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EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 23

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS 1 AND 3: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND ENVIRONMENTAL STAKEHOLDERS

Below are summary notes from the first (held on July 24th at NJDEP in Trenton) and third (held on July 26th in Newark) stakeholder meetings seeking input on the guidance being developed under Executive Order No. 23. The NJDEP, along with other state agencies, continue to work to develop guidance to consider environmental justice (EJ) in implementing their diverse statutory and regulatory responsibilities using the information collected during these stakeholder meetings.

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Summary of Stake Holder Meeting

Each meeting began with a welcome and introductions of NJDEP staff or other State representatives, steering committee members and Environmental Justice Advisory Council members in the room.

NJDEP provided a presentation and then facilitated a conversation with stakeholders on priority EJ challenges; identification of EJ Areas; state agency actions; and state agency coordination. Below are the overarching comments from the various stakeholders and do not cover all that was discussed at the stakeholder meetings.

Overarching Comments from Stakeholders

1) Priority Challenges:

- Limited connection to the environment/green spaces especially for youth
 - Access to “Green”- parks, food systems, Green Infrastructure, forests
 - Urban agriculture
 - Environmental pollution
 - Air Pollution- Mobile sources
 - Water challenges
 - Brownfields
 - Soils
- Climate change
 - Coastal resiliency
- Affordable housing
- Transit equality
 - Access to Jobs
- Health concerns

- Disinvestment
- Capacity building
 - Lack of EJ education- Should have “Place Based” educational opportunities in communities
 - Inequalities in the process, inability to find access points to engage and unfamiliarity with decision making processes
 - Engaging with local nonprofits for solutions
 - Funding for technical efforts to tell the story/be advocates for their communities
- Funding and resources are needed to address EJ issues
- Language barriers
- Pesticide exposure

2) Identification of EJ Areas:

- Environmental data
- Population and census data
- Accessible and reliable data
- Cumulative Impact tool
- Yes, identifying would reduce subjectivity
- This needs time, establish a working group
- Should do this, and don’t get caught up in how as likely the results will not change much between methods or criteria
- EJ Screen at the municipal level is ok but not at the neighborhood level.

3) State Agency Action:

- Community engagement
 - Translation of materials- languages and terminology used
- What do they have control over
- Measurable outcomes
- Master planning processes for municipalities and guiding that process more as to what should be included
- Encouraging the use of needs assessments to identify the severity of injustices and develop strategies
- State agencies should link EJ plans to criteria selected to identify communities
- Should address cumulative impacts
- Metrics and objectives should be established for accountability
- EJ Criteria for funding sources
- State agencies attend stakeholder meetings

4) State Agency Coordination:

- State Plan
- Training
- Collective incentives/Project coordination for developments that are geared towards reaching EJ goals
- Break down silos/Communication
- Agency priorities matrix
- Coordinate across (state agencies) and up and down (Federal/local levels)