

MARYLAND COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Date: 6/25/24

Time: 10a - 12p

Commissioners in Attendance:

Regina Boyce, Dr. Renee Carr, Crystal Faison, Kellie Gaither, Tracy Garrett, Paulette Hammond, Andrew Miller, John Papagni, Lesliam Quiros, David Simon, Asha Smith, Sacoby Wilson

Interested Parties:

Patrick DeArmey, Quinn Fowler, Cat Goughnour, Joseph Griffiths, Pamela Kasemeyer, Charles Lee, Kim Pezza, Matthew Standeven

1. Cumulative Impacts

Charles Lee - Environmental Justice Pioneer

- Charles opened by noting the importance of assessing cumulative impacts on human health and the environment and particularly in marginalized communities. Also, the importance of centering this work in improving both human health quality and the environment. Existing screening tools were mentioned as a helpful assessment tool.
- The challenges of introducing cumulative impacts legislation were also discussed, and the intersection of environmental justice and cumulative impact analysis was highlighted.
- Finally, the need for a more innovative approach to address cumulative impacts was emphasized, along with the importance of building capacity for community engagement and advocacy.
- Charles highlighted the need for data-driven decisions in the environmental justice space.

- He emphasized the importance of combining quantitative and qualitative methods to capture the lived experience of communities in a robust and authentic way.
- Charles discussed EPA's evolving cumulative impact framework, with a focus on collaboration and collective learning.
- He expressed the importance of and need to invest in more discussion and tease out the complex issues related to cumulative impacts.

Questions and Comments

- There was a discussion about the challenges of addressing cumulative impacts in Maryland, including political resistance and the need for more conversations.
- Suggestion proposed that the term “cumulative impacts” should be operationalized to address multiple burdens and stresses.
- Assistant Secretary of Just Communities, Cat Goughnour, discussed environmental justice and health impact assessments.
- Need to enhance the capacity of technical assistance centers to address queries and offer support to marginalized communities.
- The use of maps was suggested to identify areas with cumulative impacts.

2. Public Comment

- General discussion by Commissioners and members of the public related to environmental justice and health equity in Maryland, emphasizing the importance of community engagement, data-driven approaches, and inclusive decision-making processes. Speakers highlighted the need for a comprehensive and holistic approach to addressing environmental issues, prioritizing the voices and needs of marginalized communities. Comments also stressed the importance of operationalizing legislation to focus on racial equity and social justice, and of strategic planning to ensure the commission stays on track.
 - Schedule strategic planning session for commission.
 - Commissioner Gaither shared updates on upcoming events in Curtis Bay.
 - Commissioners and general public to provide feedback on enhancing EJSCREEN tool to better capture structural racism indicators.
 - The Environmental Justice and Health Disparities Symposium on environmental justice and climate justice issues will take place on September 11-14, with commission members encouraged to attend.
 - Dr. Wilson discussed the Commission's decision on a dedicated panel, suggesting alternative ways to involve the Commission in the symposium if decided not to have a separate panel.
 - Commissioners discussed sharing emails for exchange of ideas between

- meetings.
- Commission members encouraged each other to enhance the feedback loop between state agencies and the commission.
 - Commissioners emphasized the importance of tracking measurable outcomes to ensure environmental justice.
 - Speakers emphasized the importance of environmental justice and community involvement in decision-making processes.
 - It is suggested that the term “environmental justice” should be used more holistically and inclusively, rather than narrowly focused on impacts analysis and permitting.

The meeting adjourned.

Notes (in part) below from the chat:

Asha Smith

10:25 AM

Is there an existing screening tool for CI?

Dr. Reneé Carr

10:29 AM

How has the legislative reception been for the term "disproportionately"?

Rebecca Rehr

10:35 AM

Here's the survey:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSftDO3_ru396vM6mRV-_5lss970FhIkjxYrebdzXga7NIHUNQ/viewform

Sacoby Wilson

10:40 AM

<https://www.ceejh.center/>

Sarah Abel -MDP-

10:45 AM

Hi Brandon. Would you mind also adding me to the contact list for CEJSC?

sarah.abel@maryland.gov

Dr. Reneé Carr

10:47 AM

When agencies are making presentations to the Commission, is there any expectation for them to consider or incorporate our suggestions?

Rebecca Rehr

10:50 AM

Dr, Carr - it MIGHT be true if it's a state agency because the first item in our charge is "Advising the State government agencies on EJ."

And, I just checked and it's the Governor and the General Assembly who receive our recommendations.

Recommending options for addressing EJ issues to the Governor and the General Assembly; including prioritized areas of the State that need immediate attention.

Rebecca Rehr

10:51 AM

I don't think historically the CEJSC has asked for that report back, and I think that would be an important accountability step for us to take as a Commission.

*asked for that report back that Dr. Wilson is referencing right now.

Dr. Reneé Carr

10:54 AM

That would be helpful for the Commission being able to show measurable impact.

Regina T. Boyce

10:57 AM

with all due respect, I do not support "score cards"

Andrew Miller

10:59 AM

In my experience it's very easier for us to engage our legislators on issues that matter to us. Actual conversations are productive particularly when a particular bill is on the table.

Rebecca Rehr

11:00 AM

Two more items for general business: 1. Is there an update on the EJ folks across agencies meeting? This came up on last month's call. 2. Veronika Carella brought up that today's meeting conflicts with the CEHPAC meeting and since our two commissions are closely related, may want to avoid conflicts in the future for those who want to attend both. Thanks!

Regina T. Boyce

11:01 AM

Thank you, Andrew! I agree. I enjoy the actual conversations with interested groups.

Regina T. Boyce

11:02 AM

is CEHPAC an official group?

Rebecca Rehr

11:03 AM

Yes, it's the Children's Environmental Health Protection Advisory Council. Run out of MDH. We have a joint meeting with them once a year.

Rebecca Rehr

11:04 AM

only if it doesn't conflict with another concurrent session that commissioners are participating in :)

Sarah Abel -MDP-

11:07 AM

Sorry, I am at MML so need to type. We recently shifted smart growth to sustainable growth to include environment, equity, and economy, as well as resilience and vitality. Would love to find ways to connect the environmental justice and just communities work into our sustainable growth work and metrics. I look forward to working with you all on that and open to suggestions on finding ways to consider not only where we grow, but how we grow and for whom.

Cat Goughnour -DHCD-

11:08 AM

For reference, DHCD's Just Communities Legislation I referenced:

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2024RS/bills/hb/hb0241T.pdf>

Andrew Miller

11:09 AM

what are the arguments made against including cumulative impacts in legislation and regulation?

Regina T. Boyce

11:18 AM

this has been eye opening. Thank you Charles!!

Regina T. Boyce

11:20 AM

the problem is that we in MD speak about cumulative impacts as only air quality impacts

Cat Goughnour -DHCD-

11:22 AM

For reference: Principles and guidelines for social impact assessment in the USA - The Interorganizational Committee on Principles and Guidelines for Social Impact Assessment

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.3152/147154603781766293?needAccess=true>

Sacoby Wilson

11:23 AM

identify, prioritize, and microtarget through visualization

Just Communities, Green Zones, EBDs, EcoDistricts, Environmental Justice Districts

all the same thing

Sacoby Wilson

11:25 AM

CA: <https://calgreenzones.org/>

Regina T. Boyce

11:26 AM

and that is the issue

Cat Goughnour -DHCD-

11:31 AM

I welcome the opportunity to participate in the cumulative impact trainings for communities, if helpful

Regina T. Boyce

11:33 AM

Me too, Cat and Dr. Wilson!!

Rebecca Rehr

11:34 AM

You were right, it was earlier.

Here's an old article about EBDs:

<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/ResearchCenter/eMDE/Pages/vol1no2/ebd.aspx>

And a general presentation about them:

<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/WQFA/Documents/www.mde.state.md.us/EBD%20combined.pdf>

Sacoby Wilson

11:36 AM

<https://www.ceejh.center/mid-atlantic/projects/2019/2/2/environmental-benefits-districts-in-prince-georges-county-smgb3-rgas5-p7kl8>

see the blog on EBDs

Cat Goughnour -DHCD-

11:43 AM

Delegate Boyce, I look forward to continuing to discuss how Just Communities can support your vision for authentic inclusion of people furthest from justice

Regina T. Boyce

11:44 AM

Yes indeed, Cat!!!