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[The Climate Justice Working Group - May 12](#)

**By Jeff Jones**

The Climate Justice Working Group met May 12th to review the status of its reports to the CAC, and to continue working on its primary obligation under the CLCPA, the development of a working definition of disadvantaged communities. Staff reviewed interactions with the CAC and various advisory panels and also reported on efforts underway by NYSERDA and DEC to interact with other state agencies to inventory and assess relevant programs that address existing systems for measuring, tracking and reporting potential DAC benefits. Multiple agency staff working groups are proposed for assessing DAC investments and collaboration over time.

A discussion about the difference between investments and benefits was kicked off by the release of a proposed statement further defining the language that will guide the ultimate CAC scoping plan to achieve CLCPA goals of investing in and/or benefitting DACs. This quickly initiated a discussion by EJ members of the working group concerning impacts the definition may have on the level and amount of climate benefits over time.

Working group members also raised fundamental questions about how and by whom these decisions will be made. While working group staff assume such decisions will follow recommendations made by multi-agency staff working groups, questions were raised about the role of a potential environmental justice advisory board. Questions raised included: What decisions will be made before the EJ advisory board is empaneled? How will communities have a say in investments where they live? What role will race play in determining the definition of a DAC? How will tribes and indigenous communities in NY be brought into the decision-making process? How will food and health be integrated into the definition of a DAC? And, broadly speaking, how will public engagement be handled?