

Adopted Minutes of the Environmental Justice Council

December 4, 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.waportal.org/Environmental%20Justice%20Council%20Meetings). 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:

- Maria Batayola
- Tatiana Brown (Co-Chair)
- Cristina González Torres, joined at 3:40 pm
- David Mendoza, joined at 4:27pm
- Esther Min, joined at 4:00 pm
- Todd Mitchell
- Faaluaina Pritchard, joined at 3:37pm
- Running-Grass
- Raeshawna Ware, joined at 4:00 pm

Council Members absent:

- Nichole Banegas
- Maria Blancas
- The Honorable Jarred-Michael Erickson (Co-Chair)
- The Honorable JJ Wilbur

Agency Ex Officio Liaisons present:

- Jennifer Grove, Department of Commerce
- Lauren Jenks, Department of Health
- Nicole Johnson, Department of Agriculture
- Jerry Rivero, Department of Natural Resources
- Emilie Litsinger, Puget Sound Partnership

- Ahmer Nizam, Department of Transportation
- Courtney Cecal on behalf of Millie Piazza, Department of Ecology

Council staff:

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

Guests and other participants:

- Allyson Brooks, Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

I. Welcome and Roll Call for Quorum

Tatiana Brown, Council Co-Chair, opened the meeting and thanked Monica Tonasket, who has resigned from the EJ Council. Christy Curwick Hoff, Council Staff, facilitated roll call. At the time of the initial roll call, there were 4 voting members present, not meeting quorum (see table).

13 Members / 3 Vacancies / 0 Leaves of Absence / Current Quorum = 7		
Nichole Banegas	Business Representative	Absent
Maria Batayola	Community Representative	Present
Maria Blancas	Community Representative	Absent
Tatiana Brown (Council Co-Chair)	Community Representative	Present
The Honorable Jarred-Michael Erickson (Council Co-Chair)	Tribal Representative	Absent
Cristina González Torres	Community Representative	Absent
David Mendoza	Representative At Large	Absent
Esther Min	EJ Practitioner	Absent
Todd Mitchell	Union Representative	Present
Faaluaina Pritchard	Community Representative	Absent
Running-Grass	EJ Practitioner	Present

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Raeshawna Ware	Community Representative	Absent
The Honorable JJ Wilbur	Tribal Representative	Absent
Vacant	Community Representative	Vacant
Vacant	Tribal Representative	Vacant
Vacant	Tribal Representative	Vacant

II. 2025 Reflections, Appreciation, and Celebration

Running-Grass, Council Member, thanked the interpreters for their work. He noted the hard work to organize the Council's in-person meeting in September. He said the Council reorganized the way they do their work in 2025, in hopefully a more efficient way. He thanked the agencies for making the HEAL Act a reality. He noted the turnover among Council Members this year and thanked former members. Co-Chair Brown also extended gratitude to former member Aurora Martin. She said they were looking forward to advancing environmental justice in the state and asked community members to continue to use the public comment period to share what they are experiencing in their communities. Maria Batayola, Council Member, said she wants to give visibility to the community organizations who lead environmental justice at the local level.

Cristina González, Council Member, said we have a lot of work ahead and thanked community for being resilient and trusting in the Council. Jerry Rivero, Ex Officio with the Department of Natural Resources, reflected on the recent in-person meeting. He said he felt motivated by the meeting, the feeling of unity, and the work ahead.

III. Honoring Theo Cielos' Life and Work

Maria Batayola, Council Member, said this was an opportunity to remember and honor the life and work of former Council staff member, Theo Cielos. She said Theo was a scientist, a high thinker and a high feeler and she encouraged the EJ Council to role model courage, and to question if they were authentically engaging community and the level to which issues may be true emergencies or not. Member Running-Grass said we can continue to live in the honor of those whose work helped to build the Council, and Theo was one of those individuals. He played

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two pieces of music. Sierra Rotakhina, Council Staff, said that Raeshawna Ware, Council Member, proposed that in 2026 the Council take a couple minutes at each meeting to share a “Theo Moment”—how they have affected change, witnessed good, or done something light and beautiful in the name of environmental justice. Co-Chair Brown said that she didn’t have an opportunity to work with Theo, but still feels their presence and is grateful that they continue to hold space to honor Theo.

IV. Approval of Agenda by Council

Maria Batayola, Council Member, facilitated adoption of the agenda.

Motion: The Council adopts the [agenda](#).

Motion/Second: Todd Mitchell/ Cristina González Torres

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

V. Approval of May 9, July 24, September 25, and October 10, 2025 Meeting Notes by Council

Member Batayola facilitated adoption of the meeting notes.

Motion: The Council adopts the May 9, July 24, September 25, and October 10, 2025 meeting notes (see [meeting materials](#), starting on page 11).

Motion/Second: Todd Mitchell/ Cristina González Torres

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

VI. Public Comment

Sierra Red Bow, Council Staff, opened up and facilitated the public comment period.

Simon Knaphus, Beacon Hill Council, said they are bringing the voices of 40,000+ neighbors asking for the EJ Council to advocate for the state to mitigate the harms that have resulted from

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the recent reversal of federal environmental regulations and programs. Simon said they are an aviation impacted community living under flight paths. They shared information from an airport operations health report. Simon said the community has been organizing the Fix the Harm campaign that is seeking to address damage to health, environment, and climate caused by aviation. The number of flights at the SeaTac airport is increasing and they are sending a message that the airport needs to ensure the increase does not result in added harm. They have concerns about air quality and health impacts for vulnerable populations. The Federal Aviation Administration said the additional 80,000 flights would have no significant impacts. Simon said this is a result of changed federal policy and asks the EJ Council to advocate for the mitigation of the loss of federal environmental protection laws, rules, and programs.

Anonymous Public Commenter said they work in education and outreach and have taught wildfire and community preparedness to adults and children. They want to bring awareness to the impacts our environment creates on farmworkers, both H2A and H2B. They shared the experience of two H2A workers who were dropped off near a Red Cross evacuation center but were not allowed to enter for several days and spent two nights sleeping outside. The workers did not understand the evacuation orders. They had very little food and did not have the proper personal protective equipment and were later hospitalized from the smoke exposure. They said the workers feared retaliation and being blacklisted if they disclosed the name of their employer. The workers' manager attempted to prevent interaction with the workers. They shared another story of an employer who removed the heater and AC from company vehicles because they thought workers were spending extra time in the vehicles to get out of the weather. The workers were left dehydrated and near heat exhaustion. Two workers fainted and still had to work the next day. They said these are only two stories of many that they have heard.

VII. Addressing the Loss of Federal Environmental and Cultural Resource Protections and the Potential Risk to Tribal and Community Data

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Member Batayola introduced the item. Dr. Allyson Brooks, State Historic Preservation Officer and Executive Director at the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, shared her slide presentation, which provided information about federal budget cuts, policy changes, and rollbacks to regulations.

Member Batayola asked what the Council's actions should be given the loss of federal protections. She said her idea was to request an assessment of all the changes, which could result in recommendations. Co-Chair Brown asked if there's been an analysis of what is to come as a result of incoming data centers. Dr. Brooks responded that it would depend on the federal agency that has jurisdiction. Member Batayola suggested subject matter experts could do an assessment and identify gaps. Co-Chair Brown suggested the Urgent and Emergent Issues Workgroup discusses until they have a better sense of a path forward. David Mendoza, Council Member, said it is untrue when some point to Tribes and the protection of cultural resources and overburdened communities as the reason for slowing down processes. Member Batayola agreed that the Urgent and Emergent Issues Workgroup should discuss further.

IX. Discussion and Possible Adoption: 2026 Legislative Policy Statement

Co-Chair Brown introduced the agenda item and Christy Hoff referred Council Members to the draft 2026 Legislative Policy Statement. Members discussed the edits to Section 2.8. Sierra Rotakhina said the bylaws allow for the Council to postpone taking action on items if there are absences among the community and Tribal Representatives. She discussed this item with Co-Chair Erickson earlier in the day, and despite the Tribal vacancies, he was supportive of the Council discussing and considering action on this item. Member González Torres said the Executive Committee discussed the language in 2.8 in detail.

Motion: The Council adopts the 2026 Legislative Policy Statement (see [meeting materials](#), starting on page 42) as presented on December 4, 2025 with the changes agreed to by the full Council.

Motion/Second: Todd Mitchell/Maria Batayola

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.

13 Members / 3 Vacancies / 0 Leaves of Absence / Current Quorum = 7		
Nichole Banegas	Business Representative	Absent
Maria Batayola	Community Representative	A
Maria Blancas	Community Representative	Absent
Tatiana Brown (Council Co-Chair)	Community Representative	A
The Honorable Jarred-Michael Erickson (Council Co-Chair)	Tribal Representative	Absent
Cristina González Torres	Community Representative	A
David Mendoza	Representative At Large	A
Esther Min	EJ Practitioner	A
Todd Mitchell	Union Representative	A
Faaluaina Pritchard	Community Representative	A
Running-Grass	EJ Practitioner	A
Raeshawna Ware	Community Representative	A
The Honorable JJ Wilbur	Tribal Representative	Absent
Vacant	Community Representative	Vacant
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X. Discussion and Possible Adoption: Additional Council Budget Values and Principles

Co-Chair Brown introduced the agenda item. Christy Hoff reviewed the Additional Council Budget Values and Principles. Member Mitchell said they need to be realistic in asking for full Council consultation in budget decisions. Member Mendoza said they are not issuing a directive but encouraging better practices. Members offered edits to the proposed motion.

Motion: The Council adopts the three Budget Values and Principles (see [meeting materials](#) starting on page 48) as presented at the December 4, 2025 Council meeting and directs staff to combine all of the Council Budget Values and Principles adopted in 2025 into one document. The document will include a statement that the values and principles are not in priority order.

The Council directs staff to submit the values and principles to the appropriate committees of the Legislature, the Governor, and the Office of Financial Management to inform the development of the 2026 supplemental budget.

The Council will follow its procedure for “Advocating for the Council’s Budget Recommendations” adopted by the full Council on November 21, 2024 when advocating for these budget values and principles.

Motion: Second: Tatiana Brown/Raeshawna Ware

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.

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E: I block, have serious concerns.

F: I stand aside, recuse myself.

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David Mendoza	Representative At Large	A
Esther Min	EJ Practitioner	A
Todd Mitchell	Union Representative	A
Faaluaina Pritchard	Community Representative	A
Running-Grass	EJ Practitioner	A
Raeshawna Ware	Community Representative	B
The Honorable JJ Wilbur	Tribal Representative	Absent
Vacant	Community Representative	Vacant
Vacant	Tribal Representative	Vacant
Vacant	Tribal Representative	Vacant

XI. Discussion and Possible Adoption: 2026 Council Meeting Schedule

Sierra Rotakhina said the Council is required to develop a meeting schedule and file it with the Office of the Code Revisor. She said the Executive Committee has recommended that they adopt a January meeting date to discuss how the new way of approaching the work is going and then develop a full 2026 meeting schedule to meet the needs of the work. She added that they have previously identified a February date to meet only if needed for legislative purposes. She reviewed the proposed meeting dates: January 29, 2026 from 3:30 – 6:30pm and February 12, 2026 from 3:30 – 6:30pm (hold to meet only if needed for legislative purposes).

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Motion: The Council adopts the 2026 meeting schedule (see [meeting materials](#), starting on page 56) as presented on December 4, 2025.

Motion: Second: Esther Min/Todd Mitchell

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.

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Esther Min	EJ Practitioner	A
Todd Mitchell	Union Representative	A
Faaluaina Pritchard	Community Representative	Absent
Running-Grass	EJ Practitioner	A
Raeshawna Ware	Community Representative	A
The Honorable JJ Wilbur	Tribal Representative	Absent
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XII. Presentation: Environmental Health Disparities Map Updates

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Sierra Rotakhina and Sierra Red Bow, Council Staff, gave a staff briefing on the Council's obligations under the HEAL Act related to the Environmental Health Disparities Map.

Sierra Red Bow said the EJ Council responsibilities include consultation to the Department of Health on development and maintenance of the map and to work with the Interagency Workgroup to provide guidance on how to use the map to identify overburdened communities (noting that many individuals prefer the term frontline communities). She encouraged members to think about what further information they want to learn about the map.

Co-Chair Brown asked when they hope to have the map team come to present the latest version of the map. Sierra Red Bow said staff follow up with the team. Co-Chair Brown said they want to think about the tools they have to advance environmental justice work and how they track successes. The map is one of those tools. She invited Members to think about and propose other ideas when they come together in January.

XI. Appreciation and Adjournment

Co-Chair Brown adjourned the meeting.