

**Equity Advisory Group –
Equity Lens Session**

Meeting Date: February 16, 2022
 Time: 4:30pm – 6:00m
 Location: Zoom Meeting

Attendees:

Facilitator:	EAG Members:
Amber Lenhart	Clyde Abrahamson, Spokane Indian Housing Authority
Avista:	KJ January, Spectrum Center Spokane
Tamara Bradley	Jupiter McGee, Community Member and Organizer
Renee Coelho	Guests:
Kim Boynton	Rylie Ellison – Department of Ecology
Jaime Majure	Caroline Mellor – Department of Ecology
	Shay Bauman – Public Counsel

Agenda

- I. Welcome & Introductions
 - Overview of Meeting: Rules and Intent
- II. Outdoor Air Quality (CBI)
- III. Desired Outcomes
- IV. Improving Air Quality in Overburdened Communities (*Special Presentation*)
- V. Your Support Team and Next Meeting

Facilitator

- Amber Lenhart
 Amber Lenhart
 Tamara Bradley
 Tamara Bradley
 Washington State Dept. of Ecology
 Amber Lenhart

Meeting Notes

In 2021 we developed our Clean Energy Implementation Plan (CEIP). You, the EAG were an important part of that work. The CEIP included 13 Customer Benefit Indicators (CBIs), spanning affordability, environment, community development, access to clean energy, public health, energy security, energy resilience, and other.

Today we are focusing on Outdoor Air Quality, which falls under the Environmental equity area. The metrics to be used:

- # of days Avista customers experience air quality
- Direct Avista plant air emissions

We want to hear from you, about your experiences with local air quality. This is our first CEIP so we’re always looking for feedback and insights on our CBIs, to make sure we’ve

Dept. of Ecology is seeking to understand how air quality is impacting specific communities, under the Climate Commitment Act—**this act is a separate clean energy effort and is not related to Avista’s Clean Energy Implementation Plan.**

Improving Air Quality in Overburdened Communities (Dept. of Ecology)

Climate Commitment Act (CCA) – while there's an assumption that as we decrease greenhouse gas emissions and carbon pollutions, the legislation really wanted to make sure that we were addressing other pollutants, small particulates, etc. A specific initiative within the CCA (Sec. 3) requires DoE to identify these overburdened communities, expand air quality monitoring in these communities, establish air quality targets in these areas, identify/notify the largest sources of emissions, review/evaluate air quality in these areas, and establish air quality standards, emission standards, or methods to achieve air quality standards.

Member: “Overburdened communities”, what does that really mean?

DOE: communities that are or may be disproportionately burdened from air pollution—low socioeconomic status, people of color, or already marginalized, etc.

We are looking to incorporate public feedback at multiple stages. There will likely be a rulemaking next year, yet another chance to engage and give input into what's important with regards to air quality, Right now we're having an information process (Jan-March)—listening sessions, meeting with newly-formed Environmental Justice Council—then we're receive feedback on our draft criteria (criteria used to identify the communities) in Spring 2022, and outreach to share these results before a more formal rulemaking process, looking to place the expanded monitoring system in the fall.

Pollutants we'll be looking at are “criteria pollutants” (both fine and coarse)—CCA requires that we focus on these pollutants specifically. They are already regulated at the federal level (National Ambient Air Quality Standards, NAAQS), and at the state level we monitor and take actions if levels become too high.

Common sources: wood burning, transportation, natural sources (wildfire), industrial. These may vary throughout the year—e.g., you may see more industrial and natural in the summer and wood burning/heating in the winter.

All monitoring conducted by DoE is ambient air monitoring—75 sites across WA in public, outdoor areas. This monitoring is done in different ways, dependent on the purpose for that particular monitoring—informing the public, compliance, or supporting research.

Particulate matter is the greatest area of concern, and it's also the most monitored in the state. While we can typically pinpoint the type of pollutant, we can't determine the individual source of the pollutant.

To identify these communities, we're using monitoring, modeling, emissions inventory, environmental health disparities map, socioeconomic/population data, and public/partner input. We want to hear your personal experiences with pollution—how does it impact your daily life, do you have sources of concern or do you see issues that might impact air quality—what do you think should be prioritized as we look to develop this criteria?

DoE Questions:

1. How does air quality affect your daily life?
2. Do you experience changes in air quality throughout the year? If so, can you tell us more about your experiences?

Member:

3. What do you see as the biggest problems for air quality in your community?

Member:

4. What do you see as the best ways to improve air quality in your community?

Member: I have asthma, so the changes in the seasons really affect my breathing regularly. Fire season is terrible for me. I've lived in bigger cities—Spokane doesn't have issues like transportation and industries, but as we continue to grow that could become an issue. In the groups I work with, a lot of our queer youth is on the streets, so I'm glad we're talking about this.

Member: Living where I do, it really doesn't affect my life until fire season. I used to live downtown and Deer Park. This time of year I would typically notice the air inversions—I'd walk across Monroe Street bridge, esp. during the winter, and those inversions would really affect my breathing. I'm used to living out here in Wellpinit. We used to have 4 seasons, and now we joke that we have 5; I have heart issues and can really tell over the last few years. Spokane is really becoming a boomtown, people moving into the area—over the last 10 years, we never used to experience traffic jams and now we do. I guess I don't see a way to improve it—EV vehicles could be. I'm a contributor too, as I love to burn, I love the heat from a fire. I don't know, what is the best way to improve it, outside of moving up to North Canada.

Member: One thought also is that lower income communities will likely reduce air pollution from tailpipe emissions more slowly due to less access to electric vehicles and more inefficient vehicles generally. Offensive smells are really noticeable to me (Millwood example), or a truck that starts spewing black smoke.

Member: how will DoE's "overburdened communities" overlay with the Vulnerable Populations/ Highly Impacted Communities (Names Communities) we've been discussing?

DoE: for us, these communities will get increased air monitoring, and increased opportunities to address the air pollution—financial assistance or regulatory. When we're looking at the Health Disparities Map, where you're seeing a 9 or 10 when you're narrowing it to just Air Quality, you may see different neighborhoods because we're just looking at that one metric.

Avista: while DoE is doing their work and deciding where to put their monitors, how might we leverage this and get that attention in our Named Communities.

Amber: might there be certain intersections, areas, etc. that will be more impacted? In talking about air inversions, it will be clear near my home and as I drive into Millwood it's soupy fog, don't know if that's elevation or air quality, but something to think about.

Renee: North South Freeway -will be elevated roadway alongside Spokane Community College.

DoE: Where do you find information on air quality in your community?

Are there additional places or sources of information where you would like to be able to get information on air quality?

Member: I only really look up info on air quality during fire season and just google "Spokane air quality" or something similar

DoE: are there any demographic characteristics, suggestions, about where we should be looking?

Member: Do you have any idea of where you're thinking of placing this monitoring?

DoE: those sources we referenced earlier—but we also really want to hear from communities about specific areas, but also what about those areas, what characteristics there really matter.

Renee: Ecology has mentioned the Environmental Health Disparities map for this effort - Avista also utilized that same map as a starting point for identifying our Named Communities for the Clean Energy Implementation Plan.

Amber: People don't seem as worried about trains (esp. coal trains) here as in western WA, but we have a lot of rail freight lines through/adjacent to neighborhoods

Member: omg Amber thank you for bringing up trains. they've caused me much distress during high school blocking my route to school 😞 had not thought much about the air pollution. My high school had 3 sets of train tracks on either side of it, so now that I've thought about it, definitely a lot of trains in the area that bring a lot of pollution.

5. We will be identifying communities for expanded monitoring. What community concerns or factors would you want considered in determining these communities?

6. If you have air quality concerns for specific areas in your community, can you tell us more about those specific areas?

Chat Question: What type of geographic boundaries come to mind when you think of your community?

Member: Definitely the north side down by the highway; there's a large number of communities around there. I forgot about the N/S freeway, so once that's up that's a concern.

Member: If there's a problem with air quality, we usually get a notification through the tribe—mostly during fire season, or if there's a fire west of us in Chelan area (which there usually is each year)

Member: I definitely want to do outreach to my members and coworkers about this. DoE shared contact info:

Survey with background info, provided wrap-up and next steps:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/1409205ca61847faa4194072330709cd>

Webpage: <https://ecology.wa.gov/Air-Climate/Climate-change/Reducing-greenhouse-gases/Climate-Commitment-Act/Overburdened-communities>

Newsletter sign-up:

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAECY/subscriber/new?topic_id=WAECY_15

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