

**MINUTES OF THE COMBINED MEETING
OF THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL AND
THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARD
November 14, 2023**

CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL (CAC) MEMBERS PRESENT:

Robert Barkanic	Jerome Shabazz
Jacquelyn Bonomo	John St. Clair
Cynthia Carrow	Thad Stevens
Duane Mowery	John Walliser
Trisha Salvia	Jim Welty
James Schmid	Tim Weston

CAC STAFF PRESENT:

Ian Irvin, Executive Director

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARD (EJAB) MEMBERS PRESENT:

***Please note – these minutes are for the CAC portions of the joint meeting. Items in relation to EJAB, its members, and its meeting will be in separate minutes.**

EJAB STAFF PRESENT:

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Shabazz called the meeting to order at 12:40 PM.

DEP REPORT:

Executive Deputy Secretary for Programs Ramez Ziadeh provided a brief update on the following:

Food Processing Residuals

FPR is a type of residual waste that is produced in animal and non-animal food processing and is used as a soil conditioner and nutrient source in normal farming operations. The FPR application is exempted from permitting as long as guidance in DEP's FPR Manual is followed. Recently DEP, the Department of Agriculture, and state lawmakers have received odor and potential threats to drinking water comments and complaints related to FPR use. Often the complaints submitted to DEP are not violations under the FPR manual. A workgroup made up of DEP staff, Department of Agriculture staff, FPR application planners, farmers, and other experts has been established to understand the current status and concerns about the use of FPR, and evaluate the efficacy of the FPR Manual in addressing concerns, and discuss actions to enhance the Commonwealth's management of the FPR application.

PAyback Program

Payback is an application that was developed out of Executive Order 2023-07 signed by Governor Shapiro earlier this year which allows residents and businesses to check their eligibility for a refund for any Commonwealth permit, license, or certificate application fee. If a refund is approved, the requestor will receive notification that payment should be received within 45 business days. The Go-Live date was November 1, 2023. Applications completed prior to November 1 are not eligible for refunds through the Payback process. As of November 8, no refund claim requested have been received by DEP.

Mid-Atlantic Environmental Literacy Summit

On November 1, DEP attended the Chesapeake Bay Program's Mid-Atlantic Environmental Literacy Summit engaging leadership of Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement jurisdictions. Two themes were discussed: Building Green Career Pathways showcasing programs to develop career pathways supporting emerging workforce needs related to sustainability; and High Impact Actions for Sustainable Schools exploring the actions that schools and school districts can take to mitigate impacts and adapt to climate change.

Agriculture Energy Efficiency Rebates

The Energy Program Office (EPO) is in its third and final round of the rebate, which provides prescribed rebates of up to \$7,500. The energy efficiency measures are for things such as LED lighting, ventilation equipment, variable frequency drives, and refrigeration equipment. Since the program's reopening on August 26, 10 new applications have been received and rebates issued. Applications are being accepted through the end of the year.

Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Roadmap

DEP is working with ICF, Inc. to build upon the first ZEV Roadmap, which will expand the scope from light-duty electric vehicles to include medium and heavy-duty electric vehicles and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. The roadmap will map out specific, implementable strategies to maximize the economic and environmental benefits of transportation electrification.

Chesapeake Bay Restoration Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

In May of 2022 the EPA announced \$40 million in first-year funds from the IIJA, including \$15 million for jurisdictions for the Most Effective Basins, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Small Watershed Grants, and Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reductions grants program. The monies have not yet been awarded. The EPA published a Request for Application in July of 2023 with the intent to award these funds in January 2024.

Q&A included how implementation of the new EJ policy will interact with the PAYback program and the permit decision guarantee program, addressing questions regarding specifics of those two programs, and the expected timeframe for DEP to be able to use results from the 2020 census for the designation of EJ areas.

Presentations:

Dr. Sharon Watkins joined the Department of Health in November 2015. She is the Director of the Bureau of Epidemiology and the State Epidemiologist.

Dr. Watkins discussed the recently released results of the University of Pittsburgh studies which looked at health outcomes related to unconventional oil and gas industry. In 2019 Governor Wolf put aside close to \$3 million for multiple studies, and the Department of Health signed a contract with the University of Pittsburgh to conduct those studies in the southwest region; one related to pediatric cancer and two other short to medium-term outcomes related to asthma and pre-term birth and birth weight. The detailed reports can be found on the Department of Health website.

Q&A included whether environmental stressors were looked at as part of the cumulative impact and whether the measure of the health conditions from 2010 to 2019 was compared to other Pennsylvania residents.

COMMENTS FROM ADAM CUTLER, CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARD (EJAB)

EJAB has been focused on the new EJ policy, its rollout, and the public comments to the new policy. The Board has been very involved in working with DEP on the RGGI rules and is now engaging in the world of the post Commonwealth Court decision and how that impacts the way that DEP will handle that aspect of GHG and carbon emissions as it relates to some of the more overburdened communities in the Commonwealth.

Areas in which CAC and EJAB might collaborate include public outreach strategies and synthesizing the information in a way that benefits the citizens of Pennsylvania. EJAB has been relying on its Board members and their networks to help spread communications throughout communities impacted by environmental justice work. Developing multi-sector advisory boards with folks from the medical, legal, healthcare community, and folks involved in NGOs and community groups would be beneficial. After many years, the Department now has a robust set of regional coordinators with the Office of Environmental Justice who help spread the message through more official channels throughout the state.

Discussion amongst the CAC and EJAB members included the need to engage public commenters, returning to informative field trips, focusing on hydrogen hubs and carbon capture and sequestration, capturing data, taking advantage of tools that are available for gathering and storage information, and the need for representative from diverse communities on water and wastewater issues.

The joint meeting of the CAC and EJAB concluded at this point.

CAC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IAN IRVIN

The three nominees under consideration for the Oil & Gas Technical Advisory Board are:

Jeff Woluntofsky, Professional Geologist (incumbent)
President and CEO of Moody & Associates, an environmental and geological consulting firm

Amanda Vesay, Geologist
Vice President of WellDone Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to plugging orphaned and abandoned oil and gas wells

Edwin Panero, President of Ecometrics, a consulting firm that explores the benefits and impacts of nature-based solutions

Tim Weston made a motion to forward the three names to the Governor for consideration. James Schmid seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The motion was unanimously approved.

Executive Director Ian Irvin will forward the names of the nominees to the Policy Office who will then forward the names to the Governor.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Chairman Shabazz motioned to approve the Minutes of the September 12, 2023 meeting. Tim Weston seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Chairman Shabazz motioned to approve the Minutes of the October 10, 2023 meeting. Tim Weston seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Tim Weston requested that the Minutes of this meeting reflect that the priorities of the Department will be reviewed and CAC's own priorities considered.

CAC COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Legislative Committee

Executive Director Ian Irvin made the suggestion to recommend that the General Assembly adopt January as Pennsylvania's Radon Action Month and has drafted a letter and a Resolution. Edits were provided by Tim Weston and approved.

Cynthia Carrow motioned to approve the draft letter and Resolution that January be adopted as Radon Action Month. Tim Weston seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Executive Director Ian Irvin will follow up on a previous attempt by the Council to determine what data the Department might have regarding illegal electronic Waste disposal and check to see what other states are doing on the issue.

Strategic Issues Committee

The committee held a meeting on November 8. The major focus of the meeting was hydrogen hubs and carbon capture utilization and storage. The Class 6 Program was included in discussions. Ian Irvin will circulate several links to the EPA's Class 6 Program for those members of the Council who would like to do additional research. The Department of Energy has made its announcement related to the initial set of hydrogen hubs projects that have been accepted for further development. The Mock 2 project will ultimately result in alternative fuels for transit. Ian Irvin has reached out to a public facing contact to potentially talk to the Council. Another project implicating PA is the Appalachian Regional Hub and, the committee would potentially like to get a presentation on that going forward.

NEW BUSINESS/OPEN DISCUSSION:

The next meeting of the CAC will be January 9, 2024 at 12:30 PM. A complete list of the 2024 proposed meeting dates will be circulated to the Council members.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business, Chairman Shabazz moved to adjourn the meeting. James Schmid seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The November 16, 2021 meeting of the CAC adjourned at 3:50 PM.