has a step in this process been missed? Have the Advisory Council not had a chance to weigh in on the RFP?
- Jennifer B.: Can the Advisory Council please have access to the link to the contract and RFP?

- Kim B.: Not sure if we can share the link to the contract itself, but we can share the RFP
- Jennifer B.: The RFP should be released publicly, not to the Retainer's List.
- Mariana S.: Why was it not released to the public? Why was it released to the Retainer's List?
- Kim B.: Decision-making was related to making sure the funding could be secured for the mapping tool in general. This decision-making is above the Environmental Justice Coordinators.
- Xusana D.: Are these RFPs being handled through BGS's Office of Purchasing and Contracts?
- Kim B.: There are different processes for different procurement processes. The Community Engagement RFP, once it has been reviewed and revised by many groups including the Advisory Council, will be handled by BGS and will be a fully public process. The GIS RFP has specific requirements to ensure fairness across firms on the Retainer's List.
- Xusana D.: What is the start date for the work? When are the Bidder's Conferences for these? How were these decisions made?
- Kim B.: There are no start dates for these RFPs.
- Xusana D.: What is the closing date for the bid?
- Kim B.: Those close dates can be shared after the meeting or during the break. Just will take a moment to find the dates. Bid Conference for GIS RFP took place on April 27.
- Xusana D.: Is there a planned Bidder's Conference for Community Engagement contractor? Why are we paying for another community engagement project?
- Kim B.: Community Engagement contractor would not replace the work of the Advisory Council. Community Engagement contractor scope of work limited to ensuring the data accurately depicts Vermont. They would support the GIS contractor to accurately incorporate qualitative data. It is important for accountability to have someone who is dedicated to putting their hours and capacity towards this.
- Xusana D.: When will the Advisory Council get to learn more information about how the decision was made to release the GIS RFP?
- Kim B.: The Civil Rights and Environmental Justice Unit can arrange something with the support of Karla Raimundi
- Jennifer B.: Concerns around if this process is in compliance with the Law. Specifically around adequate consultation
- Juliet B.: Law requires consultation with AC and IAC around identifying indices and criteria to be included in the mapping tool. This part of the development process has not happened yet, but the Unit has intention to comply with.
- Kim B.: How much capacity does the Advisory Council have to be involved in the mapping tool process?
- Jennifer B.: Concerned if this process aligns with the spirit of the law.
- Maryam A.: Would not be interested in choosing a contractor for hire, but would be interested in weighing in on the contents of the RFP. How will the RFPs be evaluated? How can we move forward to correct for some of these procedural concerns?

- Kim B.: Development of the RFP was based on information generated by Advisory Council in the public meetings. Advisory Council members received the RFP during the drafting process. Evaluation has not happened yet. Who on the Advisory Council would be interested in participating in the evaluation of proposals?
- Walter B.: There are obstacles that we are running into in this work that is related to the structure of the Vermont state government. The Advisory Council should demand a conversation with ANR leadership, namely Secretary Julie Moore, and other senior staff. Advisory Council should take a vote about whether or not they want to take this approach.
- Juliet B.: Point of clarification – Advisory Council was consulted on the GIS RFP in October of 2024 over email. Email has been forwarded for AC members to review. Two public meetings were partially dedicated to preferences for the functions and capabilities of the mapping tool. EJ Coordinators will share the RFP as-released after the meeting. Advisory Council will be consulted in the development of the Community Engagement RFP.
- Mariana S.: Point of clarification – The concern seems to be more with the decision to use the Retainer’s List, rather than concerns about consultation. Could we have a motion for the Advisory Council to request that we stop this process and reconsider?
- Xusana D.: How do we want to approach approving a motion? Where does the Interagency Committee get incorporated into this?
- Xusana D.: Procurement best practices: extending timeline/deadlines, formally and informally share opportunities in other networks, include a statement of intent, include inclusion and justice in a scoring rubric where applicable, share out as widely as possible

1:45 PM

Public Comment

- No comments.

1:45 PM

15-min Break

2:00 PM

Environmental Justice Mapping Tool

- Jennifer B.: Proposed motion in the chat [Can also be found in the Environmental Justice Online Resource Library public meeting folder for March 28, 2025]
- Walter B.: Thinks the Advisory Council should take a formal vote.
- Jennifer B.: Movement made
- Walter B.: Seconded
- Maryam A.: Seconded
- Xusana D.: Where does the Interagency Committee get incorporated into this? We may need to inform them or solicit feedback
- Kim B.: EJ Coordinators can provide list of emails for all IAC members

- Mariana S.: Point of clarification – Is the AC’s concern more about consultation or the process being used to distribute the RFP?
- Jennifer B.: The distribution is of greatest concern, from a personal perspective
- Juliet B.: EJ Coordinators will share the RFP as-released in the meeting chat
- Jennifer B.: Looking at the content of the RFP, it looks like some of the content can be extrapolated as indices and criteria, and so the Advisory Council should have had more of a role in this content.
- Juliet B.: The RFP covers the statutory purpose taken directly from the Law. The “other purposes” section are taken directly from feedback from public meetings (potentially the May public meeting). The RFP was intended to fully inform the contractor of what the “world of possibilities” is and captures the challenges that the contractor may face. Data challenges associated with the EJFP definition came from the analysis of John Adams, Director of the Center for Geographic Information. The Advisory Council still needs to review this definition to address data challenges and ensure applicability. Although the mapping tool has one of the last statutory deadlines in the law, it is also the deliverable with the most extensive runway.
- Kim B.: Some of the data challenges with the EJFP definition also came from the public meeting during which we discussed privacy and protection of members of the public.

****Deliberation in the chat around final language of statement of the Advisory Council****

- Vote to approve the motion set forth by Jennifer (Draft statement to be circulated by email and available on Environmental Justice Online Resource Library)
 - All present vote to approve (total of 7 members)
- Approve **March 28, 2025 Agenda**
 - Agenda approved. No comments.
- Walter B.: Next steps: Jennifer send out statement to AC for further review. AC members to respond and revise within 48 hours. AC distribute to other folks (perhaps IAC) for further review/awareness. Would be good to have a meeting with ANR leadership.

2:00 PM

Close