

PROCESS EVALUATION

CALIFORNIA AIR RESOURCES BOARD
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EJAC)

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OVERVIEW

This document summarizes feedback on the 2013-2014 Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (EJAC) from Committee members, including their ideas for next steps.

Eleven Committee members were interviewed individually following the April 11, 2014 meeting. No specific comments are attributed to specific individuals; and in many cases, words have been altered to summarize main points.

EVALUATION PARTICIPANTS

EJAC MEMBERS

Martha Dina Argüello
Gisele Fong
Tom Frantz
Kevin Hamilton
Rey Leon
Luis Olmedo
Susan Riggs
Kemba Shakur
Mari Rose Taruc
Monica Wilson
Ryan Briscoe Young

EJAC MEETINGS 2013-2014

Early June 2013

Pre-Meeting Assessment with EJAC Members

- Identified members' priority issues, questions, and concerns.
- Collected input to shape the June 18th meeting agenda and EJAC guiding principles.

June 18, 2013

EJAC Meeting #1 in Sacramento

- ARB introduced Scoping Plan Update and overview of related efforts at Cal/EPA.
- Adopted Guiding Principles for EJAC, including mission, organizational structure, decision-making, meeting agreements, and Steering Committee.
- Set up Working Groups to gather and summarize relevant information and identify focus areas for EJAC discussion at August meeting.

August 5-6, 2013

EJAC Meeting #2 in San Diego

- Work Groups presented (by sector) their focus areas for discussion, which led to the development of language for recommendations.
- Members developed "Initial recommendations to inform development of the 2013 Update to the AB 32 Scoping Plan."

October 22, 2013

EJAC Meeting #3 in Sacramento

- ARB presentation and EJAC discussion on tracking impacts of AB 32 measures in EJ communities.
- Discussion of incorporating initial EJAC recommendations into Proposed Scoping Plan Update (released October 2013) and gaps, opportunities, and concerns.
- Members captured topics for draft recommendations from meeting.
- Presentation by the Natural Resources Agency and EJAC discussion on Safeguarding California Plan.

April 10-11, 2014

EJAC Meeting #4 in Sacramento

- Discussion of incorporating EJAC's recommendations (from August and October meetings) into latest Plan Update draft (released February 2014).
- Discussion rounds of draft EJAC final recommendations.
- EJAC decision on final language for recommendations.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

GENERAL FEEDBACK ON THE PROCESS

Positive and welcoming experience

- Very positive experience; many Committee members said they would like to continue to serve and would recommend others to serve on the EJAC. One Committee member said he/she felt honored to be a part of EJAC and had never worked on a committee where staff was so welcoming, helpful, and responsive.
- Smooth process and well organized.

Very different from previous EJAC (served from 2007-2010)

- Very different from initial concerns that the process would be contentious and not meaningful based on the experiences of the previous EJAC. Unfortunate that there was considerably less public interest in the EJAC this past year based on the outcome of the previous EJAC.
- Important difference from last EJAC was this time ARB responded to the recommendations and took them under consideration. EJAC members glad to see a shift in direction and language in the draft Updates based on their input; would also like to see more changes.
- Also both ARB staff and EJAC members were respectful and went out of the way to not repeat the experiences of the previous EJAC; everyone worked together and not everyone had to agree, which was fine.

Need to address EJAC concerns that ARB referred to as “beyond the scope of the proposed update”

ARB staff concluded that many EJAC questions, comments, requests for information, and recommendations were beyond the scope of the proposed Scoping Plan Update. EJAC members see these issues as interrelated with the Plan and what happens on the ground in communities; members view the EJAC as a space where these concerns can be discussed and addressed. Moving forward, Committee members would like to see:

- ARB adopt a more open view on how we can problem solve these issues. Issues brought up by EJAC (outside of the scope of the Update) get a response. ARB can play a facilitation role and help develop partnerships with other agencies to address EJ issues outside of ARB jurisdiction.
- ARB should take the lead in seeing that other agencies conform to the law and have uniform commitments, definitions, and regulations.
- Continue to create documents like the cross-link matrix of recommendations and responses.

IDEAS FOR NEXT STEPS

Continue to convene EJAC

- Intention behind legislation was that EJAC’s work reviewing and informing AB 32 from an EJ perspective would be ongoing.
- There is more work to be done and it is unclear at this stage if EJAC accomplished what it set out to do. EJAC should meet after the Plan Update is finalized to find out how their priorities are incorporated in the Scoping Plan Update; also EJAC should meet (can do some meetings as conference calls and webinars) when the draft metrics report on AB 32 comes out so EJAC and EJ communities can make recommendations. EJAC should continue to meet 1-3 times per year to engage in relevant discussions advising AB 32 moving forward.
- Process ended with a promise that the EJAC recommendations would be included, but EJAC needs to continue to meet – and not wait every 4-5 years – to answer key questions such as: Did we do what we said we were going to do? Are we creating unintended consequences? Are we achieving co-benefits for EJ communities? We need to create ongoing opportunities for EJAC to weigh in.
- Make the EJAC a permanent advisory committee (either bring to the Board or through legislation), outlining roles and responsibilities. Role of EJAC should be for emerging issues at ARB, not only on AB 32 goals and objectives. The EJAC is an important body for advice and creates a place for people that don’t feel their voices are being heard. There should also be an EJAC established for all of Cal/EPA.
- Request ARB sends a report to EJAC and EJ communities every June with updates on metrics, EJAC priority recommendations, and other EJ issues of concern.

FEEDBACK ON MEMBERS & ARB STAFF

EJAC MEMBERSHIP

Good, diverse group willing to work together

- Good mix of people, diverse group. Important to have folks working in disadvantaged communities with expertise around impacts in communities and communities' needs.
- Good rapport between committee members and a willingness to work together.
- Enjoyed meeting people from across the state and learning about diverse environmental initiatives.
- Very respectful. In the end we walked away feeling like we did what we could. Although we wish we could do more, no EJAC concerns were shut down, there was no lack of listening, and people were there to make progress.

Key leadership

- Really appreciated leadership of Ryan, Martha, and Mari Rose. Everyone was open to everyone's suggestions.
- Martha and Tom's experience serving on the previous EJAC was extremely helpful.
- The process allowed people to play different roles, which was great.

Challenging for members new to ARB/AB 32 – Need additional support

- Challenge for some members to ask the right questions and understand the answers. Grassroots members new to the process need additional training to get oriented to Scoping Plan before the meetings. Also additional training helpful for members who are strong in some areas of the Plan, but have a hard time providing input on "overview" recommendations.
- After a quick, initial survey of Committee members, pair them – a person less informed about AB 32/relevant policy work with a person more informed. This way they can bounce ideas off one another outside of meetings and help express concerns and recommendations at the meetings.

Ideas for future recruiting

- Recruit early and fill in the spots for missing Committee members. Reach out more strongly for recommendations/nominations from previous members, EJ advocates, regional leaders, and reach out to existing EJ networks around the state.
- It was super helpful to have Committee members from the previous EJAC. It would be great to have half of the EJAC be previous members so not everything must be recreated.
- Would like to see more community members on the EJAC, now that trust has been built in the process.
- Make sure there is both issue and geographic representation. Balance the size of the Committee – good to be a little larger. For example, this EJAC lacked member expertise on water and green building.

ARB STAFF

Listened, respectful, dedicated

- EJAC members felt supported by ARB staff. There was no lack of support or interest in getting EJAC members' questions answers (at meetings and on calls). ARB really listened, asked what Committee members meant, everyone tried to pay attention to each other. ARB staff was always available to talk and help EJAC members learn, also responsive to Committee feedback which was very good to see. ARB team was very respectful, inclusive, patient, generally positive, honest, and incredibly responsive.
- Trish did a remarkable job in assisting members. Enjoyed working with Trish. Acknowledged difficult position in at times, and did good job.
- Staff brought good resources to the EJAC, including additional ARB staff and other agencies' staff to inform the EJAC members. EJAC members learned from staff and had good exchanges with staff.
- Really appreciated staff there, spending all day to take EJAC questions and were honest with their answers. That did not happen in previous EJAC; it was much better this time.
- Cynthia and her team at ARB are ahead of the curve on the national discussion on many of the issues discussed and we already had a good starting point where EJAC members could engage. Nice for Committee members to work in that environment.

More room for discussion

- While this was an EJAC-driven process, would have liked ARB staff to weigh in more. Suggest that in the future have more room for discussion. ARB staff play advisory role (more than only responding to questions).
- Would have liked to know early on which ARB staff has expertise in which areas so Committee members could go to them early on with questions.
- ARB staff can help EJAC members help articulate how EJAC member interests and concerns are relevant to the Update.
- Phone calls reviewing draft Updates were too general. Encourage more information sharing. Also, Committee members needed to better understand more technical aspects of the plan and did not fully utilize staff expertise at meetings. Would like more staff briefings so Committee members can learn more and provide input.

FEEDBACK ON EJAC MEETINGS

Challenging and very good

- Enjoyed meetings attended. Good dialogue. Meeting agreements supported good conversation.
- Very educational, learned a lot.
- While it was challenging to accomplish the work in a limited number of meetings – introductory meeting and 3 content meetings – Members generally agreed that it was good that the meetings were spread out and EJAC did not meet too often given everyone's busy schedules.

Improve timing

- Be clear about the schedule and work product needed from EJAC – what the ideal timing is for EJAC draft recommendations and the preferred format for those recommendations upfront. Challenge of initial recommendations being seen as too many, too broad in scope, etc.
- Timing was bad of final meeting. It prevented EJAC's input from getting to decision-makers and makes it unclear where final recommendations will land.
- Start the process sooner. EJAC felt pressure of timeline throughout process.
- Members expressed frustration about not getting ARB's update on metrics until the last meeting.

Challenges of Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act

- Bagley-Keene made it really hard to talk to each other outside of the meetings. This prevented members from understanding the issues more fully, from being able to come prepared to meetings to ask the right questions, and to follow-up afterwards on discussions that there was not enough time for at meetings.
- Believe there was a misinterpretation of Bagley-Keene early in the process, which made the meeting in San Diego a lot harder than it had to be (members could not discuss together or prepare draft recommendations ahead of the meeting). Suggest exploring a way to uphold transparency and maximize opportunities for Committee members to work together outside of EJAC meetings.

Scheduling meetings

- Committee members liked using doodle polls to find dates ahead of time to schedule meetings and that the meetings are spread out.
- Members commented that the rescheduling of cancelled meetings could have been better – since a change in dates meant they were given short notice and several members were unable to attend these rescheduled meetings.

Formats/design of meetings

- Important to have a record of meeting discussions captured in notes for documentation purposes to refer back to what was shared during the meetings, which did not happen at EJAC meetings. If ARB is not able to provide this in the future, EJAC members should designate someone to take notes.
- Committee members liked the “world café” format used at the April 2014 meeting because it allowed them to put ideas out there and get help articulating thoughts from both other members and ARB staff. Members also like the variety.
- Would like to add more a learning component to EJAC, including presentations that inform and explain more about how to connect member concerns with AB 32. Would like to see an initial training for Committee members and ARB host ongoing webinars and outreach calls between EJAC meetings.
- Would like to use meetings as opportunity to convene experts and have broader conversations related to climate change, air quality, energy, etc. EJAC can invite speakers from different topic areas to meetings such as the Public Health Action Team. These discussions will help EJAC gather information and address challenges ARB faces. Also beneficial to be coordinating work with other state departments and agencies. Helpful for EJAC members to learn about how Scoping Plan reflects and informs work being done across sectors.
- The sub-groups created at the first meeting were good and could have continued throughout the process. Those groups could have had continued briefings with ARB staff.
- Would like to encourage more attendance of public members at the meetings. Acknowledge that the timing of the meetings may have challenged inclusion of community members.

FEEDBACK ON EJAC MEETINGS (continued)

Committee challenges and suggestions

- Having members pay out of pocket for car, hotel, and food costs for meetings (and reimbursed later) made it difficult for some members to attend meetings. Suggest for future to establish a travel budget that can cover these costs upfront.
- All EJAC members need to read (at the least) the section of the plan and the section of the draft EJAC recommendations in their sectors ahead of the meetings. If members have questions on technical documents, they can request ARB staff support offline. Members should also find a group of allies on EJAC and in the broader community who are engaged on these issues and lean on them for expertise and ideas.

New ideas

- Suggestion for future work to create a space and plan with explicit principles about power, race, class, and privilege.
- Suggestion to include EJ tours as part of future EJAC meetings. Tours should be educational, raise consciousness of issues on the ground, and part of leadership development for ARB.

FACILITATION BY UC DAVIS EXTENSION COLLABORATION CENTER

Well-run meetings

- Good to be a part of the well-run meetings. Did a good job. No one could have done it better. Should not change anything.
- Accessible, very clear, and welcoming of EJAC leadership. Was on the phone with members and staff as long as it took to prepare for meetings.
- Challenging role of when and how to rein in the conversation considering the wide range of expertise and experience among Committee members.
- Real commitment to make it collegial. Not always easy to be disciplined and organized as a movement. Tara really helped keep us on track as much as possible. She helped the Steering Committee stay focused on what we can do given the process.

Neutral role

- Made a huge difference to have a facilitator - someone to work out issues that were not EJAC's or staff's.
- Had room to develop process organic to the group that also met deadlines for the state.
- Process driven by EJAC, yet tight enough facilitation. Great to be part of it.
- Struck a good balance between enjoyable and serious. Not always easy to find a good facilitator who respects boundaries of facilitators, neutral and there to conduct an open and clean process, and someone who is not intervening or lead the discussion to a certain objective.

Suggestions for future EJAC facilitation

- Discuss the role of the facilitator at first meeting and find out how Committee members would like to interact and hear from the facilitator in between meetings (by phone/email).
- Include a mid-way check-in with Committee members about the process and facilitation.
- In this process the Steering Committee shaped the agenda. Check in with other members if they want to engage in proposing/defining the meeting agendas.
- Continue to remind the members of their goals and encourage questions and concerns to meet those goals.