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## EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 23

### SEPTEMBER STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS TRENTON, EAST ORANGE AND CAMDEN: SECOND MEETING FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS

Below are summary notes from the three stakeholder meetings (September 13 at DEP in Trenton, September 18 in East Orange and September 20 in Camden) held as a follow-up to July stakeholder meetings and to seek additional feedback on guidance being developed under Executive Order No. 23. The DEP, along with other state agencies, continues 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 Stakeholder Meeting**

Each meeting began with a welcome from DEP staff and introduction of stakeholders as well as other state agency representatives, local elected officials, steering committee members and Environmental Justice Advisory Council members in the room.

DEP provided a presentation on EO-23 and where we are in the process followed by a conversation with stakeholders regarding the guidance document. Questions were provided to stakeholders prior to the meeting and on the agenda to help facilitate discussion. Below is an overarching summary of the various comments made by the stakeholders.

#### **Key considerations**

- Need for identifying EJ areas
- Data sharing and transparency
- Interagency consistency
- Case-studies of collaborations and frameworks
- Need for training and capacity building
- Rigorous but flexible framework
- Tangible results

#### **Coordination Between State Agencies and Advancing EJ Goals**

*How can coordination between state agencies advance EJ goals? Do you have examples?*

- Need to address disconnect between agencies and within agencies
  - To assist communities facing multiple burdens
  - To expedite projects
  - For agencies to support each other's initiatives
  - Increase consistency
- Need "one-stop shop" for EJ communities to navigate state agencies

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- EJ Ombudsman
- Framework should:
  - Be sustainable and well embedded into agencies
  - Have top-level cooperation along with message down to field offices
  - Balance formal structure with flexible workgroups
- Examples of collaborative frameworks, EJ tools:
  - USDN Social Equity Products: <https://www.usdn.org/public/page/22/Social-Equity>
  - Boston and Rhode Island lead initiative
  - Smart Growth Policy Council
  - Together North Jersey – Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC) project
- Capacity Building
  - Coordinated guidance and expertise regarding healthy, sustainable communities
  - Municipal and local capacity for informed participation in planning and decision-making
- Embed strong equity/justice principle in all departments
- Data
  - Decrease data-sharing barriers within agencies and with non-profit sector
  - Better data and population mapping – e.g. many immigrant communities not counted when using census data
  - Systematic barriers can be identified through data collaboration between agencies
- Collaborations suggested:
  - With DOT for lower air emissions, anti-idling laws, better signage
  - Interagency on lead
  - With Dept of Education for lead and asbestos in older schools

### **Identifying EJ Areas**

*Should environmental justice areas be identified, and if so how?*

- Identification needed, but the following should be considered:
  - Negative associations should be avoided – e.g. history of redlining, judge conditions not people
  - Focus should be on directing resources and assistance in navigating government agencies to disadvantaged communities – “Greenlining”
  - More inclusive definition rather than rigid cut-offs – e.g. everyone should have access to acceptable drinking water
- Transparency and public access of data should be built into guidance
- Multiple layers of data in one tool

### **Funding and EJ Communities**

*Do you have recommendations for how to better align or prioritize funding for environmental justice? What is needed for environmental justice communities or municipalities to better utilize funding? What technical assistance is needed?*

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- Capacity for accessing grants key hurdle
  - CCI applied for grants on behalf of Camden
  - DOT initiative to simplify process
  - Need to aid EJ communities in writing and obtaining grants
- Transparency of decision-making around environmental settlements
- Benefits of green economy should be allocated to EJ communities
  - NJ Clean Energy Program Resources
  - Green jobs training programs
  - RGGI funding

## **Measuring Success**

*How would you measure success for state agencies incorporating EJ into their work?*

- Low-income areas receiving fair share of funding – e.g. transportation, green acres
- EJ permanently embedded in each agency
- Action plans for real change with timelines
- Specify goals / outcomes for air, water, etc.
- Substantive policy addressing cumulative impacts
- Guidance should define implementation
- Systematic incorporation of EJ
  - Checklists for review of existing regulations or list of things to consider in operations – e.g. public meetings advertised in multiple languages
  - Example Toolkits:
    - Racial Equity Toolkit from RSJI:  
[https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/Racial%20Equity%20Toolkit\\_FINAL\\_August2012\\_with%20new%20cncl%20districts.pdf](https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/Racial%20Equity%20Toolkit_FINAL_August2012_with%20new%20cncl%20districts.pdf)
    - GAR Tools and Resources include examples of indicators and assessments:  
<https://www.racialequityalliance.org/tools-resources/>
- Public engagement
  - Regularly updated information sharing website
  - Public accountability / stakeholder meetings in communities
- Engagement of youth and sustainability of work into future
- Equity should be measured as equal distribution of risks and benefits
- Should consider what failure looks like – e.g. major projects continue to be approved in EJ communities with no consideration of cumulative impacts or public engagement

## **Continued Level of Involvement of Stakeholders**

*What level of involvement would you like to have during implementation of the guidance document?*

- Education / Training
  - EJ training for those who will implement the guidance document

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- Citizen Science
- Empower communities to educate about EJ
- Ability to make connections between pollution and disease
- Examples of municipal coordination around equity:
  - Equity Councils and initiatives in Seattle and other cities
    - <https://www.seattle.gov/rsjj>;
    - <http://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/governance>

#### **Other Issues / Concerns**

- Carbon markets need to consider EJ – e.g. mandatory emission reductions from power plants in EJ communities
- Agencies should consider ways to address historical injustices – e.g. 20% of East Orange is covered by highways
- Urban Agriculture – Loss of farmland, small lots do not qualify as farmland, no cooperative extension in Hudson County, communities do not know how to grow food