

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

an initiative of Eastern States of the US

April 25, 2024

Environmental Justice and Equity Advisory Boards of the Participating RGGI States

Each of the participating states of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is committed to advancing principles of equity and environmental justice (EJ). This includes establishing transparent and meaningful channels for public communication and community input that can influence policy outcomes. Each state works to address these principles in its own way and within its existing legal authority. In many cases, this includes establishing advisory boards and working groups which provide guidance to a state on a wide range of environmental, EJ, and equity considerations. The table below summarizes current state practices related to EJ and equity advisory boards within the participating RGGI states.

State	Equity Advisory Boards
<p>Connecticut</p>	<p>As established by Executive Order No. 21-3, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) administers the CT Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC). CEEJAC advises DEEP's Commissioner on how to: integrate equity and EJ considerations into DEEP's programs, policies and activities; provide mechanisms for EJ Communities to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes related to energy projects in their communities; develop a model plan for community engagement and stakeholder outreach; and strengthen DEEP's partnerships with other governmental agencies, other states, tribal, and local governments, and community leaders and organizations regarding EJ issues.</p> <p>At present, CEEJAC is composed of 16 members appointed by DEEP's Commissioner to represent: EJ communities, Connecticut-based environmental advocacy organizations, large and small business and industry, and municipalities or regional Councils of Government.</p>
<p>Delaware</p>	<p>The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) operates an internal EJ Workgroup, which develops recommendations on how the Department can better incorporate EJ into its processes, policies, and procedures.</p> <p>In June 2021 Delaware established the Justice Forty Committee to study and make findings and recommendations regarding environmental justice in this State. The Committee is composed of 15 members from the General Assembly, the Governor's cabinet, and a member from the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council.</p>

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Maine	<p>The Equity Subcommittee of the Maine Governor’s Office of Policy, Innovation, and the Future works together with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Public Utilities Commission (PUC), and other affected agencies to develop and implement policies and procedures that support implementation of the state’s climate strategies in ways that ensure equitable sharing of benefits across diverse populations in Maine.</p>
Maryland	<p>Maryland has established the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities (CEJSC). The CEJSC is required to submit an annual report pertaining to EJ issues in Maryland, is charged with examining EJ issues and sustainable community opportunities that may be associated with public health, safety, economy, or government, and is tasked with reviewing and analyzing Maryland laws and policies pertaining to EJ issues.</p>
Massachusetts	<p>The Environmental Justice Council (EJC) is appointed by the Governor and chaired by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). The EJC was created pursuant to Chapter 8 of the Acts of 2021, An Act Creating a Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy (the "Act") to advise and provide recommendations to the Secretary of EEA on relevant policies and standards to achieve environmental justice principles as defined in the Act.</p> <p>The EJC advises and provides recommendations to the Secretary of EEA on relevant policies and standards to achieve environmental justice principles. As part of this broad effort, every fifth year, the EJC will conduct a comprehensive analysis to ensure the definition of environmental justice (EJ) population achieves the objectives of the environmental justice principles. The EJC shall provide advice and make recommendations to the secretary on any necessary changes to the percentage thresholds included in the definition of EJ population and any related regulation.</p>
New Hampshire	<p>The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) has adopted a Civil Rights and Nondiscrimination Implementation Plan to ensure proper nondiscrimination measures are implemented and monitored. New Hampshire currently has an Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Energy (ESEE) Board established by statute.</p>
New Jersey	<p>The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection’s Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) administers an EJ Advisory Council (EJAC), an 18-member body appointed by the NJDEP Commissioner that provides guidance to state departments and agencies on ways to incorporate environmental justice into programs, policies, and activities. EJAC members represent broad-based constituents and geography. OEJ</p>

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	<p>also administers New Jersey’s EJ Interagency Council (EJIC), made up of senior officials from state departments and agencies, which convenes to help agencies adopt EJ principles; complete Executive Branch EJ action plans; and participate in workshops and trainings.</p> <p>The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (“BPU”) has established an Equity Working Group consisting of representatives of overburdened communities, nongovernmental organizations, community-based organizations, university partners, industry partners, and state agency partners. The BPU’s Office of Clean Energy Equity, in collaboration with the Equity Working Group, makes recommendations to the Board regarding the clean energy programs and policies that best address the needs of disadvantaged and overburdened communities, and acts as a resource for the BPU Division of Clean Energy staff to receive feedback on current or future clean energy programs and policies.</p>
<p>New York</p>	<p>The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) operates a Climate Justice Working Group (CJWG), which is charged with identifying “Disadvantaged Communities” for purposes of implementing the equity and climate justice provisions of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.</p> <p>The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) is developing an Energy Equity Collaborative composed of representatives of frontline communities and affordability stakeholders to provide a venue for engagement to understand community and stakeholder clean energy priorities and to inform NYSERDA initiatives.</p> <p>In the future, DEC will empanel a Permanent Environmental Justice Advisory Group and Environmental Justice Interagency Coordinating Council which will develop a model environmental justice policy applicable to agencies statewide. The policy will guide equitable decision making and outreach to advance environmental justice statewide.</p>
<p>Rhode Island</p>	<p>The RI Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) is currently developing a Climate Justice Working Group. An operational budget for this group is under consideration by the EC4. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) Climate Justice Specialist proposes to have a working group by January 2024.</p> <p>In September 2023, RIDEM finalized an Environmental Justice (EJ) Policy. This policy includes definitions of “Environmental Justice”, “Fair Treatment”, “Meaningful Involvement” and “Environmental Justice Focus Area”. The policy also includes a map with “Environmental Justice Focus Areas” identified across the state.</p>

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	<p>This policy will guide development of strategies to integrate environmental justice principles into RIDEM's daily practices. It is important to note that this EJ policy is a dynamic document and will evolve over time.</p> <p>Additionally, in September 2023, the EC4 and its Advisory Boards each underwent an environmental justice and equity training, providing participants foundational knowledge of environmental justice (EJ) concepts within Rhode Island, establishing a shared language across departments and agencies allowing for the successful collaboration toward Act on Climate program implementation.</p>
Vermont	<p>The state passed an EJ law in 2022 which established an independent EJ Advisory Council and a state government Interagency Committee focused on EJ issues. The Advisory Council and the Interagency Committee began their work in the spring of 2023.</p>

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