

Illinois Environmental Justice Advisory Group
November 3, 2005 Meeting Minutes

The Illinois EJ Advisory Group meeting was held at USEPA, 77 West Jackson, Chicago, Illinois from 1:30 – 3:30.

Present:

Karla Owens, USEPA
Alan Walts, USEPA
Ron Burke, Illinois EPA
Jim Ross, Illinois EPA
Chris Pressnall, Illinois EPA
Dorian Breuer, PERRO
Bess Schenkier, Chicago Legal Clinic
Maggie Rice, City of Chicago
Ken Page, Illinois EPA

Conference Call Participants:

Rick Cobb, Illinois EPA
Connie Tonsor, Illinois EPA
Alan Faust, Solutia
Kathy Andria, American Bottom Conservancy
Sid Marder, Environmental Regulatory Group
Verena Owen, for Illinois Environmental Council
Andy Rathsack, American Council of Engineering Companies of Il.

1. Welcome was given by Karla Owens, EJ Program Manager, Office of regional Counsel, USEPA

Discussions

1. Functional Definitions for potential EJ Areas by Alan Walts, Associate Regional Counsel, USEPA. Alan Walts distributed handouts (for member absent, handouts were mailed by Illinois EPA).
 - USEPA is expanding its definition of EJ to include health and environmental indicators. This will also include demographics (race and/or low income).
 - The IEPA will continue to use the screening analysis of race and/or income in determining a potential EJ area. Above the state average for minority population would be considered a potential EJ area and below the state average for income would be considered a potential EJ area.

- The IEPA does not have to follow USEPA's expanded definition of EJ. Using the expanded definition will create more work and may change the focus from already defined EJ areas.

2. Use of EPA's EJ Geographic Assessment Tool (www.epa.gov/enviro/ej)

- Alan Walts discussed the different County and State factors that could be used in comparing areas of concern. This included some general factors: environmental, health, social and economic.
- The handout compared the study area (potential EJ community) with the county and state.
 - a. This Overview section compared total persons, population density, % minority, persons below poverty level, households in area, etc.
 - b. The Race section used different racial group breakdowns to compare with the study area (potential EJ community), county and state.
 - c. The Age section used different age group breakdowns to compare with the study area (potential EJ community), county and state.
 - d. This assessment tool allows you to use education, ability to speak English, etc.
- Several maps were prepared with quantified factors:
 - a. Composite of Low Income and Minority Scores only counties exceeding state averages.
 - b. Composite without risk screening environmental indicators. These maps provide an opportunity to discuss all the different uses of the data and how it can be applied to get where you need to be.

3. Plain Language Summaries of permit applications. Project summaries and fact sheets were handed out for Geneva Energy, Chicago Heights Refuse Depot Landfill Site and Solutia for discussion.

- The work group felt that these were very good examples from the IEPA.
- There was discussion on what should always be included in project summaries:
 - a. What is the facility?
 - b. What is their operation? (What do they do?)
 - c. Give all the names of the facility (past and present)
 - d. Is the facility in compliance?
 - e. Summary of compliance assurance.
 - f. Permitting history.

4. Open Discussion/Questions

- a. Concerns with the public outreach to residents and public officials regarding the Solutia public hearing. Not enough community outreach.
- b. Wants IEPA to scrutinize permits more.
- c. Work to get current emitters to reduce pollution.
- d. IEPA still accepting comments on the Draft EJ Policy and Draft EJ Public Participation Policy.
- e. Will the Advisory Group be extended beyond the 12 months? At this time there are no plans to extend the group. If the need exist it may be extended.

5. Next Meeting Date – The next meeting of the Advisory Group will be held within the 1st Quarter of 2006.

Attached maps can be opened in Windows Picture & Fax Viewer