

**Public Meeting of the Vermont Interagency Environmental Justice (EJ) Committee
(IAC)
Hybrid Meeting Minutes
July 28, 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: July 28, 2026

Meeting Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM EST

Attendees:

Interagency Committee (IAC): Karla Raimundi, Dave Pelletier, Joshua Allen, Grace Vinson, Abbey Willard, Elizabeth Schilling, Anne Margolis, Stephanie Smith, Amy Redman, Jenny Ronis, Jeffrey Mbarushimana

State of Vermont: Juliet Birch, Kim Barrett, Sarah McIlvennie

10:00 AM

Welcome & Introductions

- Consent to [Community Agreements](#)
 - Consent received. No comments.
- Approve [May 26, 2026 Meeting Minutes](#)
 - Approved. No comments.
- Approve [July 28, 2026 Agenda](#)
 - Approved. No comments.

10:10 AM AC Civil Rights and Environmental Justice Complaint Response

- Kim B.: Outlines the flow of today's conversation, focused on how to implement the Advisory Council's recommendation to develop a central complaint intake system for environmental justice complaints

- Amy R.: Reflection questions to start us off thinking about the development of a central complaint intake system and get us grounded in what it means to be doing this work at this current time:
 - What does it mean to be doing this work at this time in history?
 - How do we honor the opportunity that the AC has given us to create something new?
 - How can we support each other in changing our ways of thinking and doing?
- Kim B.: Discussion to help us develop common ground. How does your covered agency intake and process information from the public?
 - Elizabeth S.: PUC has a generic complaints web page that links to an environmental justice complaint page. This directs folks to submit complaints over email or over written letter. Once received, the complaint would be reviewed and the PUC would take time to determine how to respond, investigate, and/or resolve the complaint. No EJ complaints received yet. Waiting to see what happens with the central intake system
 - Jenny R.: LURB has an inbox for EJ complaints. The board completed an internal procedure for managing this inbox last year. Willing to share this procedure, which describes how they sort out between complaints and other inquiries, whether or not it is an EJ complaint, etc. Has had two “nonresponsive” comments in the past few years. Determined them not to be EJ related. Adding an EJ consideration to the evaluation of regional plans
 - Amy R.: VDH does not have EJ specific complaint intake processes. Program-based complaint/inquiry systems that overlap with EJ issues. Two-way communications that allow the public to engage in direct dialogue with state employees. Nothing formalized for EJ complaint yet.
 - Grace V.: ACCD has about \$68 million in disaster recovery money, one complainant has a few questions about the use of that money. This is prompting Grace to pursue a complaint system more rigorously for ACCD. Still looking to develop an avenue for complaints to be submitted and responded to. Public comment and transparency processes are lacking.
 - Anne M.: PSD has an entire division called Consumer Affairs and Public Information – addressing complaints primarily related to consumers of a regulated utility like gas, telecom, water, etc. They have a webpage with instructions on how to access and complete an online complaint reporting form. This is where a consumer would be able to make a complaint, even an EJ complaint. Ad hoc processes for taking in input from the public on projects – one-off email inboxes for input on those projects.

- Abbey W.: AAFM has some systems like a general webpage for complaint submission – can be submitted by program. The form completed online is reviewed by admin and then taken up by comms and the legal team. Have not yet received an EJ complaint specifically. General complaints are received each year and included in the past CR and EJ Complaint Reports. Overlapping with public engagement and community input sessions – offer public input opportunities for people to voice complaints and concerns about operations of AAFM.
- Karla R.: ANR has a intake process for civil rights complaints. There is an intake form publicly available online that is translated into multiple language. Members of the public are encourage to file their complaints via the ANR civil rights email, however ANR does not limit members of the public to one singular required process to submit a complaint. ANR accepts complaints in many forms. ANR also has a grievance procedure and investigation manual that sets a specific protocol for communications, investigation, and resolution of a complaint. ANR also receives feedback from the public on the program level, managed by each program themselves. For EJ, ANR has a process where the EJ Liaisons internal to the agency engage with their divisions and if they learn about any concerns that pertain to EJ, they are referred to the EJ lead from each department, and then they determine how to respond alongside the Civil Rights and Environmental Justice Unit. All complaints treated uniformly and directed to Karla.
- Dave P.: AOT also has a civil rights complaint intake process that is publicly available. Based heavily on Title VI and ADA complaints. There is more general EJ content on there, but there is not yet an EJ-specific complaint intake process in lieu of a central intake system. There is some information that indicates that a person is able to engage the agency, but that process is not as well defined as civil rights.
- Stephanie S.: DPS does not yet have a DPS-wide version of a complaint system. This is more on a division level like the state police and fire safety divisions. Curious to know how things are getting filtered through existing processes? How do we flag those existing complaints as EJ complaints if they are related?
- Joshua A.: AOE's public is mostly dealing with schools, districts, and parents directly. The state board of education takes complaints and the divisions also take their division-specific complaints. The complaint processes are siloed. There is no single "front door" for complaints or a single process for triaging, routing, and responding to complaints. Cleaner and more accessible way to receive and address public input

- Kim B.: Reminding the group of the draft EJ complaint definition developed by 3 AC members. Requiring further AC review and approval. There was a meeting scheduled earlier in July for the AC to convene on this but was cancelled due to low attendance. Reviews the contents of the draft EJ complaint definition.
- Kim B.: Breaking this definition down by elements. Element 1: “a disregard or neglect to any of the principles of environmental justice”. Discussion questions: How should EJ principles be represented within the complaint intake system? Which EJ principles would be included?
 - Stephanie S.: Is it on the individual Vermonter to understand the EJ complaint definition and the EJ principles in order to determine if their complaint is relevant? It should not be on the individual to determine whether or not their complaint is an EJ complaint.
 - Elizabeth S.: Is this an ideas generating conversation?
 - Kim B.: Yes. Ideally, we can feed part of what you discuss back to the AC to help inform their process of refining an EJ complaint definition
 - Karla R.: Some of these elements are necessary in any intake system. Starting our thought exercises with those mechanisms that are necessary to build out a process, then building off of that as we continue to refine
- Kim B.: Element 2: “any person or community that has experienced obstruction”. Discussion questions: Should anonymous complaints be accepted? How would complainants specify which category they fall under?
 - Jenny R.: LURB’s enforcement complaints are allowed to be anonymous because the identity of the complainant is not relevant. Jurisdictional opinions on the other hand cannot be anonymous because it has implications for other people’s property. Concerns with an anonymous complaint form could allow for people to make complaints on behalf of others. Lack of anonymity could have a chilling effect.
 - Juliet B.: Anonymity could encourage weaponization of the complaint process for NIMBYism, but lack of anonymity again could have a chilling effect
 - Elizabeth S.: Need a shared and agreed upon definition of the EJ complaint in order to answer the question. PUC has particular obligations under the public records act that could influence this for PUC.
 - Abbey W.: Would these questions be better served as being addressed in within a task group? How much is the IAC expected to provide to the task group?
 - Kim B.: Wanted to provide a space and time for the IAC to collectively view the EJ complaint definition in a way that was

different from the previous times. This allows us to collectively process and chew on what this definition could mean for this work.

- Karla R.: Yes, the details may be better addressed by the task group. But it is helpful to get your policy and conceptual perspective as an IAC member. For example, from your perspective, do you think that the system would benefit from anonymity? Understanding your perspective could help inform the task group's work. Regardless of the final definition, we'll need to consider these questions as a collective.
- Abbey W.: Obvious components: removal of barriers for the individual to submit, needing a clear protocol for how to handle a complaint, protection of identity – mitigating threat of retaliation as a consequence of submitting a complaint.
- Elizabeth S.: General idea of allowing for anonymous complaints is really important due to chilling effect

11:10 AM IAC August 15 Response to the Advisory Council

- Kim B.: Response to the AC's recommendations are due annually on August 15. This year, August 15 is a Saturday, so we will aim for August 14. Any thoughts on what should be included in that response?
- Elizabeth S.: Have the 2026 reports been shared with the AC?
 - Kim B.: Yes
- Karla R.: Willing to draft a joint response if needed. Including reference to the creation of the task group.
- Elizabeth S.: We can certainly acknowledge the receipt of their draft definition, but we need to develop a shared and agreed-upon definition, which will likely take place further down in the workplan.
 - Karla R.: We may benefit from having a conversation with the AC where we explore the reasoning and intention behind some of the elements of the definition – particularly those that might be harder to capture in a formal complaint process.
 - Abbey W.: Like this recommendation from Elizabeth. Is there an opportunity to offer a seat from the AC on the task group? Also cautioning that the current definition was only developed by three AC members and the full AC has not yet signed off on this set of recommendations.
 - Kim B.: This has been discussed with Amy and Jeffrey and we are aiming to get 2 AC members on the task group if possible.

- Karla R.: Like the idea of including the outputs of the task group formation conversation into the August 14 response.
- Amy R.: Learned a lot in this meeting so far. Makes sense to include some of that information in the response. If there are unresolved questions, that would also be helpful to include in the response!
- Abbey W.: Would be good to include capacity and expertise once again within our response, offering timelines for accountability. Not sure how the idea behind the anthropocentric nature of EJ would resonate in the public eye.
 - Karla R.: Would you suggest we include that in the response?
 - Abbey W.: Just posing this as my perspective. Is there consensus on this inclusion or no?
 - Karla R.: This could be called out in the joint response or it could be included in a smaller response from AAFM specifically.
 - Elizabeth S.: This was included in last year's response. Could be worth using the same language, reiterating in some form.
 - Jenny R.: Conflict between asking us to reject anthropocentricity while our entire service is intended to provide rights and services to people.
 - Karla R.: Other jurisdictions acknowledge the rights of nature, just not Vermont yet
 - Kim B.: Perhaps an office hours to discuss this in more depth? A more intimate setting.
 - Sarah M.: Being explicit in thoughts and concerns as they come up is helpful context and could provide clarity for the AC and future task group members

11:30 AM Public Comment

- No comments.

11:33 AM Break

11:38 AM Central Intake System (CIS) Task Group Presentation

- Kim B.: Reminding the group why it is important to put together this task group based on the AC's 2024 recommendations. Providing an overview and reminder

of the phases of the CIS workplan as established by the IAC for their 2026 response.

- Jeffrey M.: Sharing about the task group membership. Envisioning a core task group of 7-8 members including: AC, IAC, and covered agency staff. Also envisioning a revolving group of people who can join throughout different stages of development who can provide specific expertise to support decision making and expertise-required development. Looking for people who are passionate about the work, care about accessibility, equity, have access to leadership, have experience with systems and data management
- Amy R.: Sharing ideas about how the group will meet: can be very flexible, the task group could meet more or less frequently based on the needs of each phase, roles could change as the work evolves. These roles and responsibilities, frequency, etc. will be solidified by the core team.
- Kim B.: Would be helpful to know if each agency could let us know if you have already identified folks in your agency who would be interested in participating in or informing the work.
 - Grace V.: ACCD has identified some staff who could contribute expertise – general counsel and other staff could be revolving members
 - Abbey W.: Spoken to two people in the agency as to whether they would be the right fit. Still looking to determine what roles they would settle into best.
 - Anne M.: PSD has not identified anyone yet but will reach out to colleagues
 - Stephanie S.: DPS in the same position as PSD
 - Jenny R.: Will confirm with LURB leadership

11:55 AM VT EJ Law Updates

- Juliet B.: 6004(h) statement is still under development. Community Engagement Plan Guidance is now set to be released on August 3. Please respond to the technical assistance survey to help us tailor the technical assistance roll out to your specific needs. Expecting to begin technical assistance in August.

12:00 PM Close Out