

Meeting Minutes: CEJSC Meeting

Date: September 23, 2025

Commissioners in Attendance: Camille Burke, Del. Regina Boyce, Joseph Griffith, Sacoby Wilson, Tyler Brice, John Papagni, Andrew Miller, Rebecca Rehr, Robin Bailey, Aneca Atkinson, Subha Chandar, Voncia Molock, Tracy Garrett

Other Attendance:

Adam Ortiz, Alicia Mezu, Ben Gitterman, Camille Burke, Frederick Banks (Vice Chair), Megan Weil Latshaw, Alexander Lehmann, Paul Ferraro, Nse Witherspoon, Matthew McConaughy, Kylan Simpson (staff), Nevan Edwards, Noble Smith, Alex Lima, Veronica Carella, Frederick Johnson, Christopher Beck, Tanvi Ghadia

Agenda:

1. Welcome

- The meeting was opened by CEJSC Chair Camille Burke and CEHPAC Chair Subha Chandar.
- Introductions were made, including participation from state agency representatives, legislators, and community members.
- Quorum was discussed; CEHPAC initially did not have quorum to approve minutes, but later achieved quorum for approval.

2. Briefing on Executive Order on Environmental Justice

- Nevan Edwards (MDE) summarized the new Executive Order, emphasizing Maryland's commitment to integrating environmental justice into agency decision-making.
- Focus on data-driven solutions including the MD EnviroScreen tool.
- Clarified distinction between:
 - Interagency EJ & Equity Advisory Council (statewide strategy)
 - CEJSC (critical issue identification and recommendations).

3. Questions raised on:

- Council membership overlaps.
- Resource allocation for compliance.
- How CEHPAC/CEJSC may engage with Advisory Council.
- Adam Ortiz (MDE) noted first Advisory Council meeting will occur within four weeks.
- Dr. Sacoby Wilson stressed importance of dedicated resources; otherwise the EO risks being symbolic.

4. MDEnviroScreen Tool

- Noble Smith (MDE) presented overview: EJ score aggregates pollution burden, environmental effects, and sensitive populations.
- Alex Lima (MDE) announced public webinars, including interest in Spanish-language sessions.
- Dr. Wilson asked about data availability and rollout engagement with Latinx organizations.
- Community engagement emphasized (outreach to Brandywine, Eastern Shore, etc.).
- Requests: downloadable data, newsletter/social media graphics, and presentations for local health officers.

- Matthew McConaughey (WICHHD) agreed to coordinate sharing with county health officers.

5. **Environmental Health Data Sources**

- Subha Chandar (MDH) highlighted integration of health data (e.g., asthma, low birth weight) into EnviroScreen.
- Mentioned Maryland Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (CDC-funded).
- State dashboards expanding into overdose, biosurveillance, firearm violence, etc.

6. **Discussion on:**

- Outbreak investigations (e.g., measles) – efforts underway to integrate into biosurveillance.
- Need for an integrated one-stop platform.
- Incorporation of race/health proxies into tools to better visualize inequities.
- Community feedback: Tools must be understandable and actionable for impacted communities (example: Lothian asthma rates).
- Joseph Griffiths (MDP) suggested dedicating agenda time to topical data deep dives at future meetings.

7. **Briefing on Justice40 / GHG Reduction Spending**

- Noble Smith (MDE) introduced Christopher Beck (MDE).
- Justice40 overview: 40% of federal climate funding should benefit disadvantaged communities.
- Maryland Climate Solutions Now Act requires annual study of GHG reduction spending.
- Challenges: state agencies do not consistently track GHG spending.
- Partnership with DBM to improve reporting by December.

8. **Discussion:**

- Co-pollutants and health outcomes (asthma, respiratory illness).
- Visualizing GHG emissions and reductions via mapping.
- Dissemination of findings using infographics for multiple audiences.
- Plastics and chronic health concerns raised by Nse Witherspoon.

9.

10. **Public Comment**

- Several participants emphasized the importance of ensuring that technical information (such as EnviroScreen scores, greenhouse gas reports, and health indicators) is translated into plain language and actionable resources for communities. Tracy Garrett specifically raised concerns about high asthma rates among children in Lothian and the direct impact on school performance, urging that data tools be presented in ways that help families advocate for solutions.
- Community members reiterated the need for the Executive Order on Environmental Justice to be backed by adequate resources. Without clear commitments, they expressed concern that implementation could be symbolic rather than transformative. Calls were made for agencies to not only adopt EJ metrics but also to engage directly with the lived experiences of residents in disproportionately impacted communities.
- Speakers aligned with the Baltimore Just Transition Network highlighted the need for strong accountability mechanisms for Justice40 implementation. Recommendations included:
 - Ensuring at least 40% of climate funding reaches disproportionately affected

- communities by 2026.
- Providing regular, accessible briefings to impacted communities on how funds are distributed.
 - Building transparency into both the rollout of the EnviroScreen tool and the Executive Order.
 - Concerns were raised by Veronika Carella on the lack of detailed, publicly available data about the use of hazardous pesticides and fertilizers near schools and homes. Community members stressed that this gap undermines the human right to safe drinking water. The issue of PFAS contamination was highlighted with a case example of a Maryland school forced to rely on bottled water due to pesticide-related PFAS exposure. Calls were made for MDA and other agencies to provide clearer, accessible reporting on chemical applications and their potential health impacts.
 - Additional testimony urged both commissions to consider plastics and fossil fuel impacts on chronic health conditions, and to ensure that co-pollutants (not just GHGs) are factored into analysis and reporting.

4. Action Items:

- C. Burke to share Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week schedule.
- Adam Ortiz to clarify agency representation on CEJSC/Advisory Council.
- Future joint meetings to include topical data discussions with an EJ + children's health angle.
- Subha Chandar & Frederick Johnson to coordinate updates with Adam Ortiz.
- Noble Smith to share GHG reduction spending study and reshare MDA recording.
- Invite MDA representative to address hazardous chemical concerns at next meeting

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned.

Sources:

- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rbU8LGubL973TRt9c6R9JCoRUEcaGYhK/view?usp=sharing>