

MARYLAND COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Date: 5/28/24

Time: 10a - 12p

Commissioners in Attendance:

Yasmin Behram, Regina Boyce, Monica Brooks, Camille Burke, Dr. Renee Carr, Subha Chandar, Dennis DeShields, Crystal Faison, Kellie Gaither, Tracy Garrett, Paulette Hammond, Andrew Miller, Voncia Molock, Barbara Paca, John Papagni, Lesliam Quiros, Rebecca Rehr

Interested Parties:

Sarah Abel, Kristina Campbell, Patrick DeArme, Joseph Giffiths, Charles Glass, Frances Marie Panday, Carmen Metoyer, Serena Moncion, Dorothy Morrison, Connie Oatts, Lauryn Perpall, Matthew Standeven, Haile Tadesse, Danielle Wilson

1. Maryland Environmental Service

Presentation - Dr. Charles Glass

- Dr. Glass' presentation (and the discussion that followed) focused on Maryland Environmental Service (MES) and its commitment to environmental protection.
 - Dr. Glass led by sharing MES's structure, capabilities and achievements, as well as its focus on providing technical support, prioritizing safety, service, and quality.
 - He highlighted the importance of equitable funding allocation and the need for environmental specialists.
 - The development of an environmental justice practice at MES, including grant proposals for federal funding and the importance of partnering with universities to support environmental research and projects.
 - MES has achieved various successes such as 1,000 projects in every county

- across MD and being recognized as a top workplace.
- Engineers in operational groups help procure design and construction for environmental projects.
 - Environmental Operations is the largest group managing recycling, hazardous waste and energy plant operations.
 - Also focused on environmental science and compliance capabilities, including stormwater management, renewable energy, and geospatial engineering.
 - Dr. Glass shared his experience in developing an environmental justice practice at MES.
 - Dr. Glass discussed grant proposals in development with Prince George's County and University of Maryland, focusing on workforce development in energy and stormwater sectors.
 - Finally, he highlighted MDOT's efforts to support environmental grants, including partnerships and funding support.

Questions and Comments

- The conversation centered around environmental community development and workforce development initiatives in Maryland. General agreement that Dr. Glass should be connected with communities in need of assistance in addressing environmental issues and coordinating with state agencies in pursuing federal grants was also discussed.
 - Schedule a follow up meeting between commissioners Paca, Brooks, DeShields, Molock and Dr. Glass to discuss potential collaboration on projects for the Eastern Shore communities.
 - Connect Dr. Glass and his team directly with communities such as Bellevue and Deal Island to assess environmental issues and identify support.
 - Coordinate with the Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center programs on grant writing support and identify synergies.
 - Invite Dr. Glass back to future commission meetings to provide updates on MES projects and activities.

2. Climate Solutions Now Act Climate Vulnerability Score Method/Map

Presentation by Marie Panday

- Marie discussed the development of a climate vulnerability assessment model for Maryland, focusing on community engagement and environmental justice factors.
- Use EJ tool to identify underserved and overburdened communities in Maryland.
 - Marie explained how data inputs, including sensitivity and adaptive capacity, are used to calculate a community's climate vulnerability score.
 - She highlighted the importance of using existing data layers, such as urban heat island and storm surge, to keep the data stream consistent.
 - Marie explained how the climate exposure score is calculated using percentile scores from the EJ tool.
 - Marie explained why only five climate indicators were included in the model, with a focus on data availability and community relevance.

Questions and Comments

- Explore displaying data as binary (overburdened/underserved yes/no) rather than percentiles.
- Provide an internal version of the tool for further discussion with MDH.
- Schedule presentations on the tool for other state agencies.
- Chair Burke expressed concern with presenting the data in an understandable to community members.

The meeting adjourned.

Notes (in part) below from the chat:

Barbara Paca

10:32 AM

Thank you for your presentation Dr. Glass. How do we apply for an equitable portion on the Eastern Shore?

Patrick DeArmey

10:33 AM

Will MES be involved in the states approach to controlling PFAs?

Barbara Paca

10:34 AM

There are communities on the ES and Commissioners Brooks, DeShields, Molock, and myself would like to follow up with you re. a meeting.

Haile Tadesse

10:38 AM

What types of PFAS chemicals are you testing?

John Papagni -DHCD-

10:47 AM

Dr. Glass: in your presentation you mentioned recycling as a Focus area for the Service. Can you please elaborate on your work in this area?

Dorothy Morrison

10:51 AM

Yes, leaf grow gold has a whole new meaning for me now after last week's site visit.

Lori Cunningham

10:52 AM

The City of Bowie is collecting food waste for composting at our Kenhill Center. This is a project we launched this year and it goes to the PGC facility for LeafGro.

Rebecca Rehr

10:56 AM

MDE EJ Tool: <https://mdewin64.mde.state.md.us/EJ/>

John Papagni -DHCD-

10:58 AM

Dr. Glass: A follow-up question on recycling: a lot of material never makes it into recycling bins. Are there any initiatives to increase the percent of materials in the waste stream that are recycled and reduce litter?

Haile Tadesse

11:11 AM

Why did you include only five climate indicators? What about wind and other factors?

Rebecca Rehr

11:14 AM

(I can also ask this verbally, but thought it would be helpful to type it out): The CSNA also requires MDE, in consultation with the CEJSC, to "SET APPROPRIATE GOALS FOR THE PERCENTAGE OF STATE FUNDING FOR GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION REDUCTION MEASURES THAT SHOULD BE USED FOR THE BENEFIT OF DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED COMMUNITIES." Will this mapping work help move the agency towards a recommendation. It was supposed to have happened by 12/31/2023.

I believe everyone has been unofficially striving towards 40% (following Justice 40) but not sure there has been an official goal set.

Patrick DeArmey

11:15 AM

Is this climate tool available for public use yet?

Haile Tadesse

11:17 AM

Did you check (<https://vetmed.tamu.edu/news/press-releases/climate-vulnerability-index/>) for climate data?

Rebecca Rehr

11:18 AM

The CEJSC also had a very helpful presentation on GHG emissions reduction state spending a few months ago:

https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/air/ClimateChange/MCCC/Documents/2023%20MCCC%20Annual%20Report%20attachment_GHG%20Mitigation%20Spending.pdf

Hoping an annual version of that report will help answer Joe's question.

Sarah Abel -MDP-

11:20 AM

Could you provide the underserved and overburdened indicators?

What Federal environmental justice tools and data analysis did you review to develop this MD specific tool?

Sarah Abel -MDP-

11:22 AM

This is a great start to a tool and look forward seeing how it can be helpful to decision-making and improving community outcomes.

Voncia Molock

11:22 AM

In this model, is it possible that a high v7 value could give priority to a low V1 community? Or does this model only apply to a certain V1 score and above?

Rebecca Rehr

11:26 AM

Sarah - here are the indicators:

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/Laws/StatuteText?article=gen§ion=1-701&enactments=false>

You can also look into the back end of the MDE EJ screen tool for more information:

like this website: <https://mdewin64.mde.state.md.us/EJ/HowTo.html>

Rebecca Rehr

11:29 AM

The definitions in CSNA are also based on community input and work from Dr. Wilson's team at CEEJH

Patrick DeArmey

11:32 AM

probably already aware but there is the CDC SVI

<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/index.html>

Sarah Abel -MDP-

11:33 AM

I do think that emissions would be important to add. Other possible additions I would suggest would be health indicators (such as asthma), runoff, and subsiding land under climate exposure

Subha Chandar -MDH-

11:34 AM

SVI may need to be part of the communication plan and clarifying between that and this Maryland index

Sarah Abel -MDP-

11:34 AM

Last comment would caution using adaptive capacity if we are not providing specific indicators to that

Monica Brooks

11:34 AM

It is complicated. Yes it is going to be very important to drill this down to an adequately digestible way for the public. Thanks for the presentation

Frances Marie Panday -MDE-

11:38 AM

yes, please contact me at francesmarie.panday@maryland.gov

Kellie Gaither

11:38 AM

What date is the symposium?

Dr. Reneé Carr

11:39 AM

Just piggybacking to emphasize Rebecca's comment to define the terms to make them legally sound re: "minority", "underserved", and "disproportionately"

Patrick DeArmey

11:40 AM

I think there may be a forthcoming request for the commission to visit Lothian this year