

Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities'
Recommendations to the Maryland Climate Change Commission as they work to address
Equity in their 2016 Action Plan

Presented at the Mitigation Working Group Meeting April 25, 2016

Thank you for the invitation to make recommendations as you consider equity in pursuing the goals of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (GGRA). The following is a list of action items we could help develop, and a list of priorities that we feel are relevant to your ongoing work. We value inclusion in your charge to “address any disproportionate impacts of climate change on low-income and vulnerable communities” as it aligns with our work. We look forward to collaborating with you as we work towards achieving equity through climate policy.

This can be the first step in the collaboration between our commissions, with this conversation continuing throughout the year, and beyond. With that in mind, the following list should be considered a menu of options we can discuss and prioritize. We do have further detail on each of the items listed, but were looking for which items you would like to prioritize before delving into each. We can also discuss how our commissions will work best together, whether that is a formally designated liaison who meets with both Commissions regularly, specific requests from the MCCC for input from the CEJSC as issues arise, or by any other relevant means.

- Implement enhanced and more effective community outreach strategies through existing programs like the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). CEJSC and MCCC’s Education, Communications & Outreach (ECO) Working Group could work together to develop recommendations on how to conduct robust outreach and community engagement around the RGGI and implementation of the Clean Power Plan (CPP), especially in vulnerable communities.
- Utilize results of our outreach to MACO and MML, as solutions for mitigation and adaptation of climate change (ex. extreme weather events) can be achieved through local zoning practices.
 - The CEJSC is just starting outreach to MACO to discuss incorporating strategies that address issues/concerns/needs of distressed communities, which present an educational opportunity to identify best practices.
 - This relationship/information shared could be used to solicit feedback from counties and municipalities on issues in their communities. It would also help to continue conversations with MACO/MML to discuss other concerns/needs.
- Identify areas in the state that need prioritization of mitigation and adaptation programs and resources.
 - The unique demographic and geographic characteristics and health disparities in Maryland make certain parts of the state particularly

vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The following indicators could be used to identify vulnerable parts of the state:

- High percentages of vacant housing
- High percentages of renters
- Distribution of investment in watershed restoration programs
- High levels of asthma and other climate-sensitive health outcomes
- Lack of access to health promoting infrastructure
- Identify tools and indicators available to make geographic designations:
 - EJ Screen
 - National Equity Atlas
 - Environmental Public Health Tracking
- Consider a cumulative impact screening tool to analyze the additive and synergistic effects of multiple risks and exposures listed above.
 - The indicators considered would be unique to climate change vulnerability, and may be different than indicators discussed in cumulative impact work in other subjects (i.e. toxics)
- Consider using Health Impact Assessments (HIA) in evaluating GGRA programs
 - An HIA is a tool designed to inform specific policy decisions (legislation, proposed rulemaking, project permitting, program investment, etc.) and systematically assess the multiple influences on health that can occur as a result of social, economic, and environmental changes.
- Identify those greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction programs and plans whose economic benefits may not be evenly available across Maryland counties, or across portions of the population stratified by income or educational level.
- Consider reducing diesel emissions in vulnerable communities as a mitigation strategy (this would require a joint effort among MDE, MCCC, and MDOT, to which the CEJSC could advise).
- Develop a matrix of all Maryland's energy reduction/efficiency/clean energy programs, their budgets, where the money comes from, and who is eligible versus who utilizes the program
 - Evaluate the program, and/or effectiveness of the outreach about the programs
 - Reallocate resources based on these analyses