

# MARYLAND COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Date: 1/23/24

Time: 10a to 12p

## **Commissioners in Attendance:**

Aneca Atkinson, Yasmin Behram, Camille Burke, Monica Brooks, Dr. Renee Carr, Dennis De Shields, Kellie Gaither, Dr. Tracy Garrett, Paulette Hammond, Andrew Miller, Voncia Molock, John Papagni, Lesliam Quiros-Alcala, Rebecca Rehr, Asha Smith, Jacquetta Wright

## **Interested Parties:**

Hadley Anthony, Robin Bailey, Thea Becton, Nadya Chehab, Jacob Day, Patrick DeArmey, Molly Finch, Cat Goughnour, Joseph Griffiths, Shannon Heafey, Jennifer Kunze, Kim Pezza, Matthew Standeven, Mark Stewart

## **1. Introductions**

- Camille Burke, Chair of the Commission and Brandon Brooks, Environmental Justice Coordinator

## **2. Secretary Jacob Day, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (“DHCD”)**

### Presentation

- Secretary Day outlined 5 key objectives:
  1. Provide shelter for all. This issue should be viewed as a human right.

2. Expand affordable housing. Maryland is facing a housing shortage of approximately 96,000 units. The most vulnerable populations are most affected by the shortage. Access to quality housing is restricted and hence affordable housing prices increase dramatically as a result.

3. The third priority is to make places that residents can love. We must change the perspective of affordable housing and even housing development.

4. We have an obligation to connect all Marylanders. DHCD is responsible for broadband in Maryland.

5. We will right the wrongs of the past. We must make policy decisions that respond to decades of intentional disinvestment in certain places based on race.

- We will incentivise construction and stream line local approval.
- We will finance affordable housing and thoughtful community redevelopment by creating a new state entity to secure federal tax credits that we are leaving on the table today.
- We will create a new just community designation. The departmental legislation has been authored and submitted to the General Assembly to create a just community designation; it is House Bill 241 and cross filed as Senate Bill 308.
- DHCD has created a new division of just communities. The new division will be led by Assistant Secretary Cat Goughnour.

#### Questions

- Commissioner Brooks asked do you have a detailed plan for the followup and consistent accountability as it relates to this plan? Secretary Day answered that this effort rests directly into the Governor's State Plan. The plan is outcomes driven. State government will be held to a new standard.
- Commissioner Garrett asked if there is a simple definition for a just community and how does it impact rural communities. A just community is one in which everyone has opportunity. DHCD is still conducting the mapping.
- Commissioner Miller asked if there is a plan for production of affordable housing on a large scale. Secretary Day said that the Governor believes that there should be significant housing production. There are two barriers to production; one there are economic challenges and two there are local regulatory barriers.

### **3. Maryland Commission on Climate Change - Plans for 2024**

### Presentation

- Mark Stewart, Climate Change Program Manager at MDE, presented on the 2024 agenda for the Maryland Commission on Climate Change (“MCCC”).
- At the end of 2023, MDE released their climate pollution reduction plan. The plan outlines MDE’s objective to achieve the goals of the Climate Solutions Now Act. One important goal is to achieve net zero emissions by 2045. The climate pollution reduction plan lowers household energy costs, creates 27,000 jobs, increases personal income by about \$2.5 Billion a year, and grows Maryland GDP by about \$5.3 Billion between now and 2031 based on economic analysis done by Towson University.
- The Climate Solutions Now Act has set the strongest and most ambitious goals to achieve reductions in climate pollution than any other state in the country.
- Maryland had 18 coal fire power plants in 2006 with only 3 left this year (and all three have plans to close or refuel with other fuel sources).
- In 2022 Maryland for the first time met all national air quality standards.

### Questions

- Question from Commissioner Dr. Carr: How is the green rebate publicized? The rebate program is run through the Maryland Energy Association.
- Question from Commissioner Hammond: Will MCCC support the trash incinerator bill? In the climate plan, it calls for removing waste incineration from the State’s Renewable Portfolio Standards (“RPS”).
- Question from Commissioner Rehr: How is MDE coordinating with DHCD to make sure all housing is electric? Building an all electric building/house reduces upfront costs. Gas rates will at least double between now and 2035.
- Question from Commissioner Rehr’s: How is the agency being proactive in building equity into the process? In the development of the Building Energy Performance Standards (“BEPS”) MDE engaged with different affordable housing coalitions (and how BEPS would impact tenants).

## **4. MDE legislative EJ bills overview**

### Presentation

- Hadley Anthony presented from the Government Relations team at MDE.
- Delegate’s Boyce House Bill 24 has been introduced and will have amendments. It is an environmental impact, permit, and state agency actions bill. The amendments will allow for new permits to be denied and renewal permits to be conditioned to address environmental justice concerns.

### Question and Comment

- Commissioner Rehr is there an opportunity to increase the category of permits House Bill 24 can apply to? Hadley Anthony stated that there is current resistance to the Bill. Added permit categories can be amended into the Bill but it would likely make it more difficult to proceed.
- Commissioner Hammond is drafting a bill to ban PFAS.

### **5. CEJSC 2024 Meeting topics & calendar**

- Continuing the CEHPAC conversation from the Jan 17th 2024 joint meeting.

### **6. Public Comment**

- Senay Emmanuel, climate policy analyst, for Progressive Maryland, commented on trash incineration subsidies. Would like the MCCC to support removing trash incineration from the State's Renewable Portfolio Standards.
- Jennifer Kunze supports Senay Emmanuel's comments.

**The meeting adjourned.**

### **Notes (in part) from the chat:**

Jacquetta A. Wright

10:32 AM

Does DHCD currently have a Title VI coordinator? Will this position be in the new department or in DHCD's Office of Fair Practices?

Voncia Molock

10:39 AM

Want to know where to find broadband connectivity plans for rural areas

Voncia Molock

10:42 AM

Perfect! Many Thanks!

Andrew Miller

10:43 AM

Great to see you Mark!

Voncia Molock

11:02 AM

Thank you for a great presentation Mark!

What is the projected impact to the state budget as more electric cars mean less revenue from gasoline taxes?

Thea Becton

11:04 AM

HUD has a Build for the Future website with federal program information.

The site also has a Funding Navigator to find funding and technical assistance available from the federal family.

Here is the link to access the

site:<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/build-for-the-future/>

Jennifer Kunze

11:05 AM

Thursday!

testimony due wednesday

Patrick DeArmey

11:14 AM

Does the EJ commission officially weigh in on the climate commission plans?

Thanks!

Patrick DeArmey

11:22 AM

Flagging that there are some water permits that avoid public notice and comment including general industrial stormwater permits so would also avoid this new legislation

Hadley Anthony -MDE-

11:24 AM

[hadley.anthony@maryland.gov](mailto:hadley.anthony@maryland.gov)

Rebecca Rehr

11:24 AM

Hb 24 has a hearing on February 14

Rebecca Rehr

11:26 AM

House testimony is due 2 days before a hearing, so any letter from the CEJSC would have to be final on Monday, February 12.

Thanks for the heads up, ha

Monica Brooks

11:28 AM

Yes please on the permitting agenda

Joseph Griffiths -MDP-

11:29 AM

What is the number for the departmental bill?

Thank you

Rebecca Rehr

11:37 AM

Two other EJ-related bills to watch are SB 148 on the Comprehensive Flood Management Grant Program, and allocating at least 40% of funds to overburdened or underserved communities

And, a forthcoming bill from Delegate Taveras on Justice 40

Rebecca Rehr

11:42 AM

The other bill that was mentioned earlier was SB 146, Reclaim Renewable Energy on removing municipal solid waste from the state's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS). That should be on our list. CEJSC might not be able to have a letter by tomorrow for the Senate hearing, but the House hearing hasn't been set yet.

(this is the one Senay is talking about right now)

The House Bill is HB 166

You

11:43 AM

brandon.brooks@maryland.gov

John Papagni -DHCD-

11:45 AM

Can we get a list of the MDE tracked bills discussed in the legislative overview?

Jennifer Kunze

11:45 AM

HB166/SB146 sign on testimony:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSePXrbqgAih1VfYDpfbMHKyC7eJ8XQ8OGV8sFS2oq2dbuBmlg/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSePXrbqgAih1VfYDpfbMHKyC7eJ8XQ8OGV8sFS2oq2dbuBmlg/viewform?usp=sf_link)

Rebecca Rehr

11:45 AM

Removing trash from the RPS was also a recommendation from the Maryland Commission on Climate Change in their most recent annual report (Dec 2023)

Senay Emmanuel

11:46 AM

Thank you for including these, Rebecca