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[The Climate Justice Working Group - May 24](#)

By Jeff Jones

The Climate Justice Working Group met May 24th, facing intense pressure to agree on key principles to present at the Climate Action Council (CAC) meeting scheduled for June 8th. Additionally, the working group is expected to have reviewed many of the advisory panel reports that have been filed with the CAC from the perspective of those principles. Recognizing that time is short and the workload intense, support staff suggested procedural proposals. Several working group members balked at the schedule. Much of the two-hour meeting was spent discussing procedure rather than policy and searching for a solution to the looming time crunch.

Staff began the session with a proposal for operationalizing the EJ oversight process as the CAC works to develop its scoping plan to meet CLCPA goals. Proposals for action through 2021 included creating a public dashboard to track progress. The goal will be to identify and monitor benefit metrics such as jobs, job training and air quality. This will include identifying state agencies and portfolios of most immediate relevance to CLCPA implementation impacting Disadvantaged Communities (DACs), with a focus on differentiating place-based and societal-wide investments. Responding to questions raised at previous meetings, the state team is also exploring how to track demographics, such as race.

To stay on top of the process as it unfolds, periodic report cards will be issued. In 2022, the dashboard will be expanded to track additional agencies, review programs and incorporate feedback from impacted communities. Responding to working group member concerns about how benefits and investments will be quantified, staff proposed developing definitions of localized investments distinct from those focused on infrastructure, or statewide or other systems-wide benefits.

Sameer Ranade, newly named NYSERDA staff member responsible for coordinating relations and dialogue between the CJWG and the CAC, proposed a plan for the June 8th CAC presentations. Based on partial feedback from working group members, his proposal divided representatives among urban, suburban and rural categories. That idea was not acted upon as Eddie Bautista instead urged that group members should meet independently of staff to discuss their perspectives on the advisory panel recommendations. Pending further legal review, it was assumed that a meeting of a quorum of members would be subject to the state Open Meetings Law.

Unable to agree on next steps, it was decided to convene another CJWG meeting next week.