Joint Public Meeting of the Vermont Interagency Environmental Justice (EJ) Committee (IAC) and the EJ Advisory Council (AC)
Hybrid Meeting Minutes
May 13, 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

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Meeting Information:
Date: May 13, 2026
Meeting Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM EST

Attendees:

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

Advisory Council (AC): Jennifer Byrne, Victor Davila, Mariana Sears

State of Vermont: Juliet Birch, Kim Barrett, Jenny Ronis, Josh Allen, Rachel Stevens

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10:00 AM

Welcome & Approvals

- Consent to Community Agreements
    - Consent received, no comments.
- Approve November 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes
    - Quorum not achieved, minutes not approved.
- Approve December 3, 2025 Meeting Minutes
    - Quorum not achieved, minutes not approved.
- Approve December 10, 2025 Meeting Minutes
    - Quorum not achieved, minutes not approved.
- Approve March 11, 2026 Meeting Minutes
    - Quorum not achieved, minutes not approved.
- Approve May 13, 2026 Agenda

- Agenda approved, no comments.

10:10 AM

Updates

- Kim: IAC public meeting on April 2 was focused on EJFP definition and 3 VSA section 6004(h). April 8 AC meeting focused on the environmental justice complaint definition and also provided technical assistance on the Cumulative Environmental Burden Rulemaking deliverable. April 28 IAC meeting focused on the Community Engagement Plan deliverable. May 7, AC had office hours to continue developing a response to the 2026 Civil Rights and Environmental Justice Complaint Reports.
- Mariana: The EJ Network is having an EJ Summit on June 12 and 13. Mariana will be presenting on behalf of Hunger Free Vermont relating to the food security networks and the road map for food security
- Juliet: Rich will also be participating on a panel on behalf of VCNAA
- Kim: Proposed realignment of the VT EJ Law deliverable timeline. This proposal includes changes to the deadlines for only four deliverables under the Law. Altering the deadlines was important to allow adequate time for consultation, engagement, coordination, and meaningful implementation. Specifically, the Cumulative Environmental Burdens Rule needs to be informed by the EJ Mapping Tool. However, the current timeline means the Rule needs to be developed before the Mapping Tool is complete.
- Karla: This was communicated with all AC and IAC members over email as the opportunity to realign came about
- Amy: Moving the dates is clear, still concerned about how to actually achieve implementing the deliverables.
- Karla: Realignment is much needed. This will give us more time to have the conversations around the “how” so we can be measured in our approach.

10:30 AM

Public Comment

- Adam: From the Conservation Law Foundation. Here to listen, no comment.
- Josh: Will be the new representative for the Agency of Education
- Jennifer: Are the new dates proposed or already in law?
- Karla: They are proposed as part of S325

- Janet: S325 has passed out of the house and is now back in the Senate Natural Resources Committee. Still needs Senate vote and to be signed by the governor
- Jennifer: Does the AC support this change?
- Karla: Based on email conversations, there was general consensus from AC members that these changes were supported. Jennifer was the council member who had concerns.
- Mariana: Was consulted by email, several reasons to support these changes, not sure if there has been official time to consult each other as AC members on this. Jennifer has shared a proposal to shift the way this council works to possibly make the AC more involved and different
- Victor: Personally feeling disappointed by the amount that he has contributed to the Community Engagement Plan Guidance. A lot of AC members have capacity based on the news cycle. Very unpredictable current environment. Extension of time in the law would help create more time for AC members to contribute and allow more flexibility to accommodate unexpectedly changing capacity
- Jennifer: As long as the extension proposal is not being presented as a decision from the AC. AC needs time to build consensus, not just individual consent. Don't want to stand in the way, but finds it to be strange. Many other laws get thrust forward with deadlines that are held tight – there is a sense of urgency and a rush. When it comes to this one law, that is not the case. If we had been fully resourced from the beginning, this process over the last four years would have looked a lot different.
- Karla: Perhaps because this is the most important law, this is one we should be developing with the more care and with more time and intention. The timeline in the law does not allow for the development of the voices that should be centered. We have heard from the AC that confusion remains around these deliverables and what the impacts of them will be. The timeline in the law is not adequate. Lack of time to provide technical assistance, build understanding, have thorough conversations, etc. before having to make a decision.
- Abbey: What is the best way for the AC to provide feedback within this structure and culture around how laws and rules are made that we collectively agree is not ideal? How do we share information about this law in a digestible manner? This is dense and complex material. We need to find space to talk about these fundamental questions.
- Jennifer: Resourcing is one of the major restrictions. Less of a time thing and more of a structure thing. Has there been advocacy to fund the AC?
- Mariana: I am privileged to get paid for this work through my job. There is a high level of commitment, understanding, and complexity needed to participate in this body at only about $6 an hour.

- Juliet: Compensation for advisory bodies is really important. There is a bill that may expand compensation rates for advisory bodies to a “livable wage.” Appointing bodies should share more about the complexity of this work to prime AC members before they are appointed. AC members deserve informed consent.
- Kim: Taking time to talk about how changes can be made to support community engagement and relationship building

10:55 AM

ANR Recaps Executive Sessions

- Rachel: Provides a recap of the purpose of executive session: to allow a public body to meet privately when to do so in the public forum would put the body at a substantial disadvantage. This executive session would be about 3 VSA section 6004(h)
- Juliet: Since the AC doesn’t have quorum, the IAC could make a motion and include the AC members in the motion. AC members who are present can still participate in the executive session, but this would be ab IAC executive session.

11:00 AM

AC and IAC Members Deliberate and Vote on Entering into Executive Session

- Janet: Makes motion: “I, Janet Hurley, move to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing confidential legal information with an attorney pursuant to 1 V.S.A. Section 313(a)(1)(F). The Executive Session will be limited to **3 V.S.A. § 6004(h)** and associated legal issues with an attorney. Sharing this information with the public prematurely will put the AC and IAC at a substantial disadvantage because they need to understand confidential legal risks to implement the EJ Law. I move for ANR staff, including attorneys, and all present Advisory Council members to be present.”
    - Abbey: Seconds the motion
- Juliet: Runs roll call vote. 10 out of 10 present IAC members vote in favor. Approval to enter into executive session is secured.

11:05 AM

IAC Executive Session Begins

- Recording ended.

11:59 AM

Close Out

- Mariana: Interested in pursuing options to make public meetings less structured and more spontaneous. Interested in revisiting Jennifer's proposal for the AC.
- Karla: The AC's proposal is supported but the council will need to meet and provide structure around this process, provide EJ Coordinators with preferences, and vote on it. Proposing to turn the May 26 IAC meeting into a joint meeting, allowing for more collective conversation.
- Claire: Would be supportive if there was critical mass of AC members available to attend
- Karla: We will check. If we don't hear from them that they're available, it will stay as an IAC meeting.
- Juliet: We are slated to exceed the meeting cap for the IAC (estimated total of 14 meetings) and meet the meeting cap for the AC (estimated total of 11 meetings)
- Karla: Meeting outside of public meetings would be good
- Mariana: Office hours could be a good option. As well as Working on Excellence Partners.