

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
OF THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL  
September 12, 2023**

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL (CAC) MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Bob Barkanic	James Schmid
Jacqueline Bonomo	John St. Clair
Jamie Bracey-Green	Thad Stevens
Cynthia Carrow	John Walliser
Duane Mowery	Jim Welty
Trisha Salvia	Tim Weston

**CAC STAFF PRESENT:**

Max Schultz, Interim Executive Director, Citizens Advisory Council

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Vice Chairman Tim Weston called the meeting to order at 12:35 PM.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 11, 2023**

Vice Chairman Tim Weston solicited additions or corrections to the July 11, 2023 Minutes. Hearing none, Vice Chairman Weston requested a motion to approve the Minutes.

**Thad Stevens moved for approval of the July 11 Minutes. James Schmid seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The Minutes were unanimously approved.**

**DEP UPDATE**

The DEP Update was provided by Max Schultz, CAC Interim Director.

***2024 Climate Impacts Assessment and Climate Action Plan***

The Climate Change Act of 2008 requires the development and update of a Climate Impacts Assessment (CIA) and Climate Action Plan (CAP) every three years. The CIA is a risk-based approach that identifies the likelihood of climate hazards, their impacts, and the consequences by sector. The CAP is an assessment of costs, benefits, and impacts to Pennsylvanians and creates an action plan to help the Commonwealth to reach its climate goals. While the CAP lays the framework for legislative action, it also includes adaptation mechanisms to enable Pennsylvanians to adapt to climate change. While both reports are still a work in progress, the final reports for both the CIA and the CAP will be completed by the end of 2023 and June 2024, respectively.

***PITT/DOH: Pennsylvania Health and Environment Studies***

On August 15, 2023, the University of Pittsburgh and the PA Department of Health (DOH) co-hosted a public meeting to announce the results of the Pennsylvania Health and Environment Studies. The epidemiological studies examined the prevalence of childhood cancers, asthma, and negative birth outcomes in proximity to unconventional natural gas development in southwestern Pennsylvania. The studies were conducted from 2021-2023 and relied on health records that

included data from 1990-2020. The public meeting provided an opportunity for questions to be answered by the lead researchers from the University of Pittsburgh, as well as DOH senior staff. DEP's Deputy Secretary for Oil & Gas Management attended but did not answer questions as the focus of the meeting was purely on the three health studies rather than DEP's role. DEP has engaged with DOH on the study and recognizes there is limited information in the study regarding exposure pathways related to oil and gas activity and health outcomes but remains committed to following the science and meeting its duties to protect public health, safety, and the environment.

### ***Environmental Justice Planning***

DEP will soon publish in the *PA Bulletin* the adoption of the new EJ Interim Final Policy. The new policy updates where EJ considerations are applicable and includes the PennEnviroScreen screening tool, a publicly available state-of-the-art mapping tool that will allow DEP to more accurately identify communities facing environmental justice issues. Public comment meetings are being scheduled with the dates soon to be announced in the *PA Bulletin*.

### ***Climate Action for Environmental Justice Communities***

The Energy Programs Office (EPO) is developing a strategy to better understand environmental justice communities' funding priorities and maximize the deployment of federal funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act to environmental justice communities. The EPO engaged Preservation Design Partnership (PDS) to lead community engagement sessions and develop a report summarizing the feedback. The PDS report will provide an accounting of the top funding priorities raised by EJ communities. This feedback will inform both the 2024 Climate Impacts Assessment and Climate Action Plan. The report is expected to be released soon and will follow up with a federal funding prioritization likely in the first quarter of 2024.

Q&A included discussion about published papers doubting the correlation between active gas well proximity and various health conditions and whether DEP would consider identifying three or four communities that have been disproportionately impacted by environmental justice and make those communities the poster children for environmental sustainability. A presentation from the Energy Programs Office was suggested.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

### ***Tom Pike, Protect PT***

Mr. Pike stated that a Right-To-Know request was filed by *Inside Climate News* which revealed an attempt by the Shapiro Administration to place the fate of RGGI into the hands of a secret committee comprised largely by corporate polluters and their lobbyists. Fifteen western PA environmental organizations signed a letter, drafted by Protect PT, to Governor Shapiro calling for the disbanding of the secret committee and to prepare for the implementation of RGGI. Though the CAC is not the correct venue for this complaint, there is no correct venue. The meetings, agenda, minutes, and decisions of the secret committee are not public. Protect PT calls on the CAC to make its voice heard to those who have the power to kill RGGI.

The University of Pittsburgh and Department of Health study found strong links between fracking and severe asthma attacks, as well as a 5-7-fold increase in incidents of lymphoma for

those who live nearby. Protect PT calls upon DEP to exercise its full rulemaking authority to establish reasonable setbacks from fracking infrastructure to protect human health and wellbeing. Act 1, Section 27 entitles all Pennsylvanians to clean air and water. DEP has existing statutory authority under the Clean Streams Act to establish minimum setbacks that set fracking infrastructure at a certain distance away from water bodies in order to protect those rights. Protect PT requests that DEP identify a legal pathway to establish health and safety buffers between fracking infrastructure and water bodies, as well as protected structures, to the maximum extent practicable.

***Barbara Brandom***

***Physicians for Social Responsibility***

Dr. Brandom recently read a report dated September 7 about injection wells in Ohio that were shut down after contamination was noticed. Pennsylvania has the same geologic issues as Ohio, and Dr. Brandom believes permitting of Class 2 injection wells in PA must be done only with great care. Fracking waste contains highly toxic organic compounds which are carcinogenic, PFAS have many adverse health effects, and heavy metals with very long half lives have been associated with cancers of the bone, liver, and breast. Fracking waste can migrate to abandoned wells and be vented to the surface, extending the areas of impact by toxic liquid, and complicates clean-up. Placement of injection wells in rural areas conflicts with Pennsylvania citizens' Constitutional right to clean air and water.

**RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH CARBON CAPTURE AND SEQUESTRATION**

***Scott Quillinan***

***Senior Director of Research, University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources***

Looking from the lens of Wyoming, Mr. Quillinan discussed the regulatory framework in Wyoming, carbon capture and sequestration projects in that state, and the risks and solutions related to loss of containment, induced seismicity, policy, financials, and social license to operate.

Q&A included career pathways for extractive industries, tax incentives for companies who sequester, regulatory framework and consensus, and the availability of regulatory resources in Wyoming.

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POLICY**

***Justin Dula, Director of the Office of Environmental Justice***

***EJ Policy and PennEnviroScreen***

Details were provided on the EJ Interim Final Policy to be adopted on September 16, 2023. The Interim Final Policy includes more clear and robust definitions, describes where the policy applies, introduces the PennEnviroScreen, seeks proactive community engagement, and enhances public participation process.

Q&A involved the Policy's underlying data, CAC community engagement, and concerns about burdening the regulated community.

**CAC COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

***Strategic Issues***

The subcommittee met last week and talked generally about the implications of the decision to focus on carbon capture and hydrogen hubs. The first step will be to catalog the questions that DEP will have to grapple with moving forward. The subcommittee would like to bring in speakers to assist with getting up to speed on the issues. Regular meetings of the subcommittee have been scheduled.

***Policy & Regulatory Oversight***

A meeting was held but there was no agenda. No air quality regulations have come before the subcommittee.

***Public Participation***

Mitch Hescox is no longer with the CAC. The next meeting of the subcommittee will be on September 28.

**NEW BUSINESS/OPEN DISCUSSION**

Jim Welty has made a nomination to the Oil & Gas Technical Advisory Board. Amanda Veazey is a geologist with the Well Done Foundation focused on plugging abandoned and orphaned wells. Her bio will be distributed to the Council. The deadline for submitting nominations will be September 26, and the nominations will be put on the table at the October CAC meeting.

Following up on comments from last month's CAC meeting that the Council's comments on the Fifth Act 54 Report on the impacts of underground mining should be sent to the Governor and the appropriate Committees in the General Assembly, and having been already sent to the Secretary of DEP, James Schmid suggested that it would be appropriate to send the comments to those parties since they are the parties responsible for the implementation of Act 54.

Vice Chairman Tim Weston solicited comments on the recommendation. Hearing none:

**Thad Stevens moved that the Council's comments on the Fifth Act 54 Report be sent to the Governor and the appropriate committees in the General Assembly should Chairman Jerome Shabazz approve.  
The motion was seconded by James Schmid, which was unanimously approved.**

**ADJOURN**

**With no further business, Jamie Bracey-Green motioned to adjourn the meeting. James Schmid seconded the motion, and all were in favor.  
The August 12, 2023 meeting of the CAC was adjourned at 3:10 PM.**