

**Joint Public Meeting of the Vermont Interagency Environmental Justice (EJ)
Committee (IAC) and the EJ Advisory Council (AC)
Hybrid Meeting Minutes
June 10, 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: June 10, 2026

Meeting Time: 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM EST

Attendees:

Interagency Committee (IAC): Karla Raimundi, Dave Pelletier, Abbey Willard, Grace Vinson, Claire McIlvennie, Elizabeth Schilling, Amy Redman, Jenny Ronis, Jeffrey Mbarushimana

Advisory Council (AC): Jennifer Byrne, Victor Davila, Britaney Watson, Mariana Sears, Maryam Abbasi, Trey Martin, Jeffrey Mbarushimana

State of Vermont: Juliet Birch, Kim Barrett, Sarah McIlvennie, Sophi Veltrop, Marcella Dent, Charlotte Safran, Kate Jerman, Ned Swanberg

10:00 AM

Welcome

10:10 AM

Approvals

- Consent to [Community Agreements](#)
 - Consent received, no comments.
- Approve [November 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes](#)
 - Quorum achieved, minutes approved.
- Approve [December 3, 2025 Meeting Minutes](#)
 - Quorum achieved, minutes approved.

- Approve [December 10, 2025 Meeting Minutes](#)
 - Quorum achieved, minutes approved.
- Approve [March 11, 2026 Meeting Minutes](#)
 - Quorum achieved, minutes approved.
- Approve [May 26, 2026 Meeting Minutes](#)
- Approve June 10, 2026 Agenda
 - Agenda approved, no comments.

10:20 AM

Updates

- Karla R.: We have the VT Environmental Justice Law Online Library that contains materials from each public meeting. We also have links to the meeting materials on ANR's Environmental Justice Law's Calendar Webpage.
- Karla R.: On May 18th, 2026, there was an exchange of ideas and communications between members of the Advisory Council regarding Senate Bill 325 outside of a publicly warned public meeting and quorum was reached.
 - Karla R.: Today we are providing proper notice, have any exchanges necessary and clarify this process to cure any deficiencies that occurred during those exchanges.
 - The email exchange stopped promptly when the Environmental Justice Coordinators realized that quorum was met.
- Jennifer B.: Could you explain what the deficiency is about?
 - Karla R.: This is a defect according to the Open Meeting Law. If an advisory body engages in exchange of business or substantive discussion outside of a properly noticed meeting, then the conversation needs to go the public forum. This allows members of the public to consider the discussion and participate.
 - Juliet.: The terms defect and deficient are both legal terms that do not relate to judgement on values.
- Juliet B.: If someone could provide a brief explanation of what was discussed over email and what the vote was, then we can notify the public of what occurred.
 - Mariana S.: We were trying to offer support to ongoing community engagement efforts being done by many partners and agencies.
 - Victor D.: There was a co-signed letter sent to the full Advisory Council that involved financing towards the overlapping work we do. There was an

amount of money going towards repairing issues of a different law that was paying for similar things the AC is already working on through the EJ Law. We were trying to support financial alignment between both goals. I believe this was not taken up, correct?

- Karla R.: That is correct.
- Jennifer B.: They moved forward with community engagement planning money that involves the Land Use Review Board. The AC wasn't brought in until it was already in Committee. They reference that the plan should follow our guiding principles.
- Janet H.: Initially, S325 implicated the Land Use Review Board to conduct this public engagement. By the time the bill passed, the Board was no longer implicated. This is regarding public engagement plan for the Legislature and not for the Land Use Review Board. The Board is not part of this public engagement that was a part of the passed legislation.
- Janet H.: Once the AC produced this letter, it was shared with me. The Board was asked to weigh in after our last meeting. It was too late to provide input to the Legislature as we weren't having another meeting for a week.
- Dave P.: Were there any changes made to the deadlines that were a part of S325 that the IAC or AC need to be aware of?
 - Karla R.: S325 does not yet have an Act and it has not been signed by the Governor. Bills are proposals until they get signed into law. The process to introduce revisions to the VT EJ Law deadlines included sharing several documents with the AC and IAC.
 - Karla R.: The purpose for the proposed realignment deadlines is to respond to the insufficient amount of time from when the EJ Mapping Tool is due and the deadline of the Cumulative Burden Rule. The outputs of the EJ Mapping Tool is needed to allow for sufficient consideration and community engagement processes to complete the Cumulative Burden Rulemaking deliverable.
- Jennifer B.: To prevent the defect from happening again, the AC should notify ANR ahead of time when quorum will be reached when discussing topics. What should we do differently next time?
 - Karla R.: Once there's an action to elicit feedback from other Council members, you would let the Environmental Justice Coordinators know so we can determine next steps. Depending on the feedback you're seeking, we may need to hold a public meeting for special or extraordinary circumstances under Open Meeting Law. Then, the special meeting would be publicly noticed and business can take place in the public forum.

- Amy R.: I am grateful to the AC for working through this process and wonder about a displaced burden on AC members trying to find funding to do the work. How can we support this moving forward?
- Mariana S.: Can CREJU help us understand the timing involved so next time there is an opportunity, we are better prepared to act preemptively?
 - Juliet B.: Yes. Next time, we can have a conversation preemptively to explain the correct steps needed.
 - Mariana S.: Despite interrupting this process that should have gone differently, The AC was brought in late.
 - Juliet B.: Ensuring that the AC is notified is not within the role of the EJ Coordinators. We cannot do legislative advocacy. We can ensure that the AC follows Open Meeting Law when the AC tries to communicate with the Legislature.
- Janet H.: I'm not sure there's anything that the AC could have done to act quicker given the pace things were moving. Part of what happened was the Legislature realized they needed more public input. The Land Access Opportunity Board is engaged. Maybe they would be willing to loop the AC in.
 - Trey M.: The Vermont Council on Rural Development, VACD, Land Use Review Board and Land Access Opportunity Board are listed on the final bill. If the LURB is in consultation, then as a covered agency, it can also indicate what k also say this is what engagement principles are. There is crossover and a shared interest between LAOB and the Advisory Council.

11:00 AM

Community Engagement Plan Re-Orientation

- Kim B.: We will be providing a recap to the Community Engagement Plan Deliverable due on July 1st, 2027.
- Kim B.: Covered agency Community Engagement Plans must:
 - Describe how agencies will engage with EJFPs as they evaluate new and existing activities and programs
 - Describe how agencies will provide meaningful participation in compliance with Title VI
 - Be informed by the Core Principles of Community Engagement
 - Be developed in consultation with the Advisory Council
- Kim B.: What is Community Engagement?
 - Community Engagement: opportunities to connect and interface with community members
 - Meaningful Participation: "all individuals have the opportunity to participate in energy, climate change, and environmental decision-making."

- Decision-making: actions or choices by an entity that could alter the outcome of the work
- Victor D.: VT EJ Community Engagement Subgroup
 - This subgroup was developed in response to the AC and IAC's agreement that the CEPs should share key qualities
 - Here are the members:
 - Advisory Council: Jennifer Byrne, Victor Davila, Mariana Sears
 - Interagency Committee: Karla Raimundi
 - Covered Agency Representatives: Richarda Ericson (PSD), Sarah McIlvennie (AAFM), Charlotte Safran (VDH)
 - ANR's Civil Rights and Environmental Justice Unit: Kim Barrett, Juliet Birch
- Victor D.: The Community Engagement Plan (CEP) Guidance:
 - Guides covered agencies through necessary critical thinking to develop their own Community Engagement Plan
 - Provides strong recommendations for each Plan to consider
 - Will not serve as a template
 - Can be used alongside technical assistance, consultation, and interagency coordination
 - Covered agencies are the intended audience
- Victor D.: How did the Subgroup get here? The Community Engagement Subgroup:
 - Identified that the Guidance must be structured to meet most of the covered agencies' needs and flexible enough to respond to the adaptive nature of engagement
 - Incorporated public meeting feedback from the last two years
 - Chose to heavily incorporate these pre-existing engagement resources as opposed to recreating work that's already done. This aligns with Principle 1 of the VT EJ Law's Core Principles of Community Engagement
 - Developed draft CEP Guidance as two options to convey overlapping content
- Victor D.: Next steps for CEP Guidance development:
 - AC and IAC will review two options to inform next drafting phase
 - Subgroup aims to deliver one final draft Guidance in late July
 - Subgroup will pay special attention to the need for covered agencies to have sufficient time for technical assistance
 - The Subgroup has identified that the drafting process must embody the same community engagement best practices we are asking covered agencies to use and the principles that are reflected in the Core Principles of Community Engagement. The Subgroup identified in their most recent

meeting on June 5 that this may look like pivoting and problem solving when things like “sense of urgency” arise.

- This means that the AC and IAC will need to determine a timeframe that responds to IAC’s implementation needs while allowing for an equitable and effective Guidance development process.
- Kim B.: Important Notes for Review & Discussion:
 - Today’s review options include foundational content and valuable approaches and elements that include previous input from IAC and AC
 - Our ask is that you review Option A and Option B together to explore how different elements and approaches work and what’s missing
 - The task is not to determine which option is your preference
 - The outcome is that the Subgroup will create one draft guidance document that includes strengths and lessons from today’s review
- Kim B.: Important Notes for Review & Discussion Continued:
 - To reiterate, today’s review of the two draft options will be used to develop one draft CEP Guidance
 - Each CA’s Community Engagement Plan and development process will have areas the Guidance cannot address. Please rely on CREJU and your fellow AC and IAC members as thought partners as you troubleshoot your unique needs
 - Today’s focus will not be on language and word choice. The Subgroup will revise the document for clarity and plain language in later drafts
- Victor D.: IAC’s Review Focus
 - IAC members will focus their review on ease of implementation.
 - Please let us know if:
 - You don’t understand what a section is asking you to do
 - You understand what a section is asking, but not how to do it
 - You find a section to be particularly helpful or clear
- Victor D.: AC’s Review Focus
 - AC members will review from the perspective of a community member or an organization working with the State
 - Please let us know if:
 - There are important things missing to make engagement meaningful for communities?
 - There is content you feel should be emphasized?
 - There are areas you feel are successful?

11:10 AM

Community Engagement Plan Guidance Review and Feedback

- Sarah M.: Questions to consider during review:
 - For each option what is the most helpful in:
 - What content feels right? Do I understand what I need to do and how to do it?
 - What about the organization feels helpful?
 - What should we carry forward into the next draft?
 - Are there things that are missing?
- Victor D.: Taking a look at the first section of the CEP Guidance for review: the recommended steps for a community engagement process

11:25 AM

Public Comment

- No comments.

11:25 AM

Break

11:30 AM

Community Engagement Plan Guidance Review and Feedback

- Kim B.: Opening up the floor for discussion about the recommended steps for a community engagement process in the draft CEP Guidance documents options A and B
- Claire M.: Content in both options seems pretty similar and overall both seem very helpful. Option B could be potentially turned into a checklist to support preparing someone to implement a community engagement process. Option A appreciated examples of how agencies have done the work, Option B provided reflection questions
- Amy R.: Liked the section on applying the framework in different contexts. Has questions about how this can be applied to EJFPs specifically. Really liked the Community Engagement Plan Template in the appendix of Option A
- Janet H.: Agree with Claire, but like some of the narrative context in Option A
- Grace V.: Preferred Option A because of the outline and template format
- Abbey W.: Likes the reflection questions
- Jeffery M.: Option A has strong compensation section, Option B has strong organizational structure

- Abbey W.: Finds these guidance materials helpful, finding the collective task of creating a CEP to be overwhelming. Would appreciate dedicated time to have discussion about each section of the process
 - Karla R.: What of the process comes up as challenging?
 - Abbey W.: There are a lot of steps in the process, requiring a lot of time and staff. Many steps require conversations with other parts of our agency to gather input, requiring even more time and staff.
- Mariana S.: Something missing might be how do we get some coordination across agencies on community engagement processes. Centering the people who are impacted by this work by having only a few ways of engaging where all agencies participate
- Grace V.: Appreciating the example language from Option A
- Victor D.: Would it be helpful for the Guidance to include some sort of steps or workflow to support internal communication at your agency?
 - Janet H.: Cannot see how this would be helpful to the whole group because each agency is different, has different roles, capacities, and structures.
- Janet H.: Regarding what Mariana mentioned, each agency is engaged in different activities regarding different topics, so it isn't possible to have one engagement that would be able to cover all. It would be burdensome on the public. Can there be some sort of database that tracks where agencies are with their engagement processes?
- Maryam A.: For implementation, you need resources to get back to communities about how their feedback and input impacted the work being done. Are we supposed to develop CEPs for each of our communities? Plans that speak to different communities (different language communities, for example)?
- Charlotte S.: Would it be helpful to have core values or commitments that are shared across the state of Vermont? Do the sections on doing your research about communities speak to the concerns around over-tapping and tailoring engagement to specific needs of communities? Community Engagement Community of Practice is developing a community engagement inventory tool that will be accessible to state employees.
- Claire M.: This guidance is supposed to tell agencies how to develop Community Engagement Plans which will instruct agencies on their engagements writ large – not project-specific. Want to know how we get to the July 1 deliverable from there?
- Abbey W.: We need to have some clarity around the execution of the Community Engagement Plans

- Jennifer B.: The subgroup could work on developing a pre-assessment that needs to be done for each agency. What are the parts that need to be aligned across each of the CEPs?
- Kim B.: AC and IAC members can send other feedback in writing.
- Sarah M.: Next subgroup meeting is June 26. How much time do we want with the feedback?
 - Mariana S.: A week
 - Victor D.: Agreed
- Karla R.: Wants to clarify that specifically determining how to execute the CEP within each agency is considered part of technical assistance. Not something that can be easily addressed in the Guidance. CREJU already began this work with Grace and held a workshop at PUC. Would be great to do something similar at other agencies
 - Jennifer B.: Curious how this is going at ANR?
 - Karla R.: ANR has a Community Engagement Plan Task Group to tackle this issue, we want to slowly expand awareness across the agency about this deliverable. The Task Group does not want to get ahead of the Community Engagement Plan Guidance.
- Sarah M.: All covered agencies must provide equal opportunity for meaningful participation. Conditions need to be met for meaningful participation to be an option for the public. To institutionalize meaningful participation, a CEP must be developed. Developing CEPs will involve their own engagement processes including internal and with the public. The CEPs must include personnel policies and standard operating procedures to push change in engagement. Looking for technical assistance that allows for more space for shared learning across the covered agencies
- Charlotte S.: What would be supportive for covered agencies to have in Guidance knowing we can't solve for everything?
 - Claire M.: Assessing where you are starting from as you set out to develop your CEPs. Plans should be aspirational and should do a realistic assessment of where agencies are and how they are going to get where they want to be. Doing an assessment would be a helpful step in the right direction at each agency
 - Abbey W.: Based on lessons learned from the Baseline Spending Reports, it would have been helpful for agencies to share their processes to help inspire other agencies on how they will implement theirs.
- Karla R.: Regarding the July 1st deadline:
 - We had conversations with the AC and IAC and all of the covered agency General Counsels. We need to hear back from some agencies regarding their preferred approach. Internally, the Civil Rights Environmental Justice

Unit, is in the process of drafting a response that could be responsive to the deliverable. This deliverable involves covered agencies establishing agencies making a commitment to distribute proportionately based on the baseline spending reports. It is 3 V.S.A. § 6004 (h) in the EJ Law.

- Karla R.: This was discussed in executive session with the AC and IAC and then with the General Counsels from the IAC.
- Jennifer B.: I thought the executive session was about the EJFP definition. I did not realize that relates to this deliverable.
- Karla R.: Yes. That relates to this deliverable. The executive session included discussion on the approach that agencies are comfortable taking. The conversations with the covered agency General Counsels also included the Attorney General's Office and the Solicitor General for the State.
- Karla R.: Our goal is to send communication to covered agencies next week. This deliverable requires conversations outside of ANR and outside of our General Counsel's office.
- Claire M.: I advocate for this to be on the agenda for the IAC's next meeting.
- Karla R.: Regarding the Community Engagement Plan Guidance development timeline:
 - Karla R.: We originally anticipated the Guidance being complete by the end of July to engage in one-on-one robust conversations about the deliverable and give agencies one year to use the guidance to create their plans.
 - Kim B.: Can someone from the Community Engagement Subgroup speak to if the July timing gives you time you need to incorporate the best practices in community engagement you identified as being important?
 - Jennifer B.: I feel good about having two months to get this finalized. The Subgroup could then sketch a timeline for the next year to support covered agencies.
- Claire M.: The Guidance document is not a formal deliverable. Having the next iteration of the guidance by the end of July is good even if it is not complete. Then, the IAC can start collaborating.
- Karla R.: There needs to be a separation between content and structure of the Guidance and what may be missing in terms of internal structures needed to operationalize the Guidance.

1:00 PM

Close Out