

**Public Meeting of the Vermont Interagency Environmental Justice (EJ) Committee
(IAC)
Hybrid Meeting Minutes
May 26, 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: May 26, 2026

Meeting Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM EST

Attendees:

Interagency Committee (IAC): Karla Raimundi, Grace Vinson, Bob Donohue, Abbey Willard, Claire McIlvennie, Stephanie Smith, Amy Redman, Janet Hurley, Jeffrey Mbarushimana

State of Vermont: Jenny Ronis, Juliet Birch, Kim Barrett, Joshua Allen

10:00 AM

Welcome & Introductions

- Consent to [Community Agreements](#)
 - Consent received, no comments.
- Approve [April 28, 2026 Meeting Minutes](#)
- Approve [May 26, 2026 Agenda](#)
 - Agenda approved, no comments.

10:10 AM Updates

- A proposal for adjusting the VT EJ Law timeline was included in S. 325
- The VT Environmental Justice Advisory Council submitted a letter to the General Assembly on 5/18
- This will be discussed in the 6/10 Joint Advisory Council and Interagency Committee Public Meeting as well as Community Engagement Plans

10:20 AM Civil Rights & Environmental Justice Complaint Response Re-Orientation

- Kim B.: Today, we will recapping the Civil Rights and Environmental Justice Complaint Summary Report Response process over the last couple of years.
- Kim B.: Here is the recap for 2024:
 - On April 29, 2024, the AC had a public meeting to develop recommendations in response to the IAC's reports.
 - On May 15, 2024, the AC submitted a unified response providing several recommendations to the IAC.
 - The AC's main recommendation was to develop a Unified Intake System Complaint for both Civil Rights and Environmental Justice complaints.
 - On August 15, 2024, the IAC submitted a unified response to the AC addressing each of their recommendations.
 - The Agency of Natural Resources also submitted a response explaining that Civil Rights complaint processes and EJ complaint processes need to be separate due to pre-existing federal Civil Rights requirements.
- Kim B.: Here is the recap for 2025:
 - In March 2025 IAC members submit Civil Rights and Environmental Justice Complaint Summary Reports.
 - In May, 2 AC members Mariana and Rich submitted a response that confirms interest in further exploring both EJ Complaints and the anthropocentric framing of the term Environmental Justice in the VT EJ Law (Act 154 of 2022).
 - In August, the IAC submitted a unified response that shared agreement that an EJ Complaint needs to be defined and expressed interest in the AC's input on the anthropocentric framing used in the VT EJ Law.
 - The IAC did not have guidance on how to define an Environmental Justice Complaint however they developed an Environmental Justice Complaint Intake System Workplan between May and August to make progress towards the AC's previous recommendations.
- Kim B.: Here is the recap for 2026:
 - On January 27, 2026 IAC members reviewed their Centralized Environmental Justice Complaint Intake System Workplan in a public meeting
 - On February 24, IAC members review modifications to their workplan in a public meeting
 - On March 13, IAC members submitted their 2026 Civil Rights & Environmental Justice Complaint Summary Reports

- March 13, IAC members also submitted their Centralized Environmental Justice Complaint Intake System Workplan
- On April 8, the AC discusses Civil Rights & Environmental Justice Complaints at a public meeting
- On May 7, 3 AC members attend “Office Hours” to develop recommendations to the IAC
- On May 15 3 AC members- Mariana, Rich and Matt submitted recommendations to the IAC which included a draft Environmental Justice Complaint definition
- Abbey W: Where we are in the process of working on a Centralized EJ Intake System. Do we have a subgroup?
 - Kim B.: Today you will review the draft definition, deliberate and collectively decide on how you will implement the workplan. You can discuss developing a subgroup during today’s discussion.

10:25 AM Civil Rights & Environmental Justice Complaint Response Questions

- Kim B.: Now we will review the draft environmental justice complaint definition developed by 3 Advisory Council members. This definition requires further AC review and approval. Here is a summary:
 - An EJ complaint alleges a disregard or neglect to any of the principles of environmental justice
 - People or communities that can file a complaint include people who have allegedly experienced:
 - Obstruction to fair access to environmental benefits
 - Disproportionate exposure to environmental burdens
 - Lack of meaningful participation, information, services, or protections related to the EJ Law
- Kim B.: The next slide includes the full draft ej definition written out.
- Janet H.: Second part of the first paragraph is not included in slide 8. The EJ Law as it is currently constructed doesn’t really speak to those priorities
 - Kim B.: Some members of the AC have a continuing interest in evaluating the framing of the EJ Law and the anthropocentric focus of the Law.
 - Janet H.: These principles are not part of the statute’s definition of environmental justice. Concerned about our ability to actually do and acknowledge the things that are included in this draft definition
 - Juliet B.: Key terms under the law can be redefined – environmental justice, environmental benefits, environmental burdens, meaningful participation

- Claire M.: How frequently should we be revising the definitions under the Law? The Law says every 5 years
- Juliet B.: The Law's deadline for the first revision of definitions was December of 2025. This did not take place. When we are collectively ready to revise definitions, we should determine a frequency rate from there forward
- Bob D.: Looking at second paragraph, noting that agency inaction can sometimes be the result of lack of funding. Not making something part of a law or expectation for the state unless it has been adequately funded.

10:40 AM Civil Rights & Environmental Justice Complaint Response Circle Process

- Kim B.: Discussion questions:
 - What were your takeaways from the report response?
 - What elements of the response would you like to explore further?
 - How would you like to see the IAC proceed from here?
- Stephanie S.: We need to continue our conversation on how to build out an EJ complaint intake process. The definition of the EJ complaint does not matter unless we have something to do with it. Making the complaint intake process as simple, flexible, and forgiving as possible. Designing an intake process that filters by the two lenses in the definition
- Janet H.: This feels like a big ask to reconcile. Feeling nervous about balancing this process with the Community Engagement Plan deliverable.
- Grace V.: ACCD contracts with Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO) on fair housing complaints. They provide external capacity in managing these complaints. How do we break down siloes to ensure that contracted entities are also complying with this process?
 - Karla R.: Need to know more about the dynamic between ACCD and CVOEO to be able to understand how to improve this process. This is something that needs to be determined internally, ensuring that compliance with federal civil rights requirements are being complied with.
 - Grace V.: Also must adhere to fair housing requirements based on federal funding and subrecipients.
 - Karla R.: Developing an understanding of how ACCD's civil rights complaint intake process works could be a helpful place to start to build out an EJ complaint intake process for ACCD as well. Need to touch base with your general counsel
- Amy R.: Feeling grateful for the AC members' time and attention on the EJ complaint definition process. AC review and finalizing of this complaint definition

is an opportunity to continue with relationship building. Thinking about the intake system, excited to begin implementing the work plan and thinking about who the core work team will be – Who will be the lead agency for this? Spoke to the lead person in Colorado on their EJ complaint intake system. Doing something is the main goal, and that something can be improved over time.

- Bob D.: This current draft definition is very aspirational, especially in our current structure in which ecological destruction is a rampant part of our daily practices. We will never be free of ecological destruction, but we can try to mitigate it to the extent that is possible.
- Abbey W.: How to maintain anonymity and protection of individuals for the person making the complaint or the individual against whom the complaint is made? How could HR be potentially involved in this if an individual state employee is named? There are certain programs that require a particular complaint process that AAFM manages – recognizing that we may find ourselves in a position where Vermonters are struggling to figure out how to file a complaint due to complexity and distinction from other types of complaints
- Claire M.: It would be helpful to have a continued conversation with the AC about the concerns that are coming up here and the ways we could operationalize addressing these concerns. Thinking about forming a team that will figure out how to compare agencies' current structures on complaints, take what works, identify what isn't working, and use these findings to create a thoughtful intake process
- Josh A.: Still new to a lot of this work. In the meantime between now and the completion of the EJ complaint intake system, what is the process for now through which someone can submit a complaint? What would be considered an EJ complaint, and if a complaint is received, who would address those complaints?
 - Karla R.: Describes ANR's current approach to EJ complaints and how to resolve them. This is a more high-level approach in the interim while we are waiting for a formal EJ complaint intake system to be stood up. Invite agencies to reflect on if there is something that can be stood up in the interim so that answers can be provided to members of the public as we are waiting for a formal system
 - Amy R.: VDH is waiting on a lead agency. Don't have any regulatory power. Cannot do anything in the interim, in a holding pattern
- Karla R.: In thinking about the framework and the roles of the AC and IAC, not taking the more "aspirational" elements of the EJ complaint definition as individual triggers, but rather as concepts that can help interpret complaints more broadly. Being mindful as we are discussing the scope of a complaint. Broader interpretation.

11:15 AM Break

11:25 AM Public Comment

- Pike P. (public): Was today's conversation about a specific complaint? Are these meetings recorded and where can I watch them back?
 - Karla R.: The conversation is not about a specific complaint but about a process to develop a complaint intake mechanism.
 - Pike P.: There is a higher incident of respiratory illness in the Old North End than in other parts of Vermont. Probably because a large amount of particulate matter being emitted from the McNeil Plant. The Environmental Justice Law speaks to this kind of issue. ANR should consider EJFPs when considering permits for operations of this nature.
 - Karla R.: Affirms the existence of the EJ Law, summarizes the IAC and the AC. ANR is preparing a response to your complaint.

11:30 AM Civil Rights & Environmental Justice Complaint Response Conversation Resumes

- Kim B.: Introduces Jeffrey, new designee for the Office of Racial Equity
- Jeffrey M.: Looking forward to interacting with everyone and learning more about how the office can support in the implementation of the Environmental Justice Law.
- Juliet B.: Thinking back to Abbey's comment about anonymity and protection. Civil Rights processes require a Nondiscrimination Coordinator – could be applied by analogy to the EJ complaint process where there is a defined and protected communication structure for complaints.
 - Abbey W.: What is the likelihood of being able to fund such a position?
 - Karla R.: This conversation about budget needs and resources is comprehended in the workplan. Phase 0 is developing a core team that will assess how we will move forward. Clear that we are working with constraints, and those constraints need to be acknowledged and addressed in this intake development process
 - Claire M.: We should come up with multiple recommendations, contingency plans on how to address this complaint intake process. Was the workplan discussed by the AC as they were developing their response?

- Abbey W.: Are there other IAC members who would be interested in participating in the core team?
 - Claire M.: Planning to broach this topic internally to figure out if there are individuals at PSD who would be willing to support with this. Does not personally have capacity to support at this time
 - Abbey W.: Does not feel she has capacity to serve in this core team. What is the approach if we do not identify a core team? How does this deliverable measure in terms of ability and interest to work on it?
 - Janet H.: Trying to figure out who at LURB would be the appropriate person. Does not personally have capacity to support at this time. Trying to determine who the right person is from LURB.
 - Karla R.: Need people who have the knowledge necessary and the interest to propel this work forward. Identifying people outside of the IAC is welcome
 - Abbey W.: Folks at AAFM would want roles, expectations, etc. before bringing someone from the agency into this core team. Thinking through what we are asking of people.
 - Karla R.: Realigning the timeline under the Law will allow more time for this deliverable – freeing of resources in terms of the urgency
 - Amy R.: Wondering, does CREJU have any early ideas about ANR's engagement in this team?
- Grace V.: Related to the Community Engagement Plan deliverable: Was able to meet with CREJU to determine an approach moving forward on how to get buy-in on the Community Engagement Plan deliverable, framing, etc.
 - Juliet B.: CREJU can always support with conversations with leadership or internally at each agency to support preparing for deliverables. Also, CREJU will be involved in the core team for the EJ complaint intake process.

11:55 AM Next Steps

- Kim B.: Please start sharing out next steps.
 - Claire M.: Having conversations internally at each agency – setting a deadline by which we will have these conversations. Come back and have a collective conversation about the expected or intended outcomes – how many people should be on this core team, etc.?
 - Karla R.: The first step of our workplan has a deadline of the end of June. Either we can continue to work towards this deadline or revisit the deadline to make it more feasible. Towards Jeffrey, this could be an area for Office of Racial Equity to be involved and inform.