

## **Meeting Minutes: CEJSC Meeting**

**Date:** March 25, 2025

**Commissioners in Attendance:** Camille Burke, Dr. Renee Carr, Subha Chandar, Crystal Faison, Kellie Gaither, Tracy Garrett, Paulette Hammond, Andrew Miller, Voncia Molock, John Papagni, Rebecca Rehr, Rachel Lamb, David Simon

### **Other Attendance:**

Noble Smith (MDE), Alex Lima (MDE), Rachel Lamb, Veronica Carella

### **Agenda:**

#### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

- Noble Smith welcomed attendees and introduced Alex Lima as the new Civic Community and Public Engagement Coordinator for CEJSC.

#### **2. Legislative Updates**

- **Chesapeake Bay Legacy Act:** Supported by the commission, passed the House, and is now in the Senate. This bill defines environmentally sustainable farming practices and attaches benefits through DNR.
- **Cherish Act:** Did not pass out of the House. This bill aimed to build a community cumulative impact analysis into MDE permitting actions. The speaker anticipates this concept will reappear next year.
- **PFAS Chemicals Act:** The commission was unable to reach a quorum to provide testimony in support of this bill, despite having a draft letter ready.
- **Department of Social Equity Bill:** This bill is progressing in the state of Maryland.
- **MDE Fees Bill:** Rachel Lamb discussed this departmental bill, which aims to increase permitting fees to increase MDE's capacity, especially for supporting compliance and enforcement in environmental justice communities. The bill has crossed over to the other chamber.
- **Next Generation Energy Act (Speaker and Senate President's bill):** Rebecca Rehr brought attention to this bill, which aims to fast-track new natural gas plants by defining "dispatchable energy" and waiving certain requirements, including public notice, community liaison, community meeting, and the use of EJ screen. This exemption is particularly concerning as the EJ screen provision was added as part of a settlement over a Title VI complaint with the Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission is reportedly working on language to amend this portion of the bill. Monica Brooks expressed strong opposition to removing public notice requirements.

#### **3. Events Calendar**

- Noble Smith is developing an events calendar to help members plan.
- Upcoming meetings are scheduled for April 29th, May 27th, June 24th, and July 29th.
- A joint meeting with the Children's Environmental Health Protection Advisory Council (CEHPAC) is typically held in December, but Subha Chandar noted it can be scheduled at any time.
- **Retreat:**
  - Noble suggested May 27th as a potential date at Jug Bay Sanctuary in

Lothian, Maryland.

- The purpose of the retreat is to evaluate the commission's progress for the 2025 annual report.
- The location, Lothian, is an underserved community.
- The original plan to tour by bus may be difficult due to road infrastructure, but meeting at the sanctuary would still allow for observation of local facilities and engagement with community members for a listening session.
- Subha Chandar noted May 27th is the day after Memorial Day.
- The retreat is usually not open to the public, but a hybrid model, including a community opportunity in the afternoon, is being considered.
- **Chevrolet EJ Action Team Presentation:** Noble suggested scheduling a 20-minute virtual presentation on July 29th from the Chevrolet community regarding their pollution concerns.

#### 4. Public Comment

- **Veronica Carella:** Reiterated concern about the hijacked PFAS chemicals prohibition bill (HB 386/SB 345). Industry amended the bill to redefine PFAS chemicals in Maryland statute, reducing the number of recognized PFAS pesticide chemicals from 66 to 6. This sets a dangerous precedent by removing existing protections and making it difficult to protect environmental justice communities from thousands of pesticides. She urged the commission to oppose the bill and contact Senator Ben Brooks, the bill's sponsor, to prevent it from being introduced for a vote in the Senate. She also highlighted the Maryland Department of Agriculture's alleged failure to enforce EPA product labels, leading to well contamination.
- **Monica Brooks:** Supported Veronica Carella's comments, emphasizing the importance of protecting communities and holding industry accountable.
- Camille agreed to work with Noble to prepare a statement or action for commissioners to vote on and send to Senator Ben Brooks. Veronica will send an email with specifics.
- The commission discussed making it known that they are open to presentations from communities regarding their specific concerns, potentially by putting out an "all call" and circulating information on the MDE website and with other committees, including CEHPAC.
- A calendar of activities, including Earth Day events, will be shared with the commission.

#### Action Items:

- Noble Smith to send an email for commissioners to vote on a letter opposing the amended PFAS chemicals prohibition bill to Senator Ben Brooks, and to share Veronica Carella's contact information and written testimony.
- Noble Smith and Camille to solidify retreat details (date, location, hybrid format if applicable) and share with the commission.
- Noble Smith to reach out to the Chevrolet EJ Action Team to confirm their availability for a July 29th virtual presentation.
- Noble Smith to develop and circulate a preliminary calendar of commission activities and events, including Earth Day events.
- Noble Smith and Camille to discuss strategies for encouraging community presentations at commission meetings.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned.

Sources:

- [CEJSC Meeting - 2025/03/25 09:54 EDT - Recording](#)