



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE
Meeting Minutes – August 7, 2020
Virtual Only

Task Force members present:

Victor Rodriguez (Co-Chair)
David Mendoza (Co-Chair)
Cassie Bordelon
Michael Furze
Millie Piazza
Leah Kintner
Allison Camden

Laura Johnson
Ignacio Marquez
Tomas Madrigal
Emily Pinckney
Rowena Pineda
Peter Godlewski
Judy Twedt

Task Force members absent:

Sonia Bumpus
John Stuhlmiller

Task Force staff present:

Elise Rasmussen, Project Manager
Hannah Fernald, Administrative
Coordinator

Esmael Lopez, Community
Engagement Coordinator

Guests and other participants:

Christy Curwick-Hoff, Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities
Melanie Hisaw, State Board of Health Staff
Sarah Vorpahl, Department of Commerce
Kristin Evered, Pollution Liability Insurance Agency
David Ortiz, Cascadia College
Beverly Parsons, Kitsap Environmental Coalition
Liepa Braciulyte, Department of Commerce
John Rothlin, Avista
Jim Cahill, Office of Financial Management
Christine Stalie, Results Washington
Jean Chilinski, Spokane Transportation Collaborative
LinhPhung Huynh
Sameer Ranade, Front & Centered
Mike Ellison
Ashley Mocco Powell

David Mendoza, Task Force Co-Chair, called the public meeting to order at 9:03 am and read from a prepared statement (on file).

1. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

Esmael Lopez, Task Force Community Outreach Coordinator, acknowledged the Duwamish people, Chief Seattle and many others that have been caretakers of this land.

Co-Chair Rodriguez made statements (on file) reflecting on the operating principles of EJTF and the community agreements to guide the EJTF throughout the meeting.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Co-Chair Mendoza read a statement on Public Comments (on file).

Kim Conner, Executive Director of WA State Independent Living Council, said that she supports DOH moving forward in counting people with disabilities in COVID-19 data.

Beverly Parsons, Kitsap Environmental Coalition, thanked the Task Force for the excellent letters sent to the Governor and Legislators. She said that she would love to see all agencies work through the agreements and principles of the TF and with the community.

Ashley Mocorro, Environmental Monitoring Data talked about a meeting of WA constituents/citizens with concerns regarding pesticide use. She discussed Citizens Science, and how to fund more community science initiatives. Co-Chair David Mendoza asked her to send more information to the Task Force to learn more.

Mike Ellison, from Vancouver, said he agreed with Ms. Mocorro. He wondered if interfacing with OSPI could give opportunity for students and groups like labs and others to work out in the community.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Member Johnson recommended swapping EJ definition with the GARE framework. Member Furze asked for clarification, switching items 5 & 9.

Motion: The Task Force approves the August 7, 2020 agenda as amended with the recommendation to switch items 5 & 9.

Motion/Second: Judy Twedt/Laura Johnson. Approved unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MAY 18, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

Motion: The Task Force adopts the May 18, 2020 meeting minutes.

Motion/Second: Allison Camden/Michael Furze. Tomas Madrigal abstained. Motion approved.

5. GARE FRAMEWORK

(The Task Force did not have time to discuss this item)

6. DISCUSSION: MEASURABLE GOALS & MODEL POLICY DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Co-Chair Mendoza initiated a discussion about agency barriers regarding recommendations requiring budget or legislative action. Members discussed the following:

- How not having resources to implement recommendations would cause problems.
- The need to call out recommendations that agencies could implement with existing authority and resources versus those that would require statutory authority changes.
- Clarify what can be done now, what can be done in near term with additional resources, and what needs to be done in the long term with us all working together.
- More comfort with recommendations that can be done with existing authority.

Ms. Rasmussen, staff, shared an overview slide depicting the relationships between draft recommendations (on file). She added that best practices are to integrate community engagement and EHD mapping guidance throughout the implementation of recommendations.

Co-Chair Mendoza, talked about discussions that happened after the draft recommendations were first shared, including public meetings, individual meetings with members and agency leads, meetings with communities, and a feedback form.

Ms. Rasmussen, said community engagement work has been strong, including feedback from advocates, academics, and practitioners, members, researchers, and other states, then shared recommendation language (on file).

Members discussed each recommendation:

Measurable Goal Draft Recommendation Discussion:

- Results WA is redefining how they are doing their work, making this a good time to figure out how to integrate EJ and equity into their work.
- Important to have understandable metrics that are public, transparently track how progress is being made, and identify highly impacted communities across the state so they are engaged throughout the goal developing and tracking processes.

- We need qualitative stories to understand the nuances of what the data say, in addition to quantitative data.
- Need methods to encourage a longer term vision that both reduces harm and focuses on the outcomes we want to see.
- More conversation is needed to align EJ definition with operationalizing “community” in the recommendations.
- Important to capture stories in addition to quantitative data to shine a light on experiences that can be invisible or lost in numbers, including experiences from holding intersecting identities. Oral history efforts to inform the gaps in LEP communities for example helped to shift a deficit approach to an asset based approach of multilingual communities engaged by a statewide Language Access Plan

Measurable Goal Proposed Motion:

The EJ Taskforce tentatively approves the recommendation that a standard methodology be developed that tracks, evaluates, and publishes environmental justice and health goals as discussed in today’s conversation. The taskforce directs staff and Co-Chairs to further refine this recommendation and incorporate it into the draft report.

Motion: [Judy Twedt/Millie Piazza](#). Motion approved.

EJ in Strategic Plans Draft Recommendation Discussion:

- Recommendation is doable and implementable for State agencies the way it is crafted. Encouraging agencies to do this good work.
- This recommendation will require many agencies to make new investments, and will require reassessing where investments are going. Smaller agencies may have more difficulty implementing.
- There is a difference between strategic plan and agency protocols and processes – sometimes they are directly linked and sometimes they are not. Perhaps the “protocols and processes” piece can be included in the strategies for implementation and not in the recommendation itself.
- Important to articulate the difference between EJ and equity.

EJ in Strategic Plans Proposed Motion:

The EJ Taskforce tentatively approves the recommendation that agencies should incorporate EJ into their strategic plans as discussed in today’s conversation. The taskforce directs staff and Co-Chairs to further refine this recommendation and incorporate it into the draft report.

Motion: [Laura Johnson/Michael Furze](#). Motion approved.

EJ Staff Draft Recommendation Discussion:

- We recognize that we need dedicated EJ staff to implement these Task Force recommendations.

- Having a single point of contact helps to ensure tracking and accountability - that the goal is to have a number of staff working on EJ but that there should be a point person.
- It will be important to ensure that EJ staff are connected to agency leadership.
- Include a clear percentage of staff dedicated to this work, including senior leadership.
- Refer to the [RCW](#) requiring all agencies to have a Tribal liaison to inform this recommendation.

EJ Staff Proposed Motion:

The EJ Taskforce tentatively approves the recommendation that agencies have at least one staff position dedicated to integrating EJ principles into agency actions as discussed in today’s conversation. The taskforce directs staff and Co-Chairs to further refine this recommendation and incorporate it into the draft report.

Motion: Millie Piazza/Judy Twedt. Approved unanimously.

The Task Force took a break at 12:00 p.m. and reconvened at 12:45 p.m.

7. DISCUSSION: MEASURABLE GOALS & MODEL POLICY DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Permanent EJ Workgroup Draft Recommendation Discussion:

- Define what we mean by “overburdened communities” in this recommendation. This is not necessarily a stand-in term for racial and ethnic groups, but rather “frontline communities” or communities that are experiencing EJ issues in WA.

EJ Workgroup Proposed Motion:

The EJ Taskforce tentatively approves the recommendation that a permanent EJ interagency workgroup be convened as discussed in today’s conversation. The taskforce directs staff and Co-Chairs to further refine this recommendation and incorporate it into the draft report.

Motion: Leah Kintner/Millie Piazza. Approved unanimously.

Contracting with Local Community Organizations Draft Recommendation Discussion:

- Need to be careful about language (e.g. proven track record) and incorporating lived experience.
- Just thinking about contracting may not be enough. Some organizations may need capacity building.
- The spirit of the recommendation is a good but that it needs to be refined more.
- Task Force decided to create a workgroup to further refine this recommendation.

- Connect with Department of Enterprise Services, Office of Financial Management, Office of Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises to continue to refine this draft recommendation.
- Look to the Department of Health’s Emergency Community Outreach Contracts as a model for this work.

Contracting with Local Community Organizations Proposed Motion:

Create a workgroup to refine the recommendation about contracting with community based organizations. Work to be completed by August 21st.

Motion: Tomas Madrigal/Judy Twedt. Approved unanimously.

Amending Community Engagement RCWs Draft Recommendation Discussion

- Rulemaking funding could be limited if we needed to pay for these kinds of services, but it’s about prioritizing resources for meaningful community engagement.
- This draft recommendation should be connected to the community engagement recommendations.
- We have to compensate people for giving us their information and their experiences.
- Discussion about two pieces of the recommendation. One about removing barriers and a second about agencies needing to invest in community engagement.
- Draft recommendation rework (dividing into two parts): directing agencies to increase financial investment for community engagement; and removing barriers related to procurement of good and services. These could be distinct actions aimed at multiple audiences.

No motion proposed for this draft recommendation at this time.

Environmental Justice Analyses Draft Recommendation Discussion

- Is “environmental health analyses” is the right language, feels like we are missing the environmental justice piece. Perhaps we should be looking to an “Environmental Justice Analysis”.
- Discussion about needing to add back in that the EJ analyses need to be used to prioritize overburdened communities.
- Member Kintner discussed a comment from her stakeholder group. They initially looked at the first bit of language around cumulative impact analysis, and they recommended considering evaluation questions, appropriateness of questions etc., as well as how results will be disseminated. Instead of being implemented by individual agencies, it would be more efficient to conduct at a large scale to reduce confusing results.
- Members agreed that this is an important area to acknowledge, along with being mindful of communities on the edge of poverty.

- Whenever there is a new funding source, unless it is very intentional, those funds should be strategically addressing EJ - when funds are distributed, there need to be oversight in how those funds are spent.

No motion proposed for this draft recommendation at this time.

Incorporate EJ considerations and procedures into a range of state environmental laws draft recommendation discussion

- Appreciate the higher level recommendation as there are many different laws where EJ can be better considered.
- Concerns about State agency alignment with existing processes (e.g., permitting – there is a need for the State to clearly state at the beginning of the permitting process if a project cannot continue due to EJ concerns, so businesses are not blind sighted).
- Some members doesn't understand what the push back is about making EJ a mandatory element.

No motion proposed for this draft recommendation at this time.

Dedicated Revenue for Overburdened Communities Draft Recommendation Discussion

- Separate the “high labor standard requirement” portion of this recommendation into a new recommendation
- Members discussed the pros and cons of including a specific percentage for the dedicated revenue amount. Perhaps this recommendation can be connected to “prioritization” language in the EJ definition.
- Member Madrigal suggested that this recommendation could be added onto the new workgroup because the topics dovetail.

No motion proposed for this draft recommendation at this time.

Reparations Taskforce Draft Recommendation Discussion

Co-Chair Mendoza said there are direct connections between reparations and EJ. This recommendation is for the Legislature to create a Task Force to consider reparations for the black community and to consider the impact of racism on other communities as well.

Co-Chair Rodriguez clarified that they are looking for direction from the TF about whether to move forward with this or not.

- What are the goals and outcomes of this Task Force? Who will participate? Is it community leaders? Concern about the language “consideration the impact” – what does this mean? Is it enough?

- The crux of the recommendation is to set up a TF to determine whether reparations should be implemented and if so then recommend processes/standards.
- Unsure if this is the group that should be initiating this work and wants to acknowledge that, so keeping at a high level would allow them to focus time on making their recommendations robust.
- This is a recommendation for a TF to have the conversation - this conversation keeps getting shut down and members strongly endorses the recommendation.
- Do not compare the oppression between various marginalized groups in this recommendation language as it could be misinterpreted in a way that minimizes the injustices these communities continue to experience.

No motion proposed for this draft recommendation at this time.

The Task Force took a break at 3:15 p.m. and reconvened at 3:20 p.m.

8. DISCUSSION CONTINUED: MEASURABLE GOALS & MODEL POLICY DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Co-Chair Mendoza provided a briefing on the following emerging policy ideas related to improving enforcement of environmental laws.

- How public can report violations
- That agencies have staff and resources to provide guidance to businesses to be compliant with current laws and to investigate violations.
- Making supplemental environmental projects a standard practice in settlement negotiations across agencies with enforcement responsibilities.
- Creating concurrent jurisdiction for state agencies
- Expanding private rights of action to allow law suits to be filed by the public against violators.

Co-Chair Mendoza said these are big ideas and wanted to put them on the table to consider as recommendations based on input from communities.

9. TASK FORCE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

(Task Force did not have time to discuss this item)

10. DISCUSSION: WASHINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE DEFINITION

The Task Force discussed and amended the EJ definition based on member and community feedback (on file).

Motion: Approve the EJ definition with a commitment to continue to refine before our next meeting.

Motion/Second: Tomas Madrigal/Millie Piazza. Approved unanimously.

11. DISCUSSION: DRAFT STATEWIDE EJ PRINCIPLES

(Task Force did not have time to discuss this item)

12. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE PRESENTATION

Subcommittee Co-Chair MacClellan reviewed all recommendation materials with task force members before pausing for discussion and a vote.

Member Twedt said that the nuance between communities and populations can be a powerful tool. She said that adding this nuanced and intersectional lens to community engagement, specifically in item 1 in this document would be key.

Motion: The EJ Taskforce tentatively approves the Community Engagement Key recommendations. The taskforce directs the Community Engagement Subcommittee, staff, and Co-Chairs to further refine this recommendation and incorporate it into the draft report.

Motion/Second: Tomas Madrigal/Judy Twedt. Approved unanimously.

13. MAPPING SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

(Task Force did not have time to discuss this item)

14. TASK FORCE BUSINESS: REVIEWING TIMELINE & NEXT STEPS

Motion: Approve the September 11, 2020 meeting from roughly 9am-4pm.

Motion/Second: David Mendoza/Judy Twedt. Approved unanimously.

15. TASK FORCE REFLECTIONS

(Task Force did not have time to discuss this item)

ADJOURNMENT

David Mendoza, Task Force Co-Chair, adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

Victor Rodriguez, Task Force Co-Chair

David Mendoza, Task Force Co-Chair

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PO Box 47990 • Olympia, Washington • 98504-7990
360-236-4110 • wsboh@sboh.wa.gov • sboh.wa.gov