



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

Meeting Minutes – September 25, 2020
Virtual Only

Task Force members present:

David Mendoza, Co-Chair
Victor Rodriguez, Co-Chair
Tomas Madrigal
Michael Furze
Allison Camden
Laura Johnson
Millie Piazza
Judy Twedt

Stephanie Celt
Peter Godlewski
Leah Kintner
Larry Epstein
Emily Pinckney
Sonia Bumpus
Ignacio Marquez

Task Force members absent:

John Stuhlmiller
Rowena Pineda

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

David Mendoza, Task Force Co-Chair, called the public meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. and read from a prepared statement (on file).

1. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

David Mendoza, and Victor Rodriguez, Task Force Co-chairs,

Esmael Lopez, Task Force Staff, gave a land acknowledgement to the generations of caretakers of these lands. He shared that he hopes the work and recommendations from the EJTF will help to protect and improve the environment.

Co-Chair Rodriguez reviewed the Task Force community agreements and operating principles (on file).

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Co-Chair Mendoza read from a prepared statement and welcomed public comment.

Ms. Rasmussen shared the written comment from Dr. Zachary Gold (on file).

David Ortiz, founding faculty member Cascadia College, commented on his support and appreciation for the work of the EJTF. He referenced RCW 43.376, the Government to Government Relationship with Tribes, and other entities to engage in community feedback and being more intentional about creating bold steps.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Co-chair Rodriguez motioned to amend the agenda and move the break to after the report discussion.

Motion: The Task Force approves the September 25, 2020 agenda, as amended to move the break after the report discussion.

Motion/Second: Laura Johnson/Allison Camden. Approved unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

Motion: The Task Force adopts the September 11, 2020 meeting minutes.

Motion/Second: Allison Camden/Judy Twedt. Approved unanimously.

5. PRESENTATION: EJ TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT

Ms. Rasmussen shared the current status of the report draft, and what to expect in the final draft, and commented that she's working with Esmael Lopez (EJTF's community engagement coordinator) to make sure that community voice is woven throughout the report.

Laura Johnson, Member, talked about Washington Tracking Network and the Environmental Health Disparities Map guidance and recommendations. She stated that the goal for this section of the report is to use plain talk. Millie Piazza, Member, added that the report will include an appendix with more of the technical information about mapping tools.

Michael Furze, Member, asked if we are approving an executive summary that isn't complete. Task Force Staff confirmed it isn't any new content, and that the executive summary will only consist of information that the TF has already reviewed.

Co-Chair Rodriguez acknowledged some members aren't comfortable approving the report before it is final, and members discussed what it would mean to approve the report today:

- A commitment from the Co-chairs and staff that nothing will be added to the final report that isn't true to the work and movement of the EJTF.
- The Task Force understands that the executive summary will not include new content not already approved by the EJTF.

Co-Chair Rodriguez thanked everyone for the dialog and said we need to be true to our work and agreements, the people of Washington deserve it.

6. MEMBER COMMENTS: EJ TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT

Co-Chair Rodriguez said the goal is to hear from each member about what is in their hearts and minds and what is needed to strengthen the report:

Co-Chair Victor Rodriguez

- Honored to be a part of this work.
- Feels good about the recommendations because they have the potential to improve the way government serves Washingtonians.
- Work is long term and multigenerational, and he feels good about the relationships they've developed.
- Expressed gratitude to staff, TF members, and community members.
- He's ready to approve the report.

Member Emily Pinckney

- Happy to be a part of the process.
- Recommendations for government accountability to communities is important to her.
- This is multigenerational work. This is just the beginning.

Member Tomas Madrigal

- Assigned by community to community development. Shared community quotes (on file).
- Discussed how this is an agency heavy task force and the recommendations focus on the minutia. He can't fill the silence left by the community members who were not on the TF. The need to access land in the state and to allow for reparations are necessary to move toward a sustainable food system. He cannot speak for all farmworkers but can provide policy recommendations. Shared three of many recommendations from the farmworker tribunals.

Member Judy Twedt

- Reiterated that this is a multigenerational process. Shared governance and community participation is important.
- Wanted to clarify the language of impacted vs. burdened in the definition.

Member Peter Godlewski

- Learned a lot, and appreciated the good conversations. Enjoyed hearing different perspectives. Grateful for the process.
- Has some concerns and will be providing a minority report because there are a few recommendations his organization is uncomfortable with.

Member Leah Kintner

- Grateful for the ability to participate as an alternate with Larry Epstein. Learned a lot. Appreciated staff work. Put together an excellent set of recommendations.
- Puget Sound Partnership is about advancing environmental issues – can't do work without also tackling EJ.
- Appreciative for the subcommittees.

Member Stephanie Celt

- Expressed appreciation. Has learned a lot.

- Feels positive about the report. Have gone through a bunch of revisions to get to where we are.
- Appreciates the considerations language for the recommendations. Wants to ensure this will work for them and they can implement things to the best of their ability.
- For the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), they generate revenue for trusts, they have a context in which they are working to meet requirements to maximize revenue. Their intention is to do the most where they are legally able to do so.
- Place where DNR trust mandate is referenced (page 67) need to add “and constitutional” because that is where their mandate comes from.
- As members they are to endorse recommendations and entrust staff to finalize the report, and she feels good about that.
- They are likely to submit a member statement to use the opportunity to clarify what DNR’s trust mandate is about.
- Agency has appreciated the opportunity to work with other members on other policy issues as well.

Member Michael Furze

- Appreciates opportunity to get to know members.
- Thanked co-chairs for their work and staff for synthesizing members and community member’s comments.
- Thanked other commerce staff.
- Looks forward to seeing completed report.
- Section on paving the path toward EJ. Doesn’t remember talking about police brutality or climate change and wants to know where we drew that content from.
- Some modifications that he’ll share related to clean energy transformation act to ensure accuracy.
- Had made earlier comments re GMA – recommendation from Commerce and to focus on SEPA instead of GMA, part of that is technical and part is that lots of other process is going on with GMA and needs to have alignment to move the conversation forward.
- Page 36 – second paragraph reads like a recommendation. Agencies should consider prioritizing the map... then on the next page they go into the recommend recommendations.
- Start with the model policy and measureable goals recommendations first and then have subcommittee work after that. Would be nice to synthesize all that work. Three sets of recommendations, principles and definition—how do they all work together?
- Participating in this process has allowed him to bring ideas back to the Department of Commerce and they are putting forward decision packages to implement this work in Commerce.

Member Allison Camden

- This work has been timely due to disproportionate impacts due to COVID.
- Appreciates the leadership and approach of Co-Chairs.
- Appreciates Elise’s work to synthesize member comments.
- Has been able to bring the work back to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Expects the recommendations to be implemented.

Member Laura Johnson

- Supports previous comments made, as well as how well community has shown up.
- She regrets that the task force was not able to meet in person, but appreciates that we were able to have these conversations remotely.
- She did not have any concerns with the report, and appreciates the expansion of the definition and inclusion of the importance of slavery but she likes the old language of the recommendation better.

Member Millie Piazza

- Still trying to make a few edits in the mapping recommendations.
- Noted that there will be content around the history section of the report, and will work with staff to incorporate this.
- This report is not totally inclusive, and that there are many topics this report does not discuss or explore.

Co-Chair David Mendoza

- Two obligations as a Co-Chair: Primary is to represent Front and Centered – to understand the range of concerns community has. Invested in local community organizations to hear directly what community was thinking and seeing in their areas. That has guided him. He has wanted that voice to be reflected in the work. Also as a Co-Chair, he worked to ensure voices were being balanced. He wanted everyone's thoughts and opinions reflected in the report.

Staff, Elise Rasmussen went back to address outstanding items that members brought to the discussion:

- Ms. Rasmussen needed clarity on the draft reparations recommendation language (on file) because we can't make changes outside of this meeting. Members discussed how to ensure that the recommendation reflects that reparations are not only to redress health disparities, it is about working to correct past harms. With this said, the TF also discussed how this recommendation fits within the TF's scope of work.

Member Piazza suggested this edit for consideration based on TF's discussion for the draft reparations recommendation: "As one strategy for achieving environmental justice, Washington State government should study reparations as a mechanism to address health disparities and historical harms affecting overburdened communities. The State should focus on the unpaid debts from slavery and colonization, the legacy of redlining, treaty violations, forced exclusion, and neighborhood segregation in WA, as well as the impact that systemic racism has had on Black, Native, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian communities and others."

7. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL: EJ TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT

Motion: The Task Force approves the report in concept and as amended throughout today's conversation. The Task Force understands that the executive summary will not include new content not already approved by the TF. The Task Force directs staff to

incorporate the amendments, to share with members for review, and gives the co-chairs authority to finalize the report for submission to the Governor and Legislature.

Motion/Second: Emily Pinckney/Judy Twedt. Approved unanimously.

The Task Force took a break at 12:32 p.m. and reconvened at 12:42 p.m.

8. TASK FORCE BUSINESS: REVIEWING TIMELINE & NEXT STEPS

Co-Chair Rodriguez emphasized that though this task force is coming to a close, the Health Disparities Council will continue to exist and monitor the results of the work of this task force. Christy Curwick-Hoff further explained the role the council will have for this work and offered contact information to stay involved and informed.

Co-Chair Mendoza discussed plans for the report moving forward, including continued collaboration with the Governor's office. Ms. Rasmussen will follow up in an email to the task force.

9. TASK FORCE REFLECTIONS

Co-Chair Rodriguez asked members of the public and the EJTF what their hopes are for this report, as well as any other thoughts. He shared that we only have one home as a human family, and we need to come together to protect it for future generations.

Both Co-Chairs shared words of thanks and encouragement for the EJTF, staff, and members of the community.

Ms. Rasmussen closed with her hopes for this report: that community sees themselves reflected in the report, like members can be proud of the report, and that the recommendations live on and are acted upon. She also thanked EJTF members, Co-Chairs and staff for their time, work and commitment.

ADJOURNMENT

David Mendoza, Task Force Co-chair, adjourned the meeting at 1:05 p.m.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

Victor Rodriguez, Task Force Co-chair

David Mendoza, Task Force Co-chair

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