

Sep 23, 2025

CEJSC- CEHPAC Joint Meeting

Invited Aneca Atkinson -MDE- Brandon Brooks -MDE-
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crystalfaison@gmail.com ddeshields@me.com Donna Edwards
Devon Dodson -MDE- Dr. Reneé Carr drcarr@theproblemsolver.co
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Lisa Jones -MDE- melissa.brown1@maryland.gov metoyercarmen@gmail.com
Andrew Miller Monica Brooks Noble Smith -MDE- patrick@chesapeakelegal.org
ralinda@greaterbaybrookalliance.org Regina T. Boyce Subha Chandar -MDH-
Sacoby Wilson Molock, Voncia Yasmin Behram -MDP- Alex Lima -MDE-
Nevan Edwards -MDE- Katherine Carter -DHCD- Kaitlin Walker -MDE-
Burke, Camille (BCHD) David Simon kpezza@marylandtaxes.gov lalcala1@jhu.edu
Lesliam Quiros-Alcala Boyce, Regina T. Delegate Tracy Garrett
sara.love@senate.state.md.us Tyler Brice Kylan Simpson -MDH-
Alicia Mezu -MSDE- Jack Daniels -DHCD- Lisa Horne -DHS- Paul Ferraro
Nse Witherspoon Lehman, Mary Delegate Allen, Laura Gile, Dawn Senator
Alexander Lehmann -MDA- Ben Gitterman Matthew McConaughey -WICH-
Megan Weil Latshaw Frederick Banks -MDE- Christopher Beck -MDE-
Adam Ortiz -MDE- ~~Asha Smith~~ ~~Rebecca Rehr~~ ~~Robin Bailey~~ ~~COMMERCE~~
~~Gile, Dawn Senator~~

Attachments  CEJSC- CEHPAC Joint Meeting

 CEHPAC-CESJC Joint Meeting Agenda_09.23.25.docx.pdf

Meeting records  Recording

Summary

C Burke initiated a joint meeting with Subha Chandar -MDH- and Fred Banks -CPAC-, where the agenda included discussions on the executive order, the environmental screen tool, environmental health data resources, and Justice40. Nevan Edwards -MDE- provided an overview of the executive

order, emphasizing its focus on data-driven solutions like the MD EnviroScreen tool, while Noble Smith -MDE- presented the MD EnviroScreen tool, explaining its use of an EJ score to calculate environmental justice indicators across census tracts. Subha Chandar -MDH- also discussed environmental health data, including low birth weight and asthma data, integrated into the EnviroScreen tool, and Christopher Beck -MDE- presented on greenhouse gas reduction spending and the Justice 40 initiative, highlighting challenges in tracking state funding for GHG reduction. The meeting also addressed community data understanding and application, the annual report preparation, and data gaps in hazardous chemicals and drinking water, with Kelly Love -MDA- responding to concerns about PFAS in pesticides.

Details

- **Meeting Commencement and Introductions** C Burke initiated the joint meeting and addressed the quorum requirement for approving minutes with Subha Chandar -MDH-. Adam Ortiz -MDE- confirmed their attendance to assist with the quorum, representing the secretary's office. Subha Chandar -MDH- and Fred Banks -CPAC- introduced themselves as the chair and vice chair of the CPAC, highlighting their roles and the significance of the joint meeting for both councils.
- **Quorum Status and Meeting Agenda** Kylan Simpson -MDH- reported that the quorum had not yet been met, and the approval of minutes would be postponed. C Burke expressed gratitude for the collaborative meeting and outlined the agenda, which included discussions on the executive order, the environmental screen tool, environmental health data resources, and Justice40.
- **National Lead Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week** C Burke announced that National Lead Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week would take place from October 19th to 25th. They stated that a schedule of events, including those in Baltimore City, would be shared with both commissions.
- **Hind Award Recognition** C Burke publicly acknowledged Dr. Sacoby Wilson for being a 2025 recipient of the Hind award, congratulating them on this achievement. Dr. Wilson expressed gratitude, emphasizing that the award

recognized the collective hard work of all partners and contributors to the environmental justice movement.

- **Executive Order Briefing** Nevan Edwards -MDE- provided a summary of the executive order, noting that it reinforced the state's commitment to addressing environmental burdens in vulnerable communities and integrating environmental justice into state agency decision-making. They highlighted the order's focus on data-driven solutions, such as the MD EnviroScreen tool. Nevan Edwards -MDE- also clarified the distinct purposes of the Interagency Environmental Justice and Equity Advisory Council and the Commission of Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities (CEJSC) within the context of the executive order, with the former focusing on statewide strategy implementation and the latter on identifying critical issues and developing recommendations to the governor.
- **Engagement with the Executive Order** Subha Chandar -MDH- inquired about how CPAC might participate with the Interagency Environmental Justice and Equity Advisory Council, given MDE's lead role. Adam Ortiz -MDE- responded that the first meeting of the council was scheduled within four weeks and offered to provide updates to CPAC meetings. Frederick Johnson -CPAC- questioned how the executive order would affect the mapping tool and whether it would add more robust layering. Nevan Edwards -MDE- and Adam Ortiz -MDE- clarified that while the executive order emphasizes data implementation, specific layering details are more regulatory, and the tool is continuously evolving through collaboration.
- **Clarification on Council Membership** Joseph Griffiths -MDP- asked if the executive order or MDE envisioned separate individuals from state agencies serving on the CEJSC and the advisory council, or if the same person could serve on both. Nevan Edwards -MDE- explained that while internal discussions considered the different needs and perspectives for representation, the specific appointments vary by department due to differences in size and capacity. Nevan Edwards -MDE- also clarified that the environmental justice officer position would be addressed within six months of the executive order's signing.
- **Resource Allocation for Executive Order Implementation** Dr. Sacoby Wilson emphasized the necessity of committed resources from state agencies to ensure compliance with the executive order, stating that without them, the initiative would merely be an "exercise". They stressed that strategic plans should ensure each agency is responsive to the executive order's outlined mandates and the communities they serve. Subha Chandar -MDH- clarified that their mention of "capacity" referred to the ability to best represent all elements within an agency.

- **MD EnviroScreen Tool Overview** Noble Smith -MDE- presented the MD EnviroScreen tool, explaining that it uses an EJ score to calculate the overall burden of environmental justice indicators across census tracts, categorized by pollution burden, environmental effects, and sensitive populations. Alex Lima -MDE- announced public webinars for the tool, starting this month, with the goal of increasing public understanding and mastery. They also expressed a desire to conduct a session in Spanish due to community interest.
- **MD EnviroScreen Tool Data and Outreach** Dr. Sacoby Wilson inquired about the availability of MD EnviroScreen data for download and asked if commission members would be engaged in the tool's rollout, suggesting collaborations with groups familiar with Latinx communities. Alex Lima -MDE- confirmed their willingness to collaborate on the rollout and explained that the delay in data availability was due to file compression challenges. Regina T Boyce -CEC- requested a graphic for sharing through newsletters and social media, which Noble Smith -MDE- affirmed could be provided. C Burke stressed the importance of specific outreach to communities with environmental justice issues, such as those in Brandywine and on the Eastern Shore.
- **Children's Environmental Health Day** Nse Witherspoon -MDE- reminded attendees about Children's Environmental Health Day on October 9th, highlighting it as a platform for partners to post events, resources, and best practices related to children's environmental health. They encouraged participation by contacting Hannah Wilkerson through the provided link.
- **Health Data Resources** Subha Chandar -MDH- discussed environmental health data, including low birth weight and asthma data, that is integrated into the EnviroScreen tool and supported by state resources. They mentioned the Maryland Environmental Public Health Tracking Network, funded by the CDC, as a source for this data and highlighted efforts to integrate it into state systems to ensure its longevity. The data portal provides local information at the census tract level, trend lines, and is downloadable and mobile-friendly. Subha Chandar -MDH- also introduced the state's new data office dashboards, which utilize Tableau and cover topics like overdose, biosurveillance, firearm violence, women's health, and hospital report cards, with the potential to house environmental public health data.
- **Outbreak Investigations and Data Accessibility** C Burke inquired about the tracking of general outbreak investigations, such as measles, and the accessibility of this information to the public. Subha Chandar -MDH-

acknowledged this as a good question and mentioned efforts to integrate this information into biosurveillance platforms, aiming to make it easier for everyone to find. They also agreed on the importance of incorporating local community data and experiences to align with or address discrepancies in official data.

- **Integrated Platform and Health Indicators** Sacoby Wilson discussed the need for an integrated platform for environmental health tools, acting as a "one-stop shop" with interoperability across various tools. They emphasized the importance of robust health indicators, including population data, and the use of statistical analysis to ensure their validity. Sacoby Wilson also suggested using additional health indicators not in the sensitive populations category as a secondary screen to pinpoint communities with adverse public health outcomes due to environmental exposures.
- **Exclusion of Race in Viral Screen and Health Data** Sacoby Wilson raised the point about the exclusion of race in viral screen tools, noting that entities like CDC have historically used "rapid indicators" as a proxy for race in health analyses. They explained how health data could be used as a corollary or substitute, highlighting its power to visualize inequities across demographic groups, health outcomes, and geographically. Subha Chandar -MDH- expressed excitement about incorporating health data into scoring and complementing it with topic-specific and local community data.
- **Community Data Understanding and Application** Tracy Garrett highlighted the critical need for technical information and tools to be presented in a language understandable by affected communities, enabling them to take action. They shared a specific concern about high asthma rates in Lothian children and the impact on their education. Subha Chandar -MDH- agreed on the importance of working with communities to bridge the gap between technical data and lived experiences, connecting this understanding to local programs, services, and resources.
- **Integrating Data into Commission Meetings** Joseph Griffiths -MDP- suggested dedicating time during CJSC meetings to delve into data on a topical basis, discussing its application to various representatives' areas of focus. They proposed using breakout groups for state agencies or mixed groups to encourage active engagement with the data and foster a common language for its use. Joseph Griffiths -MDP- emphasized the importance of reserving time and resources in meetings for this purpose.

- **Health Officers' Engagement with Environscreen** C Burke suggested that Alex and Subha Chandar -MDH- consider presenting information about the Environscreen tool to health officers, as this would facilitate the dissemination of crucial knowledge down to local levels. Matthew McConaughy -WICHHD- agreed, noting that Environscreen was new to them as well, and expressed their intent to share this information and set up presentations for health officers. Subha Chandar -MDH- offered to facilitate these efforts with environmental health directors or local health officers.
- **Greenhouse Gas Reduction Spending and Justice 40 Initiative** Noble Smith -MDE- introduced Chris Beck from the Maryland climate team to discuss greenhouse gas reduction spending and the Justice 40 initiative, a federal program aiming to direct at least 40% of grant benefits to disadvantaged communities. Christopher Beck -MDE- explained that MDE is mandated by the Climate Solutions Now Act to annually study state funding for greenhouse gas reduction and the percentage of that funding benefiting disproportionately affected communities, using the Environscreen tool for this analysis. They noted the challenge of state agencies not tracking GHG spending and the new partnership with the Department of Budget and Management to improve data collection for the upcoming December report.
- **Tracking Co-Pollutants and Data Visualization** Sacoby Wilson emphasized the importance of tracking co-pollutants due to their direct and indirect impacts on public health, especially concerning asthma and other respiratory outcomes. They also strongly advocated for visualizing greenhouse gas emissions, reductions, and the allocation of funds, suggesting a sub-tool within Environscreen to map these aspects for greater transparency. Christopher Beck -MDE- confirmed that their report would include mapping elements to display data, and they aim to demonstrate how greenhouse gas reduction efforts simultaneously improve air quality by reducing fossil fuel reliance.
- **Dissemination of Technical Information** Sacoby Wilson highlighted the need for infographics and educational materials to disseminate technical information in forms suitable for different stakeholder groups, including policymakers, academic partners, agency partners, and lay audiences. They stressed that effective dissemination is crucial for ensuring all Marylanders understand and can act upon the information.
- **Scope of GHG Spending Analysis and Plastics Science** Christopher Beck -MDE- clarified that their analysis of state contracts and RFPs for GHG reduction

spending is retrospective and solely focuses on mitigation and GHG reductions, not adaptation or increasing adaptive capacity. Nse Witherspoon raised the issue of plastics and their connection to chronic health issues, urging the commission to consider available science on plastics and their relationship to fossil fuels. Subha Chandar -MDH- agreed that this is an important ongoing conversation for the group to address holistically, beyond siloed perspectives.

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes** Kylan Simpson -MDH- confirmed a quorum for CPAC, allowing the approval of the meeting minutes. Subha Chandar -MDH- initiated the motion to approve the minutes, which included an amendment to incorporate a letter from CPAC to Montgomery County Public Schools regarding construction risks and the superintendent's response. The minutes were approved with these attachments.
- **Baltimore Just Transition Network Recommendations** Tanvi Gadhia, representing the Baltimore Just Transition Network, presented recommendations for increased accountability, transparency, and funding for environmental justice in Maryland. Their recommendations included supporting the Cherish Our Communities Act, seeking input from impacted communities, providing briefings on the EnviroScreen tool and executive order implementation, setting a goal for 40% of state climate funding to benefit disproportionately affected communities by 2026, and building accountability into EJ and Justice 40 implementation.
- **Data Gaps in Hazardous Chemicals and Drinking Water** Veronika Carella, as legislative director for the Maryland Children's Environmental Health Coalition, reiterated concerns about missing data from the Maryland Department of Agriculture on hazardous chemicals like pesticides and fertilizers. They emphasized the need for data on where, when, and how these are applied, especially around schools and residential communities. Veronika Carella also highlighted the EJ commission's mandate on the human right to safe drinking water and the issue of PFAS contamination from specific pesticide applications, providing a case study of a school now on bottled water due to avoidable PFAS contamination.
- **MDA's Stance on PFAS in Pesticides** Kelly Love -MDA- responded to concerns about PFAS in pesticides, stating that under EPA's definition, there are far fewer active ingredients than suggested and that PFAS are not listed on product labels. They offered to have the state chemist speak further on the topic.

- **Annual Report Preparation** C Burke reminded CJ members that their annual report is approaching and encouraged them to provide necessary information to Noble Smith -MDE- for timely completion. Noble Smith -MDE- indicated that a draft report would be shared for comment before the October meeting. Subha Chandar -MDH- added that CPAC is also working on their annual report and will share it with their members.

Suggested next steps

- C Burke will make sure that both commissions have a schedule of what's going on around the state and Baltimore City regarding October National Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week.
- Adam Ortiz -MDE- will clarify if the executive order or MDE envisions the same person from a state agency being on both the CEJSC and the advisory council, or if it recommends a different person.
- The group will think about a data topic or a component of their data that they should look at together that has an EJ and children angle for every joint meeting.
- Subha Chandar -MDH- and Frederick Johnson will coordinate with Adam Ortiz -MDE- on the frequency and engagement of updates for the council meetings, considering opportunities for webinars or other joint activities.
- Subha Chandar -MDH- will look for and share links regarding general outbreak investigations.
- Matthew McConaughey -WICHHD- will reach out through the EJMD link to set up a presentation on the enviro screen for the health officers.
- Noble Smith -MDE- will share the study on greenhouse gas reduction spending with the group for review and reshare the MDA recording from earlier this year.
- C Burke and Noble Smith -MDE- will invite a representative from MDA to the next meeting to discuss Veronica's concerns.

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