

Adopted Minutes of the Environmental Justice Council

March 20, 2025

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 or by calling 360-584-4398.

Council Members present:

- Nichole Banegas (joined at 4:13pm)
- Maria Batayola
- Tatiana Brown, Co-Chair
- David Mendoza (joined at 3:41pm)
- Esther Min (joined at 3:43pm)
- Todd Mitchell
- Faaluaina Pritchard
- Running-Grass
- Raeshawna Ware

Council Members absent:

- Maria Blancas
- The Honorable Jarred-Michael Erickson, Co-Chair
- Cristina González
- Rosalinda Guillen (On leave of absence)
- The Honorable Monica Tonasket
- The Honorable JJ Wilbur

Agency Ex Officio Liaisons present:

- Jennifer Grove, Department of Commerce
- Lauren Jenks, Department of Health

- Jay Carmony for Nicole Johnson, Department of Agriculture
- Eliseo (EJ) Juárez, Department of Natural Resources
- Emilie Litsinger, Puget Sound Partnership
- Ahmer Nizam, Department of Transportation
- Millie Piazza, Department of Ecology

Council staff:

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

Guests and other participants:

- Kate Brouns, Climate and Energy Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor

I. Welcome and Roll Call for Quorum

Tatiana Brown, Council Co-Chair, called the meeting to order. Rowena Pineda, Council Staff, facilitated roll call. At the time of the initial roll call, there were 6 voting members present, not meeting quorum (see table). Two additional members joined by 3:45, meeting the quorum (see Council Member list, above).

14 Members / 1 Vacancy / 1 Leave of Absence / Current Quorum = 8		
The Honorable JJ Wilbur	Tribal Representative	Absent
Raeshawna Ware	Community Representative	Present
The Honorable Monica Tonasket	Tribal Representative	Absent
Running-Grass	EJ Practitioner	Present
Faaluaina Pritchard	Community Representative	Present
Todd Mitchell	Union Representative	Present
Esther Min	EJ Practitioner	Absent
David Mendoza	Representative At Large	Absent

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Rosalinda Guillen	Community Representative	Leave of Absence
Cristina González	Community Representative	Absent
The Honorable Jarred-Michael Erickson (Co-Chair)	Tribal Representative	Absent
Tatiana Brown (Co-Chair)	Community Representative	Present
Maria Blancas	Community Representative	Absent
Maria Batayola	Community Representative	Present
Nichole Banegas	Business Representative	Absent
Vacant	Tribal Representative	Vacant

Co-Chair Brown welcomed Kate Brouns, the Climate and Energy Policy Advisor to Governor Ferguson, who introduced herself, saying she was looking forward to working with the EJ Council.

II. Approval of Agenda by Council

Sierra Rotakhina, Council Manager, facilitated adoption of the [agenda](#).

Motion: The Council adopts the agenda.

Todd Mitchell, Council Member, moved to adopt the agenda. No objections noted. **The motion passed.**

III. Approval of January 30, 2025 Meeting Notes by Council

Sierra Rotakhina facilitated adoption of the January 30, 2025 [meeting notes](#) (see page 8).

Motion: The Council adopts the January 30, 2025 meeting notes.

Motion/Second: Maria Batayola/Lua Pritchard. No objections noted. **The motion passed.**

IV. EJ Council Community Connection

This item was not covered at the meeting.

V. Public Comment

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Rowena Pineda opened up the public comment period.

Amara Schermerhorn, Partnerships Manager at Taskar Center for Accessible Technology at the University of Washington, shared information about a project called OS Connect, Washington State's first statewide pedestrian dataset. Infrastructure decisions rely on these data. The OS Connect dataset shows where pedestrian infrastructure exists and where it doesn't and where neighborhoods can be unsafe due to missing sidewalks. These data are essential for environmental justice efforts by giving communities the tools to identify where areas have been neglected. OS Connect uses partnerships with environmental justice groups such as Front and Centered to connect with people in underserved areas. The data need community input and local knowledge. OS Connect makes pedestrian access visible and can be a tool for advocating for smarter and fairer infrastructure investments.

Anat Caspi, Director of the Taskar Center for Accessible Technology at the University of Washington, said the Taskar Center works at the intersection of technology, mobility, and accessibility justice. They said they co-design with people most impacted by transportation barriers and hope to expand the work now that these data are available to people who are left out of transportation decisions. They are holding a conference and want to invite environmental justice advocates as it is tied together with mobility. The conference will bring together policymakers, transportation leaders, and grassroots organizers. They hope to highlight how participatory data collection can ensure that these public projects reflect real mobility needs. They hope to build the connected partnership and stewardship to support the data downstream.

Sumayo Mohamed, MPH Candidate at the University of Washington, said they are working with the Duwamish River Community Coalition on air quality monitoring. They appreciate the EJ Council's commitment to ensuring communities have a voice in decision-making, including making sure air quality data reflect the lived experience of overburdened communities. Right

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now, community-based air quality monitoring is not being funded at the state level. In Seattle, community led efforts have shown differences in pollution levels. They encourage the Council to recommend to Ecology that they support community-based air quality monitoring and prioritize funding projects with pollution reduction impacts, so communities see tangible improvements in air quality.

Joseph Santana, Duwamish River Community Coalition, shared information about the coalition and provided recommendations related to Ecology's duties to monitor air quality in overburdened communities. They suggested that Ecology should develop an air monitoring network to establish baseline data to protect public health. They ask Ecology to look into protective air quality standards set by the World Health Organization. They suggest Ecology should prioritize reducing emissions from mobile sources through stronger tailpipe emission standards and indirect source regulations. Their last recommendation is to monitor pollution in overburdened communities, not just near them. David Mendoza, Council Member, said there has been additional monitoring in the 16 overburdened communities and \$10 million for additional monitoring. Millie Piazza, Ex Officio Member from the Department of Ecology, said she will bring these comments back to Ecology.

Davin Diaz, Environmental Justice Program Manager with Front and Centered, said he looks forward to how the conversation about prioritization goes. He said community members in Toppenish and Yakima highlighted the need for a better environmental reporting system. He said they generated a report that was published last week. The current reporting systems are fragmented and inaccessible. In the report, they draw from the IVAN model, a successful community led tool to propose a transparent, community driven approach. They call for a one stop shop reporting system that improves public access, enhances agency coordination, and builds community trust. One key recommendation is to establish community and agency workgroups.

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Maricella Santana-Walle, Environmental Justice Coordinator for ELLA, said on May 1, they are hosting their first May Day March in Lower Yakima Valley in collaboration with other partners. They will march to highlight workers' rights and environmental issues and push for a healthier and safe environment. There will be a resource fair after the march to connect community members to resources. They welcome folks to participate at the event. There will be a space where leaders and community members can share stories and resources. They sent a flyer to Council's email and they ask that staff please forward it along. The event will be from 3:30 to 5:00pm in Sunnyside.

VI. Briefing: Current State and Federal Context to Inform Council Work Planning

Co-Chair Brown shared how the Presidential Executive Orders and the state budget shortfall have had, and will continue to have, an impact on communities. She introduced Kristen K. Mitchell, Deputy Attorney General, Washington State Attorney General's Office and Enoka Harat, Policy Director at the Attorney General's Office. Enoka said their office reviews federal actions to see if they are illegal/unconstitutional, whether they impact Washingtonians, and whether they have standing to bring a case. Kristen Mitchell said Executive Orders are not law, but rather direction from the President to federal agencies. She highlighted that in Washington State, state law has Washington fully in compliance with federal civil rights law. She shared information about the Executive Orders that restrict environmental justice work and other diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives and those that stop the flow of federal funds. She said that the obligations under state laws, including the HEAL Act, remain unchanged and work to implement HEAL may proceed. Member Mendoza commented on the deregulation at the Environmental Protection Agency, asking if it will be possible for the state to maintain its standards with these rollbacks. Kristen Mitchell said rollbacks of federal rules cannot happen by Executive Order. Member Batayola asked about federal funding directly given to communities and Kristin said there is a current lawsuit to try to restore funding. She noted that's generally the Attorney

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General's Office role to provide advice and representation for state agencies. The first way they address these various issues is participating in lawsuits protecting funding going to the state and hopefully that protects funding going out to non-state patterns, NGOs, etc. She said Members can reach out to her with information about what is going on and she can take a look at it and see if there is something in place that can assist with, or something the Attorney General's Office can keep in mind when they take action.

Sierra Rotakhina, Council Manager, provided information about the significant budget shortfall facing the state over the next four years, including the March revenue forecast. She shared how program cuts and layoffs could impact staff capacity, including in the HEAL agencies in the near term. She stressed the uncertainty and anxiety and increased workload, including extra administrative work, that would be impacting staff.

VII. 2025-2026 EJC Work Prioritization Process

Running-Grass, Council Member, shared the goals for the agenda item and the process the Work Planning Group used. He referred Members to the draft Guiding Principles and Considerations developed by the Work Planning Group (see page 24 of the [meeting packet](#)). Member Running-Grass asked if Members generally felt okay about the principles and considerations – no concerns were noted.

Raeshawna Ware, Council Member, referred Council Members to the draft prioritization process developed by the Work Planning Group (see page 26 in the [meeting packet](#)). Member Mendoza asked If they would be pausing the current committee work. Member Ware said they are suspending the use of the committees so they can pilot a new way of working together. Esther Min, Council Member, said projects have a very different scale and capacity and added that Members should think about statutory responsibility. Members discussed how some of the projects on the list are interconnected. Member Batayola said they also want to mobilize all

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members, including Ex Officio Members, in projects. Maria Batayola, Council Member, facilitated adoption of the Guiding Principles and Considerations and the project prioritization process.

Motion: The Council adopts the 6-month pilot Work Planning Guiding Principles and Considerations and the project prioritization process proposed for today's work prioritization. The pilot will be effective March 20, 2025 through September 20, 2025 with iterative reporting after 3-months.

Motion/Second: David Mendoza/Lua Pritchard. **The motion passed.**

A: Yes, I approve.

B: Yes, with reservations.

C: Not voting until we have further discussions.

D: I don't approve, but I won't block.

E: I block, have serious concerns.

F: I stand aside, recuse myself.

14 Members / 1 Vacancy / 1 Leave of Absence / Current Quorum = 8		
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Raeshawna Ware	Community Representative	A
The Honorable Monica Tonasket	Tribal Representative	Absent
Running-Grass	EJ Practitioner	A
Faaluaina Pritchard	Community Representative	A
Todd Mitchell	Union Representative	A
Esther Min	EJ Practitioner	A
David Mendoza	Representative At Large	A
Rosalinda Guillen	Community Representative	Leave of Absence
Cristina González	Community Representative	Absent
The Honorable Jarred-Michael Erickson (Co-Chair)	Tribal Representative	Absent
Tatiana Brown (Co-Chair)	Community Representative	A
Maria Blancas	Community Representative	Absent

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Maria Batayola	Community Representative	A
Nichole Banegas	Business Representative	Absent
Vacant	Tribal Representative	Vacant

Member Batayola, walked the Council through the steps of identifying three projects to focus on first in 2025. Member Mendoza said all the work is needed and important. He said the CCA requirements are complicated, and he provided some context about each of them and whether some could be handled in other ways (e.g., a briefing at a Council meeting). Sierra Rotakhina noted that none of the Council's Tribal Representatives were present at the meeting, so the Council may want to wait to make a final decision about which projects to focus on first until the Tribal Representatives have a chance to weigh-in. Members then took some time to vote for their top 3 priority projects. Member Batayola said follow up items include fleshing out the project descriptions and checking in with Tribal Representatives. Member Min discussed the impacts of not sustaining momentum on projects with smaller numbers (single votes). Sierra said staff would check in with members who were not at the meeting and map out how projects could sequence and bring that to the May meeting for full Council discussion.

VIII. Public Comment

No additional public comments shared during this period.

IX. Appreciation and Adjournment

Member Batayola adjourned the meeting.