Public Meeting of the Vermont Interagency Environmental Justice (EJ) Committee (IAC)
Hybrid Meeting Minutes
October 27, 2026

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: October 27, 2026
Meeting Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM EST

Attendees:

Interagency Committee (IAC): Karla Raimundi, Abbey Willard, Elizabeth Schilling, Claire McIlvennie, Stephanie Smith, Amy Redman, Janet Hurley, Jeffrey Mbarushimana

State of Vermont: Juliet Birch, Marcella Dent, Sarah McIlvennie, Jenny Ronis

---

10:10 AM

Welcome & Introductions

- Consent to Community Agreements
    - Consent received. No comments.
- Approve July 28, 2026 Meeting Minutes
    - Approved. No comments.
- Approve October 27, 2026 Agenda
    - Approved. No comments.

10:15 AM Environmental Justice Action Report Introduction and Overview

- Juliet B.: The Vermont Environmental Justice Law requires that covered agencies "issue and publicly post an annual report summarizing all actions taken to incorporate environmental justice into its policies or determinations, rulemaking, permit proceedings, or project review" annually starting on January 15, 2027
- Juliet B.: Proposed EJ action report approach. One joint report that includes two sections: 1) ANR-developed section on actions taken under the EJ Law by all

covered agencies – key deliverables, outputs, and activities from each area of work, 2) optional section for covered agencies to report on their own progress and implementation activities – related internal coordination, training, and implementation activities
    - Janet H.: What does the rulemaking part refer to?
        - Juliet B.: We have been providing sporadic technical assistance regarding the Cumulative Environmental Burden Rulemaking process – ANR-led effort due January of 2029 that the other covered agencies will adopt in January of 2030
    - Amy R.: Thinking about ways that we can present the information that is more digestible. Where will this be shared?
        - Juliet B.: Law does not prescribe a location. We could choose to host on EJ Online Resource Library and/or post on all covered agency websites. Decision yet to be made
        - Amy R.: Is there a way we could present the information in a less text-heavy way?
            - Juliet B.: Yes, this is important
            - Abbey W.: Statute doesn't require a particular audience either.
            - Juliet B.: Thinking of the public meeting where we presented on the Baseline Spending Reports, could do the same for the EJ Action Report
- Juliet B.: Section 1 would be developed by ANR by December 1 in time for our public meeting. Section 2 would be developed by December 31
    - Janet H.: How much of the optional section would just be restating things we are required to do versus things that lend themselves to EJ implementation?
        - Juliet B.: ANR will include our accommodations work because it is part of how we train staff to interact with members of the public who have disabilities. In this way, it relates to our community engagement work. This is optional, the LURB does not have to do the equivalent
    - Abbey W.: AAFM would include things like the task groups they have stood up, website content that has been created, and is also thinking about other bigger efforts at AAFM that connect to accessibility or DEI-related work. Once expanding the thought, this feels like a much bigger task.
- Juliet B. What do folks think about this approach? Of the eight agencies present, all eight agencies agree with this approach.

10:45 AM Public Comment

- No comments.

10:50 AM Break

10:55 AM Community Engagement Plans Group Updates and Discussion

- Juliet B.: Using Mentimeter to help get responses to these prompts. Purpose of this section of the agenda is to cover successes and challenges covered agencies have experienced in their Community Engagement Plan processes, topics for AC consultation or public engagement, and learning about documentation methods. This will help inform future technical assistance and engagement with the AC and the public.
- Juliet B.: First question, what success have you experienced in the Community Engagement Plan process so far? Answers include leadership support, developing task groups, beginning assessments of current community engagement practices
    - Janet H.: LURB has begun working with Jude Smith Rachele from Abundant Sun on developing a draft Community Engagement Plan. They will go through the steps outlined in the Guidance. Anticipating an internal assessment over the next two months, recommending a public engagement plan for developing the CEP, having a rough draft delivered to the LURB in February or so.
    - Abbey W.: AAFM has found that community engagement is done by nearly everyone in the agency but is no one's acknowledged responsibility. Not part of job descriptions, but part of the work and part of the passion.
        - Karla R.: Was there conversation about perhaps needing an individual whose job description includes engagement? Or is the conversation indicating that this way of doing things is manageable?
        - Sarah M.: The conversation has not yet been had on what to do with this information. The AAFM task group has noticed that there is a lot of relationship building as part of the scopes of work of employees. Difference between engagement as part of the daily job tasks and distinct engagement projects

    - Claire M.: Richarda (community engagement specialist for Department of Public Service) also acknowledged that everyone at PSD does engagement even without a formal plan, responsibility, etc.
- Juliet B.: Second question, what challenges have you experienced in the Community Engagement Plan process so far? Using this question as a way to guide the next phase of technical assistance. Focus on specific themes and topics, or substantive skills.
    - Karla R.: Challenge for ANR is on length. Some want the document to be detailed on operations while others want the document to be brief. Recommendations on striking the balance?
        - Juliet B.: Thinking of the document as a point of reference including the details, pairing it with a much shorter simpler version that is less detailed and more for daily use.
    - Juliet B.: Highlighting a response regarding de-escalation tactics and conflict management. Could be a helpful skill
- Juliet B.: Third question, what topics do you wish to see be part of our consultation with the Advisory Council or our public engagement on the Community Engagement Plans?
    - Juliet B.: Some responses include trust and transparency, legal timelines, expectation setting and management
    - Janet H.: Thinking about how to manage engagement with permits under Act 250 – distribution of permits has more to do with where the applications come from than equity decisions made by the LURB. Probably a good conversation to continue with the PUC and ANR.
- Juliet B.: Fourth question, does your agency current collect and/or document community engagement activities? If so, how? This is a question largely asked on behalf of PSD. Trying to find methods of documentation that work, or where to go to meet this need if a method hasn't been identified.
    - Elizabeth S.: Can the community of practice support with this work?
        - Sarah M.: The community of practice is more focused on facilitating relationships and awareness. There are conversations about having a dedicated Customer Relationship Management tool. The Community Engagement Inventory Tool does not capture information at that level of detail.
        - Elizabeth S.: Would be helpful to set a bar around what type of engagement we are tracking and to what degree. Needing to set parameters so that we are tracking engagement within reason and are not creating unreasonable expectations for staff.
        - Juliet B.: a dedicated Customer Relationship Management tool could be more efficient for reporting and holding institutional

knowledge. The Inventory Tool is a helpful tool for sharing information across agencies, but more detail and quantitative data could be really helpful to capture.

11:45 AM Environmental Justice Updates

- Karla R.: Statement of Commitment regarding 6004(h) has been shared with the Advisory Council via a transmittal letter
- Juliet B.: EJ Complaint Central Intake System Task Group now has interest from program staff from different agencies including ANR, AAFM, LURB, and PSD. Advisory Council has created an updated definition of an EJ complaint based on previous feedback. This will be a topic of discussion during our next joint public meeting.
- Sarah M.: AAFM is hosting a Farm to Plate Conference session on November 19 from 2-4 pm regarding environmental justice and community engagement. This will be co-facilitated by Sarah, Abbey, Amy, Juliet, and Mariana.
- Jeffrey M.: Office of Racial Equity is hosting the fourth annual Apiary Conference on October 29 and 30 at the Stowe Peak Lodge!

12:00 PM Close Out