VT EJ AC Public Meeting-20261014_100921-Meeting Recording

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Birch, Juliet started transcription

ANR - Catamount NL D215 0:11

OK folks, you should get the little thing to say that you have to consent to being recorded.
I'm gonna start sharing my screen.
Good morning.
It's about 10.
10 roughly welcome to a public meeting of Vermont's Environmental Justice Advisory Council.
We're going to start off today's meeting with just a quick round of introductions because we're joined today by a new face.
Oh, and Victor's jumping on right now, so I'll I'll restart.
Hey, good morning, Victor.

Vincent Pricer 0:54

Hello.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 0:56

I was just just getting us started.
So you're you're right on time.
I was just saying that we should start off with just a quick round of introductions because we are joined today by a new friend, Annie Decker, from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.
So if folks want to just kind of go around rapid fire and share their name and.
Where like what seat they hold on the Advisory Council and what organization.
Maybe they work for if that's relevant, that'd be super welcome.
So. I'm Juliette Burch.
I'm an environmental justice coordinator at the Agency of Natural Resources, and I'll pass it to rich.

rich holschuh 1:42

At least once we good morning, Mzee.
We, Sal and I want to ask you, I am called rich holshu.
I'm from what is now called Brattleboro and I am appointed representative on behalf of the Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs.
It's good to see you all.
I'll pass it to Trey.

Trey Martin 2:06

Good morning friends.
I'm Trey Martin from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and the the VHCB as our acronym is is used is a seat holder or a a named seat holder on the Advisory Council. I've been filling that role for the last few years, but Annie's going to join.
Today I'll pass this to her in a second to introduce herself as we.
Think about how we're.
How we continue to support the work.
So Annie, go ahead.

Annie Decker 2:41

Thank you, Trey. Hi everyone.
I'm Annie Decker.
I I work at the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.
As as Trey said, you know we have an appointed seat at VHCB on this Council, and we're just looking to as an organization maybe bring some more capacity.
So I've been invited to to join Trey today and just learn a little bit more about what the Council has been doing and and meet you all.
So I'm really excited to be here.
My role at VHCB is I'm the associate director of resource Development and resilience, which means a lot of things.
But I'm I work under our policy director and I do, I'd say, kind of split between external kind of policy work with partners and then some internal operations kind of work.
So I get to work with both our housing and our conservation programs.

As well as our fireman forest viability and AmeriCorps and lead.
So I'm I have the opportunity to work with all of our different teams here and have been very involved in the Act 59 Vermont Conservation Plan project.
So just really excited to learn more about the work that you all are doing.
Get up to speed and happy to answer any questions folks have about.
Myself or my role or my experience, but just happy to be here today.
And I will hand it over to to Jennifer.

BJ **Byrne, Jennifer** 4:22
Hi, everyone. Jennifer Byrne. I'm the district manager of the White River Natural Resource Conservation District, where one of fourteen of the decentralized watershed governments in Vermont and we.
I'm here serving.
The seat for the NRCC, the natural Resource Conservation Council, which is our overarching state agency.
And I'm happy to be here.
Thank you.
Dial past events.

VP **Vincent Pricer** 4:53
Oh, sorry, my name is incorrect.
My name is.
I don't know how to change that. My name is Victor Dobbillon.
I am the clean water director and Vermont organizer of Raina. Harvey called Slingshot occupying the environmental justice nonprofit Space SEC seat.
I primarily work throughout the state of Vermont to help bring workshops and leadership skills to community members who are dealing with polluter threats.
And I will pass it to.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 5:27
And no, go ahead, Victor. Sorry.

VP **Vincent Pricer** 5:33
Jeffrey.

Mbarushimana, Jeffrey 5:37
Yes. Am I the last one?

ANR - Catamount NL D215 5:41
I think we'll we'll close out with Carla after you, but yeah.

Mbarushimana, Jeffrey 5:44
OK.
Yeah. My name is Jeffrey.
But you can call me Jeff.
I.
Work for the Office of Virtual Equity.
Within the AOA.
My role is the policy and research analyst.
And our office holds a seat and I'm here to represent our office.
Thank you.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 6:12
Thanks, Jeffrey and Carla, do you want to close us out?
Thank you so much everyone for being here.
My name is Carla Raimondi, and I work with Juliet in the civil rights on environmental justice unit.
And I hold the title of civil rights and environmental justice director at the Agency of Natural Resources in I am a member of the Interagency Committee.
Thanks guys for doing these introductions this morning, Annie.
It's really nice to have you here and hopefully we'll see your face more often over the next couple months.
We're also going to be joined today by Mariana Sears, who's an Advisory Council member. I'll allow her to introduce herself, but I'm going to be sharing my screen shortly, so if you guys see Mariana jump on and I don't see her, please someone let me know and I.
I'll let I'll give Maria.
On a chance to introduce herself.
All right, so.

Just doing some housekeeping here.
As always, we're going to start off our meeting with a quick reminder of our Community agreements.
So if folks want to take a minute or two to just read these to themselves, and then when you've, you know, gotten your fill and you are ready to agree to the community agreements, please put.
A thumbs up or or raise your hand or something just so I can.
I can see.
Great. I'm seeing a couple thumbs from folks.
Nice.
Awesome.
All right.
I think that that's I think that that's everyone.
So if there are no issues with the Community agreements today, I will keep us chugging along.
So our agenda today.
Is.
It is going to be really interesting.
It's mostly focused on us doing some collaborative work on the environmental justice complaint definition, which I hope you guys are all feeling.
Excited about but I'm getting ahead of myself.
So first we'll start ourselves off with a substantive conversation about the current membership of the Advisory Council.
There's been some updates in terms of seats.
And you know, as you guys may or may not know, this year is also one where we have the we have a 2/3 turnover for some of our seats.
So we'll talk about which seats are supposed to turn over this year.
And talk about what that could look like.
So that'll be our first.
Brief section of the agenda to just give everyone an understanding of where we are membership wise.
Then we'll take public comment and a break and then we'll jump into a conversation about the environmental justice complaint definition.
Shout out to Mariana, Victor and Trey, who did some work between our last public meeting and today to revise.

The definition that was originally drafted by Rich former Advisory Council member Matt Lawless and Mariana Sears.
So.
Yeah, we'll we'll take a look at that and then we'll give do some updates and close this out.
Are there any questions about today's agenda?
Or we we feeling good?
Great.
Yeah, Jeffrey.
Oh, I don't know if that was an intentional hand or not.



Mbarushimana, Jeffrey 10:27
I was gonna do a thumbs up and I accidentally pressed the the race end. Sorry.

A

ANR - Catamount NL D215 10:34
No worries. I do the same thing all the time.
I always think that.
'Cause the hand button looks like it's an emoji.
I always.
I always hit that button when I'm trying to find the other emojis.
Anyway, so some quick goals for today is to first really understand the current and anticipated vacancies on the Council and the process for identifying, you know, successors and really filling those seats. We would love to talk. I know this has been an area of interest for you guys.
It's like, how do we ensure that we have a fully seated Council?
We can certainly talk about what the options are for providing recommendations to the appointing authority to fill our vacancies.
And then as I said before, one of our goals for today is to explore the newly revised draft environmental justice complaint definition and hear some of the rationale for those revisions.
And perhaps if you know were there and and we're ready, we can come to consensus on a definition to present to the Interagency committee.
But you know, there's no pressure on that so.
Trey.

Trey Martin 11:48

If I could, I don't think this necessarily speaks for Victor and Marianna, but I feel like as we head into that, I I would rather offer the work that we did as a as suggestions questions.

You know some proposed ways to address some of the discussion we had last time when we talked about this, but also recognize all the work that went into this originally.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 12:10

Yeah.

Trey Martin 12:13

So it's not I I didn't didn't feel like we were sort of like.

Just making revisions and they were gonna like. They were like gonna take hold, but rather we had some really rich discussion and and wanted to bring that back along with some suggested language.

But I'll say that again.

Or or Victor, Mariana can can just say their version of that when we get to it.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 12:38

Yeah. Thanks for that, Tre, for the clarification.

That way of wording, it makes a lot of sense. You know, it's it's not as much a revision as much as it is kind of suggestions or recommendations based off of previous discussions.

So that makes a lot of sense and we can continue that conversation.

Later, because obviously none of the contents of the definition are set in stone just yet.

All right, so.

To kind of bring us into the first section of our agenda, I I understand that this, you know, for some folks you you may feel like, oh, I know who's on the Council.

I you know, I'm happy to hear the updates, but you know this might be this might just feel like housekeeping.

But I hope that you guys.

You know, are interested in talking about ways that we can fill some of our vacancies

as well, because I think there is a role for you guys here, so.
So I'll try and keep you know, the sharing out of information really brief, but I'd love to open it up for any conversation you guys want to have about ways that we can help support bringing new folks into the Council.
So our current membership is as follows.
We have most of our advisory are currently seated Advisory Council members here today.
And as you can see at the bottom of this list, we actually have 4:00.
Vacancies. So in the last since our since our last public meeting, we've had two more resignations from where we were previously standing. And so we are looking to fill those gaps.
And you know, I can show you guys in the next slide who the appointing authorities are.
What the term expiration looks like for these vacancies?
And when you talk a little bit about what it could look like to provide recommendations?
To the appointing authority to fill those seats.
But are there any thoughts, reflections or questions about the current membership?
OK.
So, Oh yeah, Rich, I'll go back. Sorry about that.

RH **rich holschuh** 15:04
Yeah, can.
Can you remind me what the EJFP environmental justice focus population, if I recall correctly, what is that intended to represent?

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 15:17
Yes. So as you may recall in the EJ law, the environmental justice focused population definition.
Encompasses people who speak languages other than English, people of color or indigenous peoples, and low income Vermonters.
And so anyone who represents one or more of those populations can represent this can can fill this seat.

RH **rich holschuh** 15:38
OK.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 15:46
That's a great question.

RH **rich holschuh** 15:47
Yeah. Thank you.
I just did not recall, yeah.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 15:52
It's a lot to remember, so I I get it.
Are there any other thoughts or questions about these current?
Vacancies.
I think I see. Maybe Brittany jumped on.
How are you doing, Brittany?
If you're open to it, we have a new face from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.
Who is going to who's joining us today?
And if you're open to just sharing a little introduction of yourself, Brittany, I think that Annie would benefit from knowing everybody who's in the room.
We'll come back to Brittany if there's an opportunity later in the meeting.
So moving on, now that we know sort of where we are in terms of vacancies, I wanted to break this down by appointing authority because as you guys may know, there's like different segments of the Council that are appointed by different groups.
It's a little confusing, but who?
You're appointed by.
Also has an impact on when your term expires.
So.
We have three seats that are appointed by the Committee on committees as part of the legislature.
And these seats expire every two years. 1/3 of the seats expire every two years in December.
So this year we have a term expiration coming up for Brittany's seat. The social

justice organization.
In December of 2026.
And then as you can see, we have the two vacancies, mobile, Home Park and municipal government. This gives you an idea of when if someone were to be appointed to this role when their terms would their initial term at least would expire.
And then next we have those of us who were appointed by the Speaker of the House.
We have four seats in that category.
Food security and environmental organizations.
So Mariana and Victor, you guys have an upcoming expiration in February of 2027, while the immigrant communities and EJF seats both expire in the February's of the following two cycles.
So I know Victor, you've already expressed some interest in seeking to renew your role and be reappointed. We haven't yet had that conversation with Marianna. She's interested.
But.
But you know, I I have heard from you, Victor.
So this gives you an idea of when from the immigrant community seat and the ejfP seat when the term expirations would.
Come.
Jeffrey, do you want to speak to your question a little bit?
I see you said for the immigrant communities, what is the current barrier?



Mbarushimana, Jeffrey 19:12
Yes.
In terms of vacant, are we not able to reach to someone from the immigrant communities or I'm just trying to understand what the barrier is?
So maybe I could reach out to them and see if we can recruit someone.
I'm in in touch with a lot of immigrant communities, and so I just want to understand what the barriers are currently.

A

ANR - Catamount NL D215 19:42
Yeah, that's a great question, Jeffrey.
So for everyone's reference, each of the vacancies that we currently have, except for the EJFP vacancy have been relatively recent.
And so we haven't yet had a lot of time to receive recommendations that we can

then provide to the appointing authorities to fill these seats.
Jeffrey, if you have people who you think would be a good fit for this role, we can talk about like, what if you would want to, you know, share that recommendation with the speaker of the House directly or maybe we could, you know, have a conversation with that.
Individual first before the recommendation goes.
I know that in the past, one of the barriers that we've experienced is that.
The appointing authority doesn't always share with prospective Advisory Council members.
Of course, the.
The expectations of the role, like in terms of how long the public meetings are, how frequently they are or what kind of work is completed outside of public meetings.
So just having giving people an understanding of sort of what they're getting into before they accept a role is something that I I'm just interested in.
I think everyone is entitled to having, you know, full information before they can send to participate, so.
I don't know if that answers your question, Jeffrey.



Mbarushimana, Jeffrey 21:09
Yes it does.
I will work on creating a list of people and then once I have a list I will provide them to you guys and then you guys can have that conversation with them and see.

A

ANR - Catamount NL D215 21:22
Yeah, it would be great.
Thank you, Jeffrey.



Mbarushimana, Jeffrey 21:25
Go ahead.

A

ANR - Catamount NL D215 21:25
It would be. It would be great.
If there if the if the names that you add to that list. I'm assuming that you have contacts and like contact with these individuals or.

Mbarushimana, Jeffrey 21:34
Mm-hmm.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 21:42
A relationship with them, perhaps if you could preliminarily touch base with them and assess, ask them whether they have the capacity.

Mbarushimana, Jeffrey 21:43
Yes.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 21:53
And the desire to serve that would be like a great first.
Assessment for whether they could.
Serve the way that we're expecting them to serve.

Mbarushimana, Jeffrey 22:10
Right. Yeah, that's that's the goal.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 22:13
Yeah. And then once you have that list and they have mentioned that yesterday they have an interest and they have the availability.
Then we can. I can follow up with them and I can have conversations with them and explain in a lot of detail what the role would entail. And this applies to the other vacancies, if any of you.
Know of someone who may be interested in contributing to the?
The implementation of the EJ law. Please let us know and then we are more than happy to then share the the the names with the appointing authorities.
I'm going to take a quick pause because I see we were just joined also by Mariana Sears.
Here, I'll take your hand, Brittany 1st and then maybe we can give Mariana an opportunity to introduce.
Herself. But yeah, Brittany, you go first.

Watson, Britaney 23:21

Hey sorry, I just and I I recognize.
I likely miss this.
Can you remind me again what ejfP stands for?

ANR - Catamount NL D215 23:29
Yes, environmental justice focused population.
Which is under the EJ law.
There's, you know, a bunch of thresholds and stuff that we can ignore, but essentially it's anyone who represents people who speak languages other than English, people of color and indigenous populations and or low income Vermonters.
So if you represent one or more of those.
Communities you've got.
For this seat, does that answer your question, Brittany?

Watson, Britaney 24:03
Yes, thank you.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 24:05
Yeah. Thank you. Good morning, Mariana.
How are you?

Mariana Sears 24:11
Good morning, everybody.
I am so sorry to be late. I had to attend something that came up with work this morning. So, but I'm here and I'm staying until the end.
And do you want me to introduce myself? Yes, absolutely.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 24:22
No worries.
I'm so glad to see you.
Yes, that would be awesome.

Mariana Sears 24:28
Sure. Hi everyone.
I hope we've seen each other before.

I see some familiar faces.
This is Mariana.
I work for hunger free Vermont and I serve as the food security.
Person.
Expertise. No advisor.
I don't know.
What's the word?
But the food security person in the environmental Justice Advisory Committee, and I'm not sure what else you want to know about me, but I'm just happy to be here and very happy to contribute to this meaningful work.
It means a lot to me.
Thank you.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 25:03
We're happy to have you here, Mariana.
We're joined today by Annie Decker, who's a new face from the Vermont Housing Conservation Board.
I don't know, Annie, if you want to give yourself another quick introduction for Marianna State.

AD **Annie Decker** 25:17
I'd be happy to.
Hello. Nice to meet you.
I'm Annie Decker.
I work at VHCB and we're just trying to bring a little bit more staff capacity to this group and so I'm I'm here right now listening, observing, meeting everyone and working with Trey to figure out the best way that he and I can support each other in this.
Role moving forward.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 25:45
Thanks Annie.
So Mariano, we were just sharing a little bit about the current membership of the Advisory Council, which I'll just go back a previous slide to show you where we currently stand in terms of all of the seats. And as you can see, we right now have

four VAC.
And so we were just chatting about, you know, different ways that folks, if they do have recommendations for possible.
You know, successors to these seats.
How? How we can get those recommendations passed on to the appointing authorities?
Geoffrey, thank you for, you know, offering to come up with a list of folks who could potentially fill the immigrant community seat.
I'm gonna give the disclaimer, which is I don't know if it's necessary, but I am just gonna say that we can provide recommendations to the appointing authority on who could fill the seat.
They don't always have to take those recommendations.
And so I appreciate, Jeffrey, you offering to provide a list.
I also just want to provide the disclaimer in case the appointing authority, you know doesn't, you know, chooses someone outside of that list, for example, or outside of our recommendations, it does happen, but you know the the recommendations are important to help push the appointing authority to address.
The vacancy, so thank you.
Yeah. I mean, if there are any other thoughts or questions about the current vacancies, ideas of how to fill these roles?
Folks are welcome to share.
I know that this has been, you know, a topic of conversation over the last couple of public meetings, ensuring that we have a full Advisory Council, folks who are attending public meetings.
So if there are any thoughts, feel free to jump in.
And if folks feel like this conversation has been exhausted, feel free also to say that.
And we can always just move on to the next topic as well.
Yeah, Trey, I see your hand.

TM **Trey Martin** 27:56
Just I know it.
It came up as we were thinking about the role of the HCB plays and our relationship to land access and Opportunity board. But I think it at one point.
I may have talked with you, Juliet, about whether any of these vacant positions could be filled by folks from LAob. Some of those are direct, you know, representation

relationships of the work that they do.
The EJ focus population.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 28:23
Yeah.

Trey Martin 28:26
In particular.
So that's just one a plug I wanted to make if we're thinking about folk people to represent.
And and to recommend.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 28:37
Yeah, it's really helpful. Thanks, Trey.
Mariana put in the chat.
I thought Mariam was our current Rep for immigrant communities.
Has she stepped down?
Yes, Miriam did submit her resignation for this role.
And we have so appreciated all of the work that she's done to help with this work over the last couple of years.
And I think that she was just ready to focus on other work that she's managing right now.
So yes, she did step down.
I think we can move on.
And one last plea to please let us know.
Think through who could.
Fit the expectations that you're all aware of in terms of participation and membership criteria. That would be very helpful for us. The sooner that we have a full.
Council the better off. We're gonna be as we head into busy, busy season of implementation of the EJ law. Thank you.
Yeah. Thanks, Carla.
So.
At this point in the agenda, we would move on to public comment and a break before I set us up for that, though I am going to drop some links in the chat just to set us up for the next you know, topical section of our agenda.

As I mentioned before.
The main topic of today's meeting is going to be the environmental justice complaint definition.
And so as we go into a brief break, if folks want to familiarize themselves with the two documents in the chat, one is the original draft that was drafted in May of this year and the 2nd is a second draft that was just put together a couple of.
Weeks ago.
And of course, as the word draft kind of implies, none of this is set in stone.
This is really just something for you guys to react to, discuss and figure out like, what are ways that we can tweak this definition to make it.
As representative of our needs as possible.
So those are in the chat for your review.
And I'm looking now to see if we have any members of the public on the call for public comment.
And I think the answer is no.
So I'm gonna what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna break us for a 10 minute break because we're a little bit ahead. And if you guys are open to, you know, taking five, eating a snack and running to the bathroom and then using the other 5 minutes to.
Just review those two documents. We can come back in 10. How's that sound?
All right, cool.
See you at 1051. Thanks guys.

TM **Trey Martin** 31:49
Thanks, Juliet.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 40:55
All right, folks, we'll be coming back in just a minute now.

TM **Trey Martin** 41:12
Carla, can you remind me what your work phone number is?
I have a a distinct separate question. I wanted to follow up with you on outside of today's meeting.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 41:24

Yes, I can give you that.
636-7827.

TM **Trey Martin** 41:42
Thank you.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 41:44
You're very welcome.
All right.
Welcome back guys.
For folks who.
Are going to be camera off for this meeting. If you could just give like a little reaction to say that you're back.
I just want to make sure that I'm not getting started until folks are back at their computer.
Mariana, I like this colorful decoration you have in the corner of your office.
What is it?
Is it like a spiral?
It's just.

MS **Mariana Sears** 42:25
I was.
I was going to say I don't know what it is or who put it there.
It is kind of like.
360° fan paper fan you know like.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 42:36
Yeah.

MS **Mariana Sears** 42:36
But open to the fullest with lots of colors I don't know.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 42:38
Yeah.

Mariana Sears 42:40
Some sort of some celebration, probably that we have in the office.
It's the ruins of a celebration, the remains of a celebration.
It's colorful.
That's true.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 42:52
Yeah, I like it.

Mariana Sears 42:54
Thanks.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 42:55
All right, let's let's transition into our next topic of conversation.
I'm gonna share my screen.
And give a little bit of context.
So I know we've talked about this quite a bit over the last couple of public meetings.
So I'm not gonna go into too much detail about the context, but if there are any questions, if I've skipped some key details.
Please let me know, but we are currently working on creating an environmental justice, a definition of what is an environmental justice complaint and the reason is because every year the covered agencies have to create reports that report on civil rights and environmental justice complaints that they've received in.
The past year.
And of course, we have a federal definition of what constitutes as a civil rights complaint.
But we don't have the same thing for EJ and so it gives us a really great opportunity to define that for ourselves.
And for your reference, Annie, this is really important because the Advisory Council recommended that the covered agencies create a like one stop shop for all EJ complaints to be directed to.
And then we will somehow triage all the complaints and get them directed to the right agencies so they can be resolved.
Appropriately. And so this EJ complaint definition is really the like foundation.

It's kind of step one of all of this work so.
Back in May of this year, Rich Mariana and our former Advisory Council member Matt Lawless sat down during an office hours and put together this original definition of an EJ complaint, which I will stop talking long enough for you guys to read it to yourself.
But I'll just share that you know over the last couple of months, we've talked about this definition in public meetings and you know there have been some comments about ways that this definition can be tweaked to be made a little bit more clear or a little bit more.
Airtight or covered agencies to use as part of creating an EJ complaint mechanism.
So what?
We'll talk about today.
Is some, you know, suggested revisions as Trey had said before.
But I'll leave you guys.
I'll leave this on the screen for just a moment to give you an opportunity to read through this first draft definition from May.
And I I'm a slow reader, so I could leave this up here for 10 minutes and still feel like I wouldn't have gotten through it.
But if you guys wanna, if you guys wanna give me a thumbs up when you feel like you've gotten the gist, let me know.
Please do so that I'll keep us moving.
Effect.
Cool.
Myana I like the heart eyes emoji.
Thank you for sharing that, alright.
So folks are good for us to move on to the next draft.
I'll just share that you know I'll leave Mariana.
I can't wait to call you, Vince, Victor, because I'm reading it on the screen. Victor and Trey.
I'll leave you guys to share some of the rationale, but I'll just say that I think the biggest piece of feedback that was received about this first draft definition was just that.
The second paragraph is very structured and provides a lot of like good stuff for covered agencies to use as part of the EJ complaint mechanism. While the first paragraph maybe has a little bit more.

I want to say like flexibility in or is a little bit more open to interpretation in a way that covered agencies were hoping could be tightened up just a little bit.
So I think that was part of the context that brought us to the conversation around this, that that produced the 2nd.
Draft, so I'll leave this on the screen for you guys to read. I also because I it's long, I recognize it's pretty small, which is why I shared the document as well.
But then you know I want to open it up for any discussion. And if Trey, Mariana and Victor want to provide some information about, like the rationale behind these revisions.
And like, think questions that still remain, that'd be awesome.

VP **Vincent Pricer** 48:05
Did you want us to provide that after people had a beat to read?

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 48:08
Yes, let's give it just a moment and then open it up. Thanks, victor.
All right.
So you guys have the next like 40 minutes to basically use this meeting as a working meeting?
You can talk about where these revisions came from. If there's more questions to be answered, more tweaking to be done to get us closer to a final definition.
This is really just time for you guys to work collaboratively together, and if there's anything that I can do to help facilitate that, let me know.
It could be.
I have the definition up on a Word document.
That I share the screen and I just make changes as you suggest.
Just let me know, but I'm going to stop talking and I want to open it up for any discussion you guys may have, Jennifer.

BJ **Byrne, Jennifer** 49:29
Yeah, I mean, I guess I'm just curious about like the use of time like this like this is something that we've elected to do, but I I don't.
I'm like, I'm wondering, there's so much else going on in the law and, you know, we like it.
Yeah. Is there really much more to and and like, do does everyone understand?

I know we've said it a bunch of times, but to be clear like this, this is.
A voluntary activity this.
Definition isn't binding and.
And then just one comment is I think I made this last time was reference the law reference, the definition of environmental justice from the law at least to connect it back in to make it something that's a little more permanent.
Yeah. So yeah, I'm like, I guess I'm curious about, like, why we're spending this entire meeting on this. Sorry.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 50:26
I hear you, Jennifer.
My understanding is that this is what we agreed we would do with our next public meeting during our last.
So if you guys would rather use your time our time differently, I'm open to suggestions.
We can totally switch gears, but I'm just here creating the space for you guys to continue the conversation that was had during the joint meeting.
Marianna.

MS **Mariana Sears** 50:53
I think we're very close to coming up with something.
Perhaps we don't need a whole hour.
Maybe we could just define a few things and discuss a few things that we're kind of pending and with the trust that in the definition we are saying that this remains open and flexible. There's nothing really.
Too nothing.
That scares me too much, that it goes or it doesn't go into the definition because we are creating the mechanism to reward it later if needed.
So I would say.
Let's spend a little bit of time.
Especially for whoever feels like there's something missing or there's something that can totally go and we we don't worry too much about a paragraph or a wording.
And then I would call it a day and I would totally use this time to move other things forward or to have conversations that we feel that are more relevant in terms of what's coming up in the law or other things that we may want to discuss.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 51:42
Mm-hmm.

Mariana Sears 51:54
That will be my say.
I don't know 15 minutes with this unless unless the the rest of the advisory councils feels like this is too much of A draft and needs a lot of attention.
But I feel.
I feel OK with this definition.

Trey Martin 52:10
That might be a yeah. Good question to ask Mariana, is it after people have had a chance to look at this?
Does this look?
Do folks agree?
I might say and and Victor or Mariota, feel free to add to this, but we, as we were thinking about the first definition and working on this one, we were thinking about how to create a really fair and supported or transparent and supported process for anybody who's making.
A complaint so that people don't go into a system and kind of disappear or get moved around.
That you know that they know what they're doing, that there be some guidance in in this definition.
To what we're talking about.
So that's why sort of adding the.
Any person who's experienced, intentional or unintentional.
And then there's the three obstruction or disproportionate exposure, or lack of participation.
So being really clear about those 3.
Parts of the of the law and the right.
Then what you see added to this.
Is, you know, sort of where possible, directing having agency staff be able to support people and direct them.
Not send them off on their own, but direct them and help them to bring a complaint

into an existing process that already has a legal mechanism for redress and and remedy.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 53:26
Encouraged.
Mm-hmm.

Trey Martin 53:32
So if open meeting law or section 1983 or the Administrative Procedures Act already provides a pathway for remedy.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 53:33
Mm.

Trey Martin 53:41
Not to abandon people at the gates of that process, but to help them through those gates, and then finally.
Recognizing that there needs to also be a really clear path for agency staff who are receiving these complaints to redress them so that they're not participating in a system that doesn't have.
A mechanism that they're not being put in the position where they can't help people who are asking for help.
So that's that's a little bit maybe outside of this definition, but it's in the there's a whole process that's outlined in the the documents that we've received and we're only in kind of Step 2 like let's get the definition done and then we kind of move through the.
Rest of it. But that's why I think this is important to get this definition kind of behind us. Recognizing like it says at the bottom, this is some something that that Victor really helped to articulate is that this is this we're going to continue to iterate this. This has got to be flexible.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 54:35
See.

Trey Martin 54:36

And responsive to changing needs and conditions on the ground.
But anyways, having said so, that's the sort of some background Marianna and Victor please add to that.
But then, you know, maybe we don't need that.
To Jennifer's point, maybe this is good enough to to proceed to step three in the framework.

VP **Vincent Pricer** 54:57
I think you did a good job covering it.
I'm not sure if I have much more to add.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 55:05
Carla, I saw your hand. Yes.
I appreciate all of the work that's been.
Given to.
Both proposals.
I think you know the what this exercise is about it about is identifying, you know, those elements that are important for all of you.
So that agencies have guidance regarding.
What?
To review.
And then the how it will be reviewed is something that.
Has yet to be determined, right?
And it's that process that the agencies are gonna embark on alongside some Advisory Council members in the development of the central intake system.
So in terms of looking at the proposed definition.
Or elements of that complaint.
I think it's important to allow for space.
Within the definition, so that agencies can actually work with both complaints and concerns.
And there's an important distinction there.
That should be captured and in attention to that. Trey, I am wondering.
Whether whether we should.
Could spell out the the sources of law that could be utilized to carry further that environmental justice issue, and the reason I am I am asking this question is because

sometimes redress could look different than what is allowed or.
Could be obtained under any of those.
Loss. Carla, do you think you could be more specific, like provide some examples of what you're well, I would like to know whether Trey has some reflections about this really quickly.

Trey Martin 57:19
Just about the the idea, the concept of redress.
Not necessarily.
I think what you're saying is that redress means to put something that's wrong, right?

ANR - Catamount NL D215 57:28
Yeah.

Trey Martin 57:29
And sending somebody to open meeting law might not right a wrong, but it would maybe help them to participate in a system. And I think that's I was just looking at that sentence too and wondering whether.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 57:32
Yes.
Mm-hmm.

Trey Martin 57:45
There needs to be more meat on the bones there.
Of what we mean by supporting somebody?
To to address a complaint within an existing system that provides.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 57:53
Yep, Yep.
Yeah.

Trey Martin 57:59
That, and maybe the word is remedy or outcome or something like that.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 58:02
Yeah.

Trey Martin 58:04
But but again in terms of not over promising like you know we we may not, this may not allow the complete redress of a complaint somebody has, but it might allow them to register that complaint in a meaningful way.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 58:05
Well.
Mm-hmm.

Trey Martin 58:20
With people who are then able to to hear that if it if for example, it's a complaint about inclusion in processes that may be easily remediable or it may not be remediable because it may be something that already happened and so it may be hard to do that.
So anyways, that you ask for some reflections and I I reflected and then I started to meander Carla.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 58:42
Mm-hmm.

Trey Martin 58:44
So I'm gonna check right there and and just say that I think I'm glad you focused in on this section.
Or on that that particular sentence.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 58:52
Yeah, yeah, because I am wandering.

Trey Martin 58:53
And for me, the word direct is problematic.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 58:57

Yeah, I am wandering folks.
Whether that could be perhaps extracted and utilized for a procedure of sorts and not only.
Calling out those those sources.
Because in theory, what would happen is there's an EJ consideration.
And then if it falls under civil rights, then it would stop being.
Managed under like an EJ portfolio of sorts, right?
It would.
It would move to civil rights.
So I am wondering what same thing with open meeting law and APA?
So it would it's identifying paths for resolution.
That that go beyond what agencies would consider within the EJ space.
And that, I believe could be particularly powerful and helpful.
In that process, that would then support this definition.
So what I'm hearing, if I can just try and translate what you're saying, translate ahead like into my own words.
Words, I guess, is that third paragraph that starts with covered agencies will direct blah blah blah blah blah. Removing it from this definition and instead utilizing it as part of what covered agencies do to respond to the complaints.
So if a complaint pertains to a civil rights issue, if it pertains to open meeting law that directs that provides some direction in terms of how the complaint will be remedied.
Yeah. And it would be.
An examination that will be required.
As part of the triaging exercise that will take place automatically.
When the central intake system gets developed, OK, right. Like you know, then the member of the public will have EJ complaint concerns, civil rights complaints, concerns they don't need to distinguish between them.
They identify, they identify what the concern is, then as part of the evaluation.
The agencies that are named in that particular document will examine, evaluate the contents of that narration and determine this is civil rights. It will be handled through that process or this is environmental justice and it will be handled through the process that that agency in particular has St.

Up for managing those concerns.
So what do you think about? Oh, go ahead, Trey. You go first. Yes. Sorry.

Trey Martin 1:01:49
Yeah, so it's.
I'm I wanna make sure I just reflect back.
Carla, that you you see if you agree with this, that while this concept is good and is powerful because it can lead to to additional paths towards remedies for people who are making a complaint.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:02:09
Mm-hmm.

Trey Martin 1:02:10
But that but that it would make sense to move this into the next section of our work or the next part of the framework where we say, what does an agency do when they receive a complaint?
And I think that's that makes sense to me because I think we maybe we're trying to make sure that this concept was included in the discussion today.
But but I'm hearing you say you don't think it's needed here in this definition and I would be supportive of of maybe moving that out and then we have more time to also think about the wording of this and sort of like it's maybe it's wherever it's Poss.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:02:43
Thank.

Trey Martin 1:02:45
To do this, we're gonna shuffle it off to open meeting law.
But wherever it's appropriate.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:02:49
Yeah.

Trey Martin 1:02:50
We would.

We would put it.
Put people in touch with the right remedy.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:02:53
Yes.
Exactly, exactly, and I think.

Trey Martin 1:02:57
Otherwise, the agency leadership will provide the resources to resolve this as an EJ complaint. OK, good.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:03:02
Correct, correct. And that is and that is a process that each of the agencies will need to develop and stand up so that when a complaint is filed that meets the criteria, then the agency is in a position to resolve the matter.
I think you know what's really powerful in this.
Proposal is the spelling out or the calling out of obstruction to fair access.
That that is, you know, like a fundamental component of what what elements should be present in a narration of concerns, the disproportionate exposure to environmental burdens, and then the participation aspect.
And I do also appreciate the intentional or unintentional aspect of the of the of the definition like those elements are are.
Are really, really rich, rich to use your name.
Yeah, so so that.
Yes, that's my thought.
Trey I.
And and and it will need further elaboration, right?
Like, how is that process going to take place to ensure that it actually takes place?
Yeah.

Trey Martin 1:04:30
Yeah, that is. It's resourced appropriately.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:04:32

So.
Correct.

Trey Martin 1:04:34
So it isn't just pushing things into other places, but it's helping to support people if it's appropriate. If somebody has an issue with indoor air quality because.
A lease that they're under is not being enforced.
There may be a different way to help them address that environmental justice issue than if they have a complaint about a permit that's about to be issued for a new facility that they're worried about pollution.
In the groundwater from.
And but we don't what we don't wanna do is just use this to say, you know what? This isn't an EJ thing.
You should go over here, you know. Go, go, go see the complaint department at at wastewater.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:05:13
Mm-hmm.

Trey Martin 1:05:13
But help them understand the complexity of the ANR or the AOT or whoever it is and and how how to be effective in pursuing remedies.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:05:26
Exactly. So I just want to be mindful of, you know, giving other folks who we haven't heard from yet a chance to share some of their thoughts.

Trey Martin 1:05:27
Yes.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:05:35
So I think there's a question up for like, you know or a proposal, I guess that's just up for.
Reflection, which is Carla's suggesting that you you remove this third paragraph that starts with covered agencies will and store it away for when it comes time to write a

procedure.
For agencies.
To develop.
The EJ complaint intake mechanism.
I'm assuming this message is from Trey.
I can't see the name Mariana.
Oh, it's from Mariana, OK.
So what do you guys think of that proposal, Mariana?
'S message here I think reflects it.
And then are there any other thoughts? I'd love to hear from folks who haven't gotten a chance to talk yet.
And then being mindful of what Jennifer shared, if we want to use some time or other topics as well.
Feel free to just jump in.

RH **rich holschuh** 1:06:58
OK.
Thank you.
Umm, I don't have a lot to add here right now.
I think it looks.
I think it looks pretty good as it is and it's it's, it's flexible and it will continue to the the option for continuing to.
Edit and improve this is there so.
I I like the first paragraph a lot.
I see that kind of aspirational mission statement.
Then the second paragraph is.
Kind of getting more into strategy and recognizing limitations of the system, but sketching out what there is and that's where the work needs to be done. But that's where we're at right now.
And then you know whether the third paragraph stays in or not.
That's kind of like the tactics.
How do you go about doing this and and perhaps that can be handled later on?
I'm glad to see that there's a hyperlink in here.
To the principles of environmental justice.

I'm seeing that as a hyperlink. Of course, it's not interactive in the screen.
But that's a good inclusion.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:08:05
Hopefully if you open it up in the document, let me know if the hyperlink is there and works.
But yeah, it might not be there.

rich holschuh 1:08:15
I did.
I did open up your your.
Document that you shared in the chat and it's not there as a hyperlink.
It's just text.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:08:25
Oh.
Well, that would.
That's a me problem that I missed.
I missed a detail there, sorry about that.

rich holschuh 1:08:34
But that, that that overview of the principles in one of our original.
Introductory documents a couple of years ago that was a good.
A good Yep.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:08:45
Mm-hmm.
Mm-hmm.
Thanks Reg.
Are there any thoughts from other folks who haven't?
Yet spoken.
If folks are feeling good and confident about the edited definition that's in the chat, please share. If you have some remaining concerns, please share.
The next step would be to bring it to the IAC.
Jennifer.

Byrne, Jennifer 1:09:19

Hi. Just one question in terms of like how agencies will receive this that like will they? Know, understand. Or will they actually have the flexibility? Like if an agency wants to interpret the law differently than what?
The Joint Committee puts out are they allowed to like? They don't really have to follow the the guidance that the committee's putting out, right?

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:09:48

Can you speak more to that?
I'm sorry I didn't.
I didn't totally understand your question.

Byrne, Jennifer 1:09:52

I guess I'm just saying like, this isn't like truly legally binding.
I mean it, it says, you know, it's flexible, but I think is it.
Should it be more clear to the agencies like this isn't like a new rule.
You know what I mean?
And they could decide to do it differently.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:10:07

Hmm.

Byrne, Jennifer 1:10:10

I I think.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:10:12

I think that the intention behind this area of work, if I understand and maybe Carla or other folks who worked on the this, wanna speak to it.
The intention is for all of the covered agencies to intake, triage and respond to EJ complaints in a uniform way through the central intake system. And so I think that that helps maybe speak to what you're talking about, Jennifer, but I hear your concern about like interpretation of.
The law, Karla, I don't know if you want to speak to that as well.
And then we'll go to banana too.

Yes. Yeah, I think the the agencies are clear that this is not a rule.
In the formal sense, right? This is not going through a rulemaking process, and it's not legally binding in the way that, for example, the Civil Rights Act is.
Now this exercise that we have engaged in for the last several months and that started a few years ago.
Is the centering of the Advisory Council.
Knowledge. Experience.
In order to guide the agencies in the creation of a central intake system.
That.
That and you know, I'm going to be redundant here.
That refers back and centers Advisory Council recommendations.
So what?
The recommendation?
Several years ago was that the covered agencies develop a central mechanism in a uniform way to capture environmental justice complaints and concerns.
And so when the Interagency committee looked at how to do that, there was consensus that we needed guidance from the Advisory Council to better understand what the Council meant by.
Environmental justice.
Concerns or complaints and how to intake them uniformly and so then the question was presented to the Council.
Hey folks, what do you interpret or consider to be an environmental justice complaint and or concern so that we can take your guidance, your advice and develop something that captures.
Your your knowledge, your lived experience.
Your recommendations and so this is the result of that exercise.
This is guidance for the agencies and it's going to be utilized to ensure that the central intake system allows for the capturing of concerns and complaints that alleged, for example, obstruction to fair access of environmental benefits inequitable.
Exposure of burdens and lack of meaningful participation and also there is a recognition of cultural.
Values and moral values that are exposed in the in the first paragraph.
This is that exercise in seeking guidance from the Council, so to ensure that we are facing our work on something tangible, meaningful for the Council, rather than

agencies going on their own and putting together process in isolation.
So does that answer your question, Jennifer, or do you still? What are your thoughts?

Byrne, Jennifer 1:13:53
Yeah. I mean, I think for the most part, I wonder if if that provides any clarity or yeah, if there are any other questions.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:13:56
Hmm.
OK. And then Mariana, I saw that you had had your hand up.
I don't know if you still wanted to share anything, no.

Mariana Sears 1:14:11
No, I'm good. I'm good.
I I yeah, I'm just adding to what Carla said and and hopefully.
Reassuring Jennifer that I guess behind all this is is a is a lot of trust that we're building and.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:14:28
Mm-hmm.

Mariana Sears 1:14:29
And hopefully that means something to someone.
And yeah, the agencies may not be able to to do anything with it, but hopefully they will and and and I guess that's what we're welding that's that interagency and.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:14:41
Thank you.

Mariana Sears 1:14:42
AC.
Month of month of meetings and and talking to each other means something to everyone.
And and when when something and that's why I wanted to add the word a concern

because it's not just an experience, it could be a concern or something that is coming up and this is where we have our great power to prevent something.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:14:58
Yeah.
Hmm.

Mariana Sears 1:15:03
And and I mean the government, not just our Council.
So hopefully this will continue to create a new culture and based on trust and not just in rules or in law.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:15:07
Yeah.

Mariana Sears 1:15:14
I and I may be too naive, I know that.
But just hopefully one day this is not enough.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:15:23
I I think there's such a clear distinction between, like, hopefulness and like, trying to work for the world you want to see versus being naive.
I I want you to know, Mariana, that I I think there's a difference.
So I don't see what you're saying is naive at all.
And and it is shared right?
Like what you just mentioned is shared like that is that is my position.
And you know, as as a as a an individual who's a member of the committee.
I can also share that that's the spirit of the conversations that we've engaged in, right.
Is is trying our best to the best of our abilities, recognizing that there are barriers and there will always be that we want to center and are here to center.
The the knowledge and the experience that has not been necessarily folded into government work, and so this is this is a combination of that.
Process.
So I feel like we're starting to get to a place where we've exhausted the conversation

here about this draft definition.
But I know there's a couple folks we haven't yet gotten a chance to hear from.
And so I wanted to make space if those folks wanted to share our weigh in, please feel free.
If not, that's also OK.
All right.
I think that in order to just, you know, put this conversation to bed and get us to a place where we feel ready to bring this definition to the IAC as sort of like a we are setting our foot in the direction of taking our next step.
If we could just go through each Advisory Council member and if I could just hear like just a simple yes or no, do you feel comfortable bringing this definition as revised in the chat by madiana?
To the Interagency committee, maybe we can go. And this isn't like a vote, per SE, but I just want to hear if we have consensus.
We start maybe with Trey.
What are your thoughts?
Hey, Trey says yes.
Victor, what do you think?

VP **Vincent Pricer** 1:17:48
Yeah.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 1:17:50
Yeah.
Rich.

RH **rich holschuh** 1:17:54
Yes, I agree.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 1:17:56
Thank you, Mariano.
Yeah, I love the double thumbs up.
Jennifer.

Byrne, Jennifer 1:18:07
Yes, thank you.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:18:08
Thank you, Jeffrey.


Mbarushimana, Jeffrey 1:18:13
My yes as well.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:18:15
Awesome. And Brittany, what do you think?
Brittany dropped.
I don't know if I can't see everybody on the call.
So is, is Brittany still on the call guys?


Mbarushimana, Jeffrey 1:18:34
Yes.

Mariana Sears 1:18:34
We don't.
I don't know. It seems like there's avw which maybe hurt, but I don't know if she's actually there.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:18:38
OK.
No worries if Brittany is able to weigh in, we can hear from her a little later on. But we have six out of the seven of us here are ready to bring this to the Interagency committee.
So that's really great.
We're about. We still have like, thank you so much, folks.
Yeah, this this is like this is like a big step in in the right direction to getting us to a place where the central intake system task group has like, you know.
A strong foundation to work off of.
Thank you, Carla, for reminding me to celebrate the big wins instead of just moving

right on.
That's like something that I have a hard time remembering to do.
So yeah, that's this is a big deal. Thanks guys.
I'm gonna stop sharing my screen so I can actually see you.
We still have about 10 minutes before we just move into updates and start closing out the meeting, so if anyone has anything else that they'd like to.
To address with this time, especially with respect to what Jennifer had suggested at the beginning of this discussion, please, please feel free to use this time in whatever way you think is important for the Council.

TM **Trey Martin** 1:20:02
I just asked if this summary is accurate that.
There there is 6 phases of work for the development of this complaint system and we were just providing advice and kind of input into phase one, which is the comparative analysis of each existing EJ intake models which included in that a component of that was developing definitions of.
An EJ complaint.
So this is one piece of that agencies are now gonna do in sort of internal agency evaluation of the research that's been done including our contribution.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 1:20:27
Yes.

TM **Trey Martin** 1:20:36
Then we'll there'll be a synthesis and Advisory Council engagement again.
So this is not the final time that this group gets to look at this, but after our colleagues on the IAC have a chance to talk about this, then we'll have a chance to meet with them again.
Then we'll do the like fiscal planning and design of the system.
So this is like a.
This goes through March of 2029. Just to to highlight that timeline for everybody is that, am I reading off the right thing there, Juliet?

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 1:20:57

Yes.
Yes, you. You've got it, Trey.

Trey Martin 1:21:07
OK.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:21:08
Thank you so much for drawing attention to that work plan and kind of situating us in terms of where we are timeline wise.
I'm gonna do.
I'm gonna briefly say there's kind of a dependency here that I wanna highlight in what Tre said, which is that as you guys know, we've been trying to put together.
A task group to work on creating this EJ complaint intake system.
Jeffrey and Amy from the IAC have very kindly, you know, given us some of their time to support with this.
We don't yet have any Advisory Council members who have committed any so doing any work on this, which is totally cool 'cause we understand that there's, you know, capacity concerns, but.
The invitation is always open, so if anyone has like a real interest and passion about, you know, addressing.
Environmental justice complaints and how we work with the public in that regard, please, the invitation is always open and we would love to have continued AC perspectives throughout that work. So when Trey says the covered agencies will engage in a lot of that is going to be through.
The tax group.
So thanks Trey, for bringing that up and I'm just plugging the task group and and and definitely we're still hats.

Trey Martin 1:22:27
How many people would you ideally want?

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:22:30
Jeffrey wears 2 hats.
Yes, Jeffrey is part of the Office of Racial Equity.
So I'm yes.

So therefore you.
It's also an Advisory Council member.
So you know there's representation and.
Your question Trey, is how many task group members would be necessary.
Is that what you're gonna ask?

Trey Martin 1:22:51
Yeah. How many?

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:22:51
At.

Trey Martin 1:22:52
Ideally, how?
How would you like several of us?
One of us, three of us.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:22:56
One one more Advisory Council member, I think would be ideal.
You know the the goal is to ensure that as we start thinking through.
How how we're going to stand up this process and what it's going to look like that there's input from Advisory Council members and when there are questions about usability and interfacing that we have the benefit of Advisory Council members.
Connections to communities so that we can test some of those features. Yep.
So one more would be would be ideal. Yeah. And if if interest comes up, please feel free to shoot me an e-mail.
I'll be coordinating that task group.
So if at any time you're like, I would love to do this, I I'm into it.
Just let me know.
So I'm seeing Jennifer's comment in the chat.
She said.
Can we get some updates on how the Community engagement plan guidance is being received?
Has any technical assistance been requested yet?
Yeah, we can definitely talk about that.

Jennifer, you actually you beat me to it. I was.
That was, I was gonna provide some updates about this.
And I'm really excited.
So there's two main updates that I'd love to share with you. You all.
As you know, back in August.
List of this year, the subgroup that had been working on the community engagement plan. Guidance finished that guidance and released it to all the covered agencies to help them, you know, to guide them on how to create their community engagement plans.
It has been that guidance has been really well received, a lot of covered agencies have kind of how do I put this.
I don't want to like.
I don't want to speak for the corporate agencies, but there was 11.
One person from a covered agency who was like, wow, you guys kind of did the work for us.
You gave us a lot of content.
Of what our community engagement plan will say, and that's like the best thing you can hope for, right?
Is that you know all of that work was not meaningless.
It truly is going to impact the contents of the Community engagement plan.
So shout out to the folks who worked on that guidance because it really, really is important work.
And it's being used.
Over the last.
Month or so I have met like directly with, I think 7 of the 10 covered agencies and I have a couple of meetings lined up with the last three to just meet one-on-one with the folks who are doing the community engagement plan work to hear what?
Was your reaction to the guidance?
What kind of questions do you still have about the unique circumstances from your agency?
And like what kind of tailored technical assistance would you benefit from?
Are there particular topics?
It's that you have questions about or wish you could talk about with the Advisory Council, so we can set aside time in a public meeting for it.
So that is something that I've been doing and hearing and gathering some data on.

I will say we're kind.
There's like two different camps where there's a lot. There's like half of the covered agencies are feeling raring and ready to go and are and have already, like taken off in terms of doing an assessment and working on their plan.
Or starting an assessment I should say and working on their plan.
There are some agencies, namely like the Public Utility Commission, for example, that are in very unique circumstances in terms of how they engage with the public, the public utility Commission, for everyone's reference is quasi judicial, and so they only really engage with the public in hearings.
And so they still have questions about how does this deliverable even apply to me, you know?
Because there's there's so many legal structures around how they engage with the public.
So there are some folks that are, you know, they're they're going to need some tailored support to to meet their needs.
But I have another update about the community engagement plans.
But I want to pause and just say that was kind of how we're doing in terms of technical assistance for now, there's a lot more to come.
Are there any thoughts on that before I share the other update?
Well, I was also going to add that in addition to having conversations about what kind of support may be preferred or desired.
We have also met with some of the IAC members and their leadership teams.
To start brainstorming about the first step in the guidance.
Or the the first phase in the guidance includes like.
Organizational support and so we've had some of those conversations with fellow covered agencies.
So I think the process has.
Has moved along very swiftly, transitioning from guidance to technical assistance and actual conversations to get things moving forward.
And so, like Juliet mentioned, there are several agencies too, specifically that.
Just given the nature of the services that they provide, that will be working on a kind of like a parallel track, but distinct than the rest of the agencies.
But it's going really well.
We are.
We are making progress.

Yeah, thanks for sharing that other really key piece of the conversation, Carla.
Yeah. Are there any questions about that?
I know this is a deliverable that people are super, super interested in so.
Not even questions, reflections, thoughts.

Vincent Pricer 1:29:03
It it is exciting to see things I think IF8 agencies are excited about, work that is being developed. It means that they can be taken up.
I think that while a lot of what we are doing isn't inherently like some of the things we are doing are not necessarily legally binding, but they are creating a path of least resistance, which I think is important thing to develop so that it is exciting to see.
That being taken up in that work.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:29:31
Yeah.
Love that Victor, the passive lease resistance.
Yeah. And the other update that I'll just share is that.
We've been, as you know, we talked about this in our joint public meeting last month.
You guys and the interagency committee have both separately expressed, like a lot of encouragement around this idea of having a coordinated public comment period or.
I don't want to use that term.
Maybe just like engagement process around the community engagement plans as we get to a place where we're going to be finalizing them next year.
I think it's a great idea. I love the idea of all the covered agencies working together instead of working separately.
It just gives me a big sigh of relief because it it means that there's less to coordinate in many ways.
So I I we've been working with Mariana, who's expressed a lot of interest in this idea. Idea in the past as well as Amy Redmond from VDH to just brainstorm like what does a coordinated engagement process look like that we can get meaningful input from the public and start developing meaningful relationships with the public around these plans?
And so I hope that maybe at our next joint meeting we can talk more about what

that could look like, opportunities to participate and.
I I just think that this is a really cool opportunity for us.
That we should we should jump on.
So I don't know Mariana. If you want to share anything about some of the conversations we've been having, I know it's very, very early in the planning phase.

Mariana Sears 1:31:10
No, no, not much to add, except that I'm very excited to like you said before, we're trying to put in practice the world that we want to create and.
We're thinking all sort of like crazy ideas such as like, I don't know, maybe like even thinking of an annual celebration summit to for all agencies to to meet with members of the public and share food and and and have a spaces in which.
People can just talk to agency people and see what they learn and share concerns and have different ways to interact with the members of the public as opposed to these public comments in which you get 2 minutes to speak in a meeting which you're recorded and you know.
Like changing that culture so we are not sure what's possible, but I'm very hopeful that something new and innovative and which is not so new, it's just like we used to do it in the past as human beings.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:32:00
Mm-hmm.
Right.

Mariana Sears 1:32:09
But yeah, we call it innovation.
So yeah, I'm very excited and that is why.
I don't have capacity to help on that and also helping the process to create the intake system.
So I'm very appreciative for you, Jeffrey, that you step up there and I think we will if we create what we're hoping to create.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:32:28
Mm-hmm.

Mariana Sears 1:32:33
These these two tasks and all the task will be overlapping in in a in a potential space.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:32:36
Yes.

Mariana Sears 1:32:39
People can talk about, oh, how do I actually complain about something or share a concern?
And that could be a point of entry for any agency to take a person and start a complaint process or hold their hands to to that process that were developing too.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:32:44
That is option.
Yeah.

Mariana Sears 1:32:53
So I see everything really connected and and yeah, I'm very excited about what's coming.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:32:53
Yeah.
Yeah, I love that.
And there's something so funny about thinking of thinking of community engagement like good forms of community engagement as innovative when it's like talking to people and sharing food with them, which is something that we've always done.
And yet, we've, like, I think, especially in work culture or like quote UN quote professional culture, we've just really lost that connection to each other.
So I love what you said, Ariana.
If there are any other thoughts about community engagement, feel free to weigh in.
If not, I have one more update that I would love to share about the EJ law.
And then, you know, we'd also.
I'd love to hear some updates from you guys about what's going on.

Ejys in your communities. But Trey, I saw you unmuted.
Oh, no, you didn't, OK.
I'm hallucinating, sorry.

Trey Martin 1:33:56
I I did.
I was like playing with the mouse, which was sitting on the MIC.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:34:02
Oh, OK, cool. As long as I'm not.
I'm not going crazy.
So there's one last update about the EJ law that we'd love to provide.
And then I I think it would be great to close out with just some like community EJ updates.
So our last update is related to the part of the law called 3 VSA Section 6004 H which.
Is the. Is the like really is the legal jargon.
For the part of the law that asks agencies to create a goal.
Around the way that they distribute environmental benefits.
So I will just drop the legal language in the chat for you guys to see.
But Karla, if you'd be willing to provide a quick update about that part of the work because it was just recently, yes, you know, moved forward, sure.
So 60048.
Is the section in the statue the Vermont Environmental Justice Law?
And that little section is.
The section that calls out that agencies will have a commitment of equitable distribution.
Of investments and so in attention to that particular particular statutory provision, the agencies decided.
That to honor that we were all going to sign on a commitment.
That aligns with that statutory provision.
So we engage in a very robust exercise of having conversations with all of the general counsel's for all of the covered agencies multiple times.
And a statement was developed and we.
All signed on to it and it's showing our commitment to the implementation of the EJ

law.
And you can find you can find the document in the EJ Resource library.
Yeah, there was a transmittal letter that was sent to all of you.
So you should have it in your inbox as well.
I'm gonna put it in the chat. I'm just taking forever to put the hyperlink.
So just one SEC.
But this is, you know, it in many ways.
It's.
Symbolic.
Like where this is a outward acknowledgement of something that.
Something very meaningful, but the the truly meaningful work is the next steps of, like, really continuing this work in environmental benefits reporting and moving towards the statement of the towards the commitments that are included in this letter so.
Yes, this is really just kind of setting us off for our next.
Our next work, are there any questions about this?
I know it's one of the more like legally legalese part of the EJ law.
Well, and then to ground us in was coming down the pipeline after this one.
Action took place. The next thing up in this area of work, the the benefit spending area of work.
Is that the agencies will take time now to analyze the baseline spending reports that were provided to you all.
As part of the implementation of that of the EJ law.
So we're gonna now be taking all of that data.
And making sense of it.
So that's the next step.
Yay, making sense of data.
All right. We still have about.
Oh yeah, Mariana.
Sorry, I just saw your hand.

MS **Mariana Sears** 1:38:20
No, no, just to thank you and to see if I was just going to to see if we are moving into the updates and conversation not that's I don't any specific questions, sorry.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:38:33

OK.

No worries.

Yeah, we still have about 10 minutes and if anyone wants to share any updates about, you know, EJ stuff going on, that has nothing to do with the EJ law. It could have something to do with the EJ law, but I know there's a lot that happens across. The state that we don't get to talk about as much because we're always talking about the law itself.

So folks want to share anything cool happening in their communities, or work that they've conferences. They've been to work they've done recently.

Now's the time. I think it would be good for us to include this in our public meetings. More frequently so.

Is there any thoughts that folks want to share about EJ work in their communities? Please feel free.

Yeah, Mariana, just jump in.

Mariana Sears 1:39:17

And yeah, I I could be a chatterbox.

So please if others need to jump in, please jump in.

Don't let me talk too much.

What I wanted to say first of all is that could we have this updated this updates spaces at the beginning of our meetings?

From now on I'm wondering.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:39:32

Oh yeah.

Mariana Sears 1:39:34

I'm wondering if that will allow us to be a little bit more of a Council and create some, I don't know, kind of like a less law oriented meetings and a little bit more. Of connections, things that can come up in conversation.

So if we could have updates on on a spaces for the members of the Advisory Council to speak at like 1015 minutes at the beginning of each meeting also, that will be more welcoming for new folks so that we don't bombard them with like like technical

langu.
Right away.
So I'm just thinking in the future and already dreaming of all the people that are gonna join us.
Hopeful thinking and and then I have questions for other folks.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 1:40:12
Yeah.

MS **Mariana Sears** 1:40:17
One would be if are people interested in coming in person to the November meeting and staying for lunch.
I don't know.
I thought that would be a way to get to know each other and spend time together.
You know Victor, you have proposed something. And then I don't know what happened, but I just didn't want your enthusiasm in meeting in person to go through the cracks.
So I could block myself an hour after our meeting in November and join us or join you guys for lunch at the I think at the state cafeteria or whatever, just one.

VP **Vincent Pricer** 1:40:54
When is that November meeting again?

MS **Mariana Sears** 1:40:57
19th, I said Wednesday.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 1:40:58
I just put it in the chat.

MS **Mariana Sears** 1:40:59
18th November 18th.

VP **Vincent Pricer** 1:41:00
OK.

Mariana Sears 1:41:04
And then related to what's happening in November, I guess.
What's her name?
Abby. Abby from the interagency.
Committee and Sarah, they presented a proposal to the farm to play gathering, to talk about environmental justice and to map how power and decision making.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:41:25
Mm-hmm.

Mariana Sears 1:41:30
Is kind of like.
Kind of. How happened or mapping that for people and the session was accepted.
And so there's gonna be a presentation about some of our work in November at the farm to play gathering.
That's I thought that was that was exciting. And that's something that we could start thinking about for next year if if members of these Council.
Would like to partner and bring our work to different spaces.
Recently attended the Community Leadership Summit from the Vermont Rural Council Development.
Something something in in the this was in Castletown College last week and it was a great gathering with so many people with so many community representatives, government people from municipal towns.
It was just amazing.
What a great opportunity it would be to talk about environmental justice and what the future that we're creating.
Ending to engage with folks. So I guess that's it.
Sorry I took so long.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:42:33
Yeah.
Thanks, Mariana.
I'll include in our follow up e-mail details about the farm to play conference. If folks want to like, I don't know.

I don't know much about it in terms of if it's, I don't know if it's just for state.
I I don't who it's for. So I I think that there could be an opportunity for folks to attend if they're interested.
So I'll share some info.
I see, Annie said.
That November 18th is also the statewide housing conference that it sounds like a really cool meeting.
OK, but no worries about having to miss the next meeting.
Sounds like you're gonna be some cool.

AD **Annie Decker** 1:43:19
Yeah.
Happy to. Yeah. Report back on on that conference at the following meeting and sorry that I'll, I'll have to miss that. But I do love the idea of meeting in person, especially as I get to know folks.
So if we could do that, even though I'll have to miss the November meeting, I'd love to do that at a future meeting.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 1:43:41
Where is this housing conference Annie?

TM **Trey Martin** 1:43:43
Thank you.

AD **Annie Decker** 1:43:43
It's in South Burlington.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 1:43:46
OK.

AD **Annie Decker** 1:43:47
I'm I can drop information in the chat.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 1:43:48
Well.

Trey Martin 1:43:53
Do you have that Annie, or do you want me to look for that?

Annie Decker 1:43:55
I've got it right here, Trey. Thanks.

Trey Martin 1:43:56
OK.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:43:58
You know, it would be also super ideal if we had potential seat holders and then if they can come in November, that would be great, sort of like a non boarding process even if they're not fully confirmed, if they're like going through the process, their nominations going through.
The process maybe we could have them.
So that's a good incentive for.
All of us to get lists of people's names.
Cool. And Jennifer, sorry, go ahead, Trey.

Trey Martin 1:44:30
There.
Piggyback on this and say we were, we were talking about conferences and attendance and all the different events yesterday as a team here at VHCB and just thinking about how to like make a plan to be able to talk about our work and hear from people more often.
In a more strategic way and as we get further down this road, maybe the Advisory Council could look at these opportunities like these conferences to also go and present and just even if it's not necessarily all the covered agencies, let people know what's going on with this work.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:45:01
Hmm.

Trey Martin 1:45:02

Just, yeah, you've got everybody really excited today with the hope and like theory of change that you've outlined.
So that that's work that then needs to be shared.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:45:15
Yeah. And we still have 5 minutes.
Maybe we can close out with Jennifer dropped in the chat about the land use panel that's happening on Saturday.
Do you want to share a little bit of information about that, Jennifer?

Byrne, Jennifer 1:45:27
Yeah, sure.
Can I share my screen?
Maybe it's just to put it up there. OK, cool.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:45:32
You should be able to will it let you.

Byrne, Jennifer 1:45:35
Yeah. Well, yes, we're we're hosting.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:45:36
OK.

Byrne, Jennifer 1:45:40
This panel and dance on Saturday night at Vermont State University, Randolph Student Center.
It's free to get in.
There's a live band around 7:30. We're going to have a. It's really a working lens. Use panel that runs from.
About 5:30 to maybe 7:15.
And yeah, it will have food. We've got a food truck, the box.
We have Babe's bar coming to bartend, so it'll be a really fun night and A and a really interesting, you know, visionary panel.
Hopefully everybody's really inspired so y'all are invited.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:46:20

Cool, thanks for that.

Yeah, I think that I love the idea Mariana of including these this conversation at the beginning of our meetings.

I don't know why updates have just tended to fall at the end of our meetings, but I I think that now that we're incorporating this, I think it's just important for us to talk about EJ work that's happening outside of the EJ law because there's a lot so.

So yeah, thanks for that suggestion, Mariana and Jennifer, I see your hand.

Byrne, Jennifer 1:46:52

Yeah, just really quick. I forgot to say, I'm facilitating the panel and I'm providing like 10 minutes of opening remarks. And actually I'm going to share about what we're doing.

It's an opportunity to really speak to a wide group and so the environmental justice law and you know everything that's going on with community engagement is going to be at least a slide to share to the public that this is happening in the state is, you know.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:47:15

Oh, awesome.

Byrne, Jennifer 1:47:18

You know, been working through this.

ANR - Catamount NL D215 1:47:21

That's really cool. I love that.

That's great, Jennifer. Thank you.

And then with our last couple minutes here, I see Mariana put in the chat.

Do we have any updates on the creation of the mapping tool?

Carla, would you like to speak to that?

Yes, so this is.

Oh my God, Mariana, you read my brain.

So actually today we had a great meeting with stone environmental.

And we are now finalizing.

The contracting process after this meeting today.
And what that means is that we are done with the process of negotiation within the two contractors. Just as a quick overview.
We we have a community engagement contractor.
Their name is the Creative discourse group, and we also have a GIS.
Contractor and they are stone environmental and the way that the proposal was released is that these two contractors are gonna be working hand in hand.
Alongside all of the process of the creation of the mapping tool and so the process of drafting these contracts has been very complex, because there are dependencies.
So task #1 depends on completion of the other contractors task #2.
So identifying those interdependencies.
And contingencies.
Has been very time consuming, but happily today at 8:00 AM we had the last of those meetings and the contracts are going to be released out into the world for revision. So they need to go to the attorney General's office because of the dollar amount. That's invol.
Our internal review already started.
And so we should be in a good position to share when the kickoff will be in the next several weeks.
So you will be the first ones to find out when that date is.
I was a really big update at the final hour. Congratulations.
It happened this morning at 8:00 AM and at 8:35 I had language in my inbox and I ran into our general counsel like hallway concert conversation.
So it just literally happened right before this meeting.
Yeah. Well, we have one minute left.
I'm this has been a wonderful meeting.
Thank you guys so much for the conversation.
Today, we'll share the updated draft definition with the Interagency Committee and share some information about the cool upcoming events.
That everybody shared about today in the following e-mail.
So thanks everyone.
This has been lots of fun, and we'll see you next month.
Since since we have, since we have one minute left, I would like to close out the conversation with a poem.
Is that OK?

Yeah, OK. It's gonna be quick, I promise.
I'm just into points lately.
I think it's the the season.
So this is the summer day by Mary Oliver, and I know it's not summer, but that's the poem.
Who made the world?
Who made this one?
And the black bear who made the grasshopper.
This grasshopper, I mean the one who has flung herself.
Out of the grass, the one who is eating sugar out of my hand, who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down, who is gazing around with her enormous, uncomplicated eyes.
Now she leaves her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down into the grass, how to kneel.
Down in the grass, how to be idle and blessed? How to stroll through the fields, which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?
Thank you for what you're doing with your life and contributing to this.

TM **Trey Martin** 1:52:08
Yeah. Thank you.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 1:52:10
Take care.
Oh, sweet Carla.
Thank you.

BJ **Byrne, Jennifer** 1:52:12
Thank you.

A **ANR - Catamount NL D215** 1:52:14
Bye. Wonderful day. Bye.

MS **Mariana Sears** 1:52:14
Thank you, Carla. That was great.

BJ **Byrne, Jennifer** 1:52:15
So.

MS **Mariana Sears** 1:52:16
Bye, Val everyone.

TM **Trey Martin** 1:52:20
Ah.

◉ **Birch, Juliet** stopped transcription