

# Adopted Minutes of the Environmental Justice Council

July 25, 2024

## Virtual ZOOM Platform

Due to limited staff capacity, Environmental Justice Council (Council) staff are working to streamline the Council meeting notes. The notes now include only very high-level points and the final decisions made along with voting records. The full meeting recordings can be found on the Council's website: [Environmental Justice Council Meetings | WaPortal.org](https://www.environmentaljusticecouncil.org/Meetings). However, it is important that meeting notes are useful to the Council Members and the public. Please share feedback with Council staff on how we can make these notes most useful to you by emailing [envjustice@ejc.wa.gov](mailto:envjustice@ejc.wa.gov) or by calling 360-584-4398.

### Council Members present:

- Maria Batayola (Co-Chair)
- Tatiana Brown
- Running-Grass
- Aurora Martin
- David Mendoza
- Esther Min
- Raeshawna Ware

### Council Members absent:

- Nichole Banegas
- Maria Blancas
- The Honorable Jarred-Michael Erickson (Interim Co-Chair)
- Rosalinda Guillen
- Todd Mitchell
- AJ Dotzauer on behalf of the Honorable Misty Napeahi
- Faaluaina Pritchard
- The Honorable Monica Tonasket
- The Honorable JJ Wilbur

### Agency Ex Officio Liaisons present:

- Lea Anne Burke, Puget Sound Partnership
- Michael Furze, Department of Commerce (Jennifer Grove attended on behalf of Michael Furze for part of the meeting)

- River Lin on behalf of Lauren Jenks, Department of Health
- Nicole Johnson, Department of Agriculture
- Eliseo (EJ) Juárez, Department of Natural Resources
- Ahmer Nizam, Department of Transportation
- Millie Piazza, Department of Ecology

**Council staff:**

- Jonathan Chen
- Angie Ellis
- Christy Curwick Hoff
- Dana Myers
- Rowena Pineda
- Sierra Red Bow
- Sierra Rotakhina

**Guests and other participants:**

- Yesenia Perez, Cafe Wenatchee

**I. Welcome and Roll Call for Quorum**

Rowena Pineda, Council staff, facilitated roll call.

<b>16 Members / 0 Vacancies / 0 Leaves of Absence / Current Quorum = 9</b>		
Nichole Banegas	Business Representative	Absent
Maria Batayola (Co-Chair)	Community Representative	Present
Maria Blancas	Community Representative	Absent
Tatiana Brown	Youth Community Representative	Present
The Honorable Jarred-Michael Erickson (Interim Co-Chair)	Tribal Representative	Absent
Running-Grass	EJ Practitioner	Present
Rosalinda Guillen	Community Representative	Absent
Aurora Martin	Community Representative	Present
David Mendoza	Representative At Large	Present
Esther Min	EJ Practitioner	Present
Todd Mitchell	Union Representative	Absent
AJ Dotzauer	Tribal Representative	Absent

To request this document in an alternate format or a different language, please contact Sierra Rotakhina in any language, at [envjustice@ejc.wa.gov](mailto:envjustice@ejc.wa.gov) or 360-584-4398.

On behalf of The Honorable Misty Napeahi		
Faaluaina Pritchard	Community Representative	Absent
The Honorable Monica Tonasket	Tribal Representative	Absent
Raeshawna Ware	Community Representative	Present
The Honorable JJ Wilbur	Tribal Representative	Absent

## II. Approval of Agenda by Council

Sierra Rotakhina, Council Staff, shared the agenda. There were no requests for changes. Sierra noted that adoption of the agenda is an administrative task and per Council bylaws can be adopted without a quorum present.

**Motion:** The Council adopts the agenda.

No objections noted. **The motion passed.**

## III & IV. Approval of May 3, 2024 and July 2, 2024 Meeting Notes by Council

The Council did not consider adoption of meeting notes, as a quorum was not present.

## V. EJ Council Community Connection

Sierra Red Bow, Council Staff, said this agenda item is an opportunity for community-based organizations to share information about their work. She said community members can sign up to speak at a future meeting by emailing [envjustice@ejc.wa.gov](mailto:envjustice@ejc.wa.gov).

Yesenia Perez, Environmental Justice Coordinator for Cafe Wenatchee (CAFÉ), said their organization has provided classes to community members on wildfire preparedness. They have had a youth cohort explore the effects of air quality on health. They offer resource fairs to connect community members to resources. They've worked with the Department of Health and the local health district to provide personal protective equipment to farmworkers. Tatiana Brown, Council Member, thanked Yesenia for the information and asked if there was any future programming they were excited about. Yesenia said they aim to develop relationships with Tribes and other communities that they have not yet served.

To request this document in an alternate format or a different language, please contact Sierra Rotakhina in any language, at [envjustice@ejc.wa.gov](mailto:envjustice@ejc.wa.gov) or 360-584-4398.

## VI. Updates on Past Public Comments and Community Connection Session in Central Washinton

Sierra Red Bow, Council Staff, shared an update on the draft [summary report](#) from the community meeting, which included 68 issues identified by the community. She said the next step is to work with community to prioritize the issues.

## VII. Public Comment

Nagessa Dube, Serve Ethiopians Washinton, said their organization plants trees and restores parks. They are expanding and will start increasing advocacy efforts. Nagessa said SeaTac has airports and highways and they want to advocate for more green space in the community.

Brock Howell, Executive Director of the Snohomish County Transportation Commission, spoke to how agencies were developing internal processes to ensure grant programs meet the 35% goal. He said statute specifies that the goal applies to vulnerable populations within overburdened communities.

Cathie Urwin lives in South Tacoma and shared concerns about the compounding of environmental injustices that started with an industrial warehouse. Now they are dealing with injustices with the Growth Management Act and housing developments. Cathie spoke about other compounding issues, including low tree canopy creating a heat island and transit services that don't provide access to grocery stores. Cathie said that the government has not acknowledged the impacts of warehouse development and have ignored it in comprehensive planning. They have not completed studies for environmental and health impacts.

Anonymous attendee (written comments): How can we consider housing in understanding the unintended consequences that lead to gentrification? When green spaces or preservation projects are pursued, areas become desirable to live in. This results in rent rises. What are the ways we can

consider rent raise caps as a move for protections that address to protect marginalized communities?

## VIII. Discussion: Draft Guidance on Allocating, Measuring & Reporting HEAL and CCA Investments

Jonathan Chen, Council Staff, said the Climate Commitment Act (CCA) and Community Engagement Committees have been working on draft guidance for applying the terms “direct and meaningful benefits” under the CCA and “environmental benefits” under the HEAL Act. David Mendoza, Council Member, referred Council Members to draft guidance on page 36 of the [meeting packet](#). He said the draft guidance includes ten recommendations. He said the CCA Committee has come to consensus on several of the recommendations. Members discussed whether the scope of the terms in HEAL was broader than that in the CCA and pointed to the intent of the CCA which included addressing public health. Lea Anne Burke, Ex Officio Liaison, shared a concern about making it a requirement that 40% of investments (rather than 35% with a goal of 40%) provide environmental benefits to vulnerable populations in overburdened communities. She said they are in the process of completing the first reporting cycle and suggested waiting to see and assess reporting results.

Member Mendoza said there can be vulnerable populations that are not in overburdened communities and said there is a need to rectify underinvestment in communities that are historically under-resourced and should be eligible for funding. He provided an example of children, which are a vulnerable population, adding that investments made for schools in wealthy areas should not count toward the goals. Aurora Martin, Council Member, agreed and said there should be additional criteria. She added that there should be a process for self identification. Members also discussed whether reporting should be at the program or agency level and whether HEAL covered agencies that provide investments with CCA funds could report those investments toward HEAL goals.

Esther Min, Council Member, suggested continuing this discussion with concrete examples at the next CCA Committee meeting. Member Mendoza suggested discussion with a sample agency

To request this document in an alternate format or a different language, please contact Sierra Rotakhina in any language, at [envjustice@ejc.wa.gov](mailto:envjustice@ejc.wa.gov) or 360-584-4398.

budget. Running-Grass, Council Member, said they needed more agency context and suggested inviting Ex Officio Liaisons to the next meeting. Jonathan said the next meeting of the CCA Committee is on August 8 from 2:00-3:30pm.

## IX. Briefing and Discussion: Update on 2025-2027 Biennial Budget Recommendations Development

Esther Min, Council Member, introduced the agenda item. Christy Hoff, Council Staff, referred Members to the memo on page 42 of the [meeting packet](#) and provided an overview of considerations for the upcoming session and the process the Budget Committee has gone through. Members discussed the need to prioritize funding for HEAL implementation and the EJ Council's operations in the event the CCA is repealed. EJ Juárez, Ex Officio Liaison, noted that at the Department of Natural Resources, they would lose all their environmental justice staff. The agency would still have legal requirements to implement the HEAL Act but would not have any dedicated staff for the work. Christy said the next budget committee meeting is August 6 at 2:00pm.

## X. Introduction and Input: HEAL Environmental Justice Assessments

Maria Batayola, Council Co-Chair, introduced the agenda item. Rowena provided an overview of agency responsibilities to conduct Environmental Justice Assessments (EJAs). She also shared information about the EJAs that agencies have started or completed. A total of 15 EJAs have been completed to date. She reminded Council Members that EJAs require a lot of time and resources to complete. She also reminded Members that, while EJAs identify benefits and harms, they do not require an agency to stop a significant agency action if harms are identified. Rowena said that by July 1, 2025, each covered agency must identify any new "significant agency actions" in addition to those outlined in statute. The EJAs are posted to the Office of Financial Management website. Ex Officio Liaisons shared additional EJAs that were not included in the meeting materials. Council Member Running-Grass asked if there are lessons learned from completing EJAs. Rowena said the supplemental [materials](#) included learnings and challenges that agencies are encountering as they complete EJAs.

## XI. Council Workload Planning: HEAL Agencies' Environmental Justice Implementation Plans within their Strategic Plans

Co-Chair Batayola introduced the agenda item. Dana Myers, Council Staff, shared HEAL Act responsibilities regarding strategic plans. Millie Piazza, Ex Officio Liaison, said collaboration on this topic would be helpful and she'd appreciate having the space to do that. Council Members discussed agency timelines for developing strategic plans and how some agencies have multiple different kinds of plans. Co-Chair Batayola asked for a collective timeline from the agencies so they could identify the right time to provide guidance. Co-Chair Batayola said next steps would be to pull together a team to collaboratively develop guidance.

## XII. Public Comment

Anonymous attendee (written comments): Priority 1. [Hire] persons that represent the communities you are trying to serve. Some agencies in community meetings look like historical mirror of power dynamics across this country. Priority 2. Compensate persons of color for the [extensive] work you are unable to do over the last years. We, the community, have noticed momentum increasing with the hiring of varied intersecting [identities]-- particularly [persons] of color.

## XIII. Appreciations and Adjournment

Council Co-Chair Batayola thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting.