



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE REPORT

Summer 2023

Hello to all faithful subscribers and new subscribers of our newsletter. It's been a little while since we've put out a newsletter but we're back! Although our newsletter was on a hiatus, the Office of Environmental Justice was not, so here are a few updates we wanted to share.

DEC'S DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR EQUITY AND JUSTICE—ADRIANA ESPINOZA



Deputy Commissioner for Equity and Justice, Adriana Espinoza

For those who don't know, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) appointed its first Deputy Commissioner for Equity and Justice, Adriana Espinoza. As Deputy Commissioner, Adriana oversees the Office of Environmental Justice and leads internal efforts to

encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion among incoming and current staff, and enhances DEC's outreach to disadvantaged communities across the state. Adriana came to DEC from the New York City Mayor's Office of Climate and Sustainability, where she served as Senior Advisor of Environmental Justice, directing the development and implementation of the City's Environmental Justice for All Program. Her past experiences with the Mayor's Office, as well as her time as New York City Program Director for the New York League of Conservation Voters, will help ensure environmental justice concerns are incorporated into policy decision-making and implementation.

DIRECTOR FOR THE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE — ALANAH KEDDELL-TUCKEY

Since the last Environmental Justice newsletter, Alanah Keddell-Tuckey was promoted from Public Participation Specialist to the new Director of the Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ). As the fearless leader of OEJ, Alanah heads up the agency's efforts to

implement environmental and climate justice principles into agency and state processes. Another important role that she plays is Chair for the [Climate Justice Working Group](#), which finalized criteria for identifying disadvantaged communities earlier this year. More on that initiative is below.

Before moving to OEJ, Alanah was the Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs and worked on diversity, inclusion, education, and public outreach with the Office of Communication Services. Her pre-DEC experience includes working as a Government Relations Associate with the Adirondack Council, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the Adirondack Park, and as the Government Affairs Coordinator for the Empire State Pride Agenda, a statewide political advocacy organization in New York that advocated for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights, including same-sex marriage.

CLIMATE LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY PROTECTION ACT (CLIMATE ACT)

The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (aka Climate Act) that was passed in 2019, is New York State's nation-leading climate plan and the most aggressive climate and clean energy initiative in the nation. So, what is the Climate Act? The Climate Act was signed into law to address climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by setting goals, including reducing emissions 40 percent from 1990 levels by 2030 and 85 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. Other goals of the plan are, by 2040, to have a zero-emission electricity sector, including 70 percent renewable energy generation by 2030, and to reach economy-wide carbon neutrality.

To achieve these goals, a [Climate Action Council](#) made up of 22 appointed members developed a

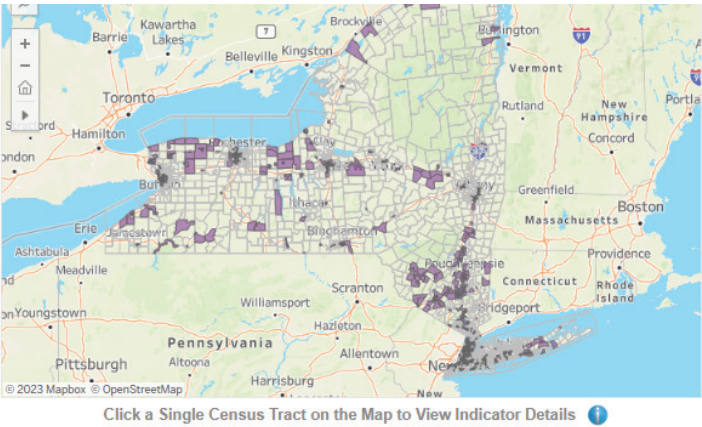
Scoping Plan to serve as an initial framework with actionable proposals recommended by a diverse group of experts from various sectors. These experts formed the sector-specific Advisory Panels covering the transportation, building, industrial, commercial, and agricultural sectors and together, they determined emission-reduction strategies to combat climate change. The draft Scoping Plan was released at the end of 2021 and after more than 35,000 comments, the final Scoping Plan was released on January 1, 2023.

Another important part of this Climate Act is the dedication to climate justice, which recognizes that the impacts of climate change disproportionately affect disadvantaged communities. This act requires New York State to direct at least 35 percent, with the goal of 40 percent, of funding to disadvantaged communities for clean energy and energy efficiency programs. Along with this funding, a community air monitoring initiative to monitor the air quality in 10 selected disadvantaged communities with high air pollution burdens across the state was implemented to help target strategies to reduce air pollution.

To learn more about the details of the Climate Act and the Scoping Plan, head to <https://climate.ny.gov/>.

WHAT IS A DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY?

On March 27, 2023, New York State’s Climate Justice Working Group (CJWG), a 13-member working group tasked with establishing the criteria by which disadvantaged communities (DACs) across the state would be identified, finalized the criteria for identifying the state’s DACs. This effort was led by DEC and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). The criteria will guide the equitable implementation of New York’s ambitious Climate Act through requirements that all agencies and authorities prioritize DACs in air pollution and climate-altering greenhouse gas emissions reductions and targeting clean energy and energy efficiency investments.



Bond Act Listening Sessions

July 20	Albany
July 26	Virtual
August 9	Brooklyn
August 15	White Plains
August 22	Bronx
August 24	Brentwood

NYS Environmental Bond Act Tour
nysebatour.com

The Climate Act requires 35 percent, with a goal of 40 percent, of the benefits from renewable energy and energy efficiency investments made by state entities be realized in DACs. Similar to the Climate Act requirements, the Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act also requires that at least 35 percent, with a goal of 40 percent, of funding benefits DACs. For more information, head to the [Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act \(ny.gov\) website](https://www.ny.gov/clean-water-clean-air-and-green-jobs-environmental-bond-act).

The Climate Act also requires all agencies and authorities to ensure decision-making does not disproportionately burden DACs.

Over three years, the CJWG worked to develop the criteria by evaluating and ultimately voting on 45 indicators, including environmental burdens and climate change risks; sociodemographic factors, such as age, race, and income; and health vulnerabilities. Using a methodology that used statewide data available at the U.S. Census-tract level, the CJWG combined and ranked all indicators into an overall score. The 45 indicators identify 35 percent of New York State as DACs.

In addition to the geographic component, the criteria include low-income households located anywhere in New York State for the purpose of investing or directing clean energy and energy efficiency programs, projects, and investments.

More information about the CJWG can be found here: <https://climate.ny.gov/resources/climate-justice-working-group/> and information about the DAC criteria can be found here: <https://climate.ny.gov/resources/disadvantaged-communities-criteria/>.

COMMUNITY AIR MONITORING INITIATIVE

As a directive of the Climate Act, Governor Hochul announced the launch of the historic statewide air quality and greenhouse gas mobile monitoring initiative – also known as the Community Air Monitoring Initiative. During the summer of 2022, this year-long monitoring effort began in 10 DACs across New York State with a disproportionately high air pollution burden. Working in partnership with community-based organizations, this effort to map hyperlocal air pollution and greenhouse gases statewide, at the community level, is the largest ever undertaken by New York State.

This initiative is bolstered by an estimated \$3 million in State grant funding - \$1 million for Community Air Monitoring Capacity Building Grants, and an additional \$2 million in new funding supporting community-led air monitoring to complement the State's efforts. The results of the monitoring will drive solutions to reduce greenhouse gases and other harmful air pollutants to protect public health.

While this study is in progress, DEC is sharing data as it's collected through virtual quarterly public meetings. To ensure community driven solutions during the



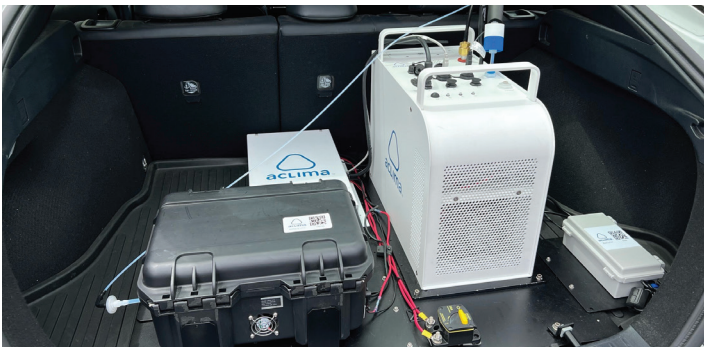
mitigation phase, DEC is also encouraging community involvement through the creation of community advisory committees. These committees are made up of community members in the study area and will help attune the study, by sharing community knowledge and developing priorities for mitigation strategies to propose to DEC based on the findings of the study.

For more information about the initiative or interest in becoming involved in the committees, go to <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/125320.html>. Information on the Air Monitoring grant that is available to fund community-driven projects to improve air quality can be found here: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/public/31226.html>.

COMMUNITY AIR MONITORING CAPACITY-BUILDING GRANT AWARDS

Nine community-based organizations across the state recently received almost \$900,000 in Environmental Justice Community Air Monitoring Capacity Building grants to help build healthier communities, particularly in areas with a disproportionate air pollution burden. The grants support projects to develop new, or strengthen existing, air monitoring programs focused on reducing exposure to harmful emissions and improving public health in DACs.

This grant opportunity, first announced by Governor Kathy Hochul in July, is supported by the State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), with resources designated to Environmental Justice communities. Grants were awarded to the following projects:



CAPITAL DISTRICT

Media Alliance, Inc., \$100,000 for “Capital Region Air Justice Lab”

Air Justice Lab creates access and education to a dispersed network of PurpleAir sensors in the Capital District Study Area, building capacity for a public data calibrated network and community-wide competency and education through air testing.

Radix Ecological Sustainability Center, \$100,000 for “Atmojustice: Youth-Engaged Air Quality Monitoring in Environmental Justice Communities”

Atmojustice will deploy air quality monitors in the South End of Albany and collect and report data back to local residents. Radix’s Ecojustice Associates youth employment program will participate in all aspects of the program.

HUDSON VALLEY

Groundwork Hudson Valley, \$100,000 for “SW Yonkers Air Quality (AQ) Education Campaign and Planning Project”

The project will expand efforts to inform this Environmental Justice area about the critical relationship between climate change, air pollutants, and individual and community health risks, and create a community-based air quality monitoring plan.

NEW YORK CITY METRO

Neighbors Allied for Good Growth, \$100,000 for “Breathe North Brooklyn”

Breathe North Brooklyn will expand Neighbors’ capacity to measure air quality in North Brooklyn, integrate air quality monitoring efforts undertaken by organizations and community members, and expand its existing air quality awareness efforts.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors, Inc., \$100,000 for “Climate Justice and Air Quality Capacity Building and Community Education Project”

The project will build organizations’ air monitoring capacity and develop and deliver a bilingual (English-Spanish) curriculum to educate and develop local resident leaders on air quality issues in partnership with an affiliate of the organization.

West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc. fiscal sponsor for South Bronx Unite, \$100,000 for “South Bronx Unite Seeking Breathable Air in Asthma Alley: Data Mapping and Community Education”

South Bronx Unite will install air monitors at 40 strategic locations at breathing level to collect ongoing air quality data in Mott Haven - Port Morris, inviting public participation and building knowledge and solutions for a breathable community.

Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, Inc. (YMPJ), \$100,000 for “YMPJ Cross Bronx Expressway Air Quality Monitoring”

YMPJ will partner with four other South Bronx community-based organizations to train residents to collect particulate matter (PM1, PM2.5, and PM10) air quality data in the vicinity of the Cross Bronx Expressway.

WESTERN NEW YORK

BRRAlliance, Inc., \$99,200 for “Black Rock and Riverside Citizen Scientist Education and Air Quality Monitoring for the Home and Community”

This project will focus on educating, training, and equipping residents in designated disadvantaged community areas on how to monitor the quality of the air in their homes, how they can improve that quality, and why it is important to do to improve their health.

Clean Air Coalition of Western New York, \$99,165 for “Breathing Free: A People’s Project for Clean Air”

Clean Air Coalition of Western New York will work with the residents of Buffalo and Tonawanda in disadvantaged community areas and be technical advisors to educate the community about air quality and build a resident-controlled air monitoring program.

Go to <https://www.dec.ny.gov/public/31226.html> for more information on these grants and grant opportunities.

NEW ECO-QUALITY CAMPAIGN

DEC is launching a new Operation Eco Quality (OEQ) campaign in Washington Heights and Inwood. OEQ is an initiative undertaken by DEC’s Office of Environmental Justice, focused on small to mid-size regulated businesses within environmental justice areas. The initiative improves neighborhood quality of life, by helping businesses achieve compliance with applicable NYS environmental



laws and regulations. OEQ utilizes a three-pronged approach: outreach, consultation, and compliance.

DEC's Environmental Conservation Officers (ECOs), Office of Environmental Justice, and regional staff work together by conducting enhanced outreach with community leaders and residents to get a better understanding of issues faced by minority and low-income neighborhoods. Then, they go to neighborhood facilities, like auto body shops, dry cleaners, and gas stations, to educate them on how to achieve greater compliance with New York State laws. ECOs return periodically to ensure that facilities have fixed any outstanding problems. Our goal is a strategic partnership between DEC and the community.

This new OEQ educational and removal campaign looks to address illegal pesticide sales and use. Illegal pesticides do not have a federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registration number, and many don't provide any kind of instructions or warnings. These illegal pesticides contain chemicals that could be toxic by entering the body through drinking, touching, breathing or being near an open bottle, and are particularly dangerous to children and pets. There has been a noticeable increase in sales of illegal pesticides by street vendors in the Washington

Heights and Inwood area, and an uptick in pesticide poisonings in children. Outreach is being conducted to notify and educate the community about the dangers of purchasing and using unregistered and illegal pesticides, so that the demand and use of these products decreases.

For more information about pesticide safety or Operation Eco-Quality, head to our website: [Operation ECO Quality - NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation](#).

GOING GREEN: ELECTRIC VEHICLES

WHY GREEN?

With the movement towards greener energy and efforts to reduce greenhouse gases (GHG), more and more people are choosing to switch to electric vehicles (EVs). Electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids emit less tailpipe emissions than their gas- or diesel-powered counterparts, supporting the reduction of GHGs. Even though there are still some GHGs emitted when the alternative fuel is produced, as well as the production of the battery, the carbon footprint is smaller than gas or diesel cars. Also, the alternative fuels can be produced in the U.S., which will reduce our dependence on imported resources.

HOW DO I CHARGE IT?

Charging an EV isn't very different than charging other electronics. One end of a charging cord is plugged into the car, while the other end is plugged into a power source – which can even be a standard 120V outlet found at your home. The time it takes to recharge an EV's battery will depend on the type of charging equipment used, how low the battery is, the type of battery, and the temperature. Charging at a Level 1 source (120V) will take the longest, while a Level 2 (240V) or a Direct-current (DC) Fast Charging source



will be faster but requires specific equipment. Since there are fewer charging stations than there are gas stations, longer trips will need more planning. Luckily, there's a map showing operational charging sites on the EVolve NY website: [Evolve New York, Electric Charging Stations Near Me, Electric Car Incentives \(nypa.gov\)](#). If you're planning for a trip outside of NY, you can head to the Department of Energy website for an Alternative Fueling Station Locator: Alternative Fuels Data Center: [Alternative Fueling Station Locator \(energy.gov\)](#).

HOW DO I PAY FOR CHARGING?

When charging at home, the cost will be included in your monthly electric bill, just like the other appliances that use electricity. At public charging stations, some of them may be free or you can pay with a credit card at the charging station, through a mobile app, or a monthly subscription service. The actual price of charging will vary around the country, just like with gas prices, but it's typically cheaper than filling up a gas tank. If you're curious, you can compare the cost of recharging against refueling here: Save Money ([fueleconomy.gov](#)) with the fuel cost calculator.

HOW DO I CHOOSE?

Unlike before, now there are more options of EVs to choose from. There are approximately 50 models of EVs of all shapes and sizes, with more models coming out frequently. Just like with gas powered vehicles, you can compare the driving ranges of different EVs. Unlike gas powered vehicles, an EV's fuel economy will be reported in miles per gallon of gasoline equivalent (MPGe), representing the number of miles the vehicle can go using a quantity of electricity with the same energy content as a gallon of gasoline, instead of miles per gallon (MPG). This will allow you to compare an EV against a gas-powered vehicle, which you can do here: Comparison: [Your Car vs. an Electric Vehicle | US EPA](#). Just be aware that these are estimates and mileage may vary due to factors, like cold weather and how fast you drive.

TAX INCENTIVES

To encourage more people to purchase EVs, federal tax credits are available for electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid vehicles. New EVs purchased before, during, or after 2023 can qualify for a tax credit of up to \$7,500, while pre-owned vehicles purchased for

\$25,000 or less, during or after 2023, can qualify for a tax credit of up to \$4,000. The availability of the tax credit will depend on a few different factors, including vehicle MSRP, final assembly location, battery parts and mineral sources, and your modified adjusted gross income. You can obtain more information about federal tax incentives and find out if your EV would qualify for a tax credit at [Tax Incentives \(fueleconomy.gov\)](#). There are also state incentives that you can look up on the [Department of Energy's Alternative Fuels Data Center website: Alternative Fuels Data Center: Search Federal and State Laws and Incentives \(energy.gov\)](#). For information on the NYS Drive Clean Rebate, head to NYSERDA's [Drive Clean Rebate for Electric Cars Program - NYSERDA webpage](#).

For more information on electric vehicles, head to NYSERDA's Drive Electric webpage: [Drive Electric in New York State - NYSERDA](#), the EPA's Green Vehicle Guide website: [Green Vehicle Guide | US EPA](#), and the [Department of Energy's fuel economy website: Fuel Economy](#).

THINGS TO DO!

Not sure what to do as the weather gets warmer? Why not head to a free fishing clinic? Free fishing clinics are family-friendly events where participants can fish for free; no freshwater fishing license or enrollment in the Recreational Marine Fishing Registry is required. Knowledgeable staff are on hand to teach participants about fishing equipment and techniques, fish identification, fisheries management, angling ethics, and aquatic ecology.



County	Event	Date	Time	Location	Contact
Bronx	DEC Pop-Up Fishing Clinic at Tiffany St. Pier	Tuesday, 7/18 Thursday, 7/20	12:00pm-2:00pm 5:00pm-7:00pm	Barretto Point Park, Viele Ave. Bronx, NY 10474 (at pier)	DEC Region 2 Fisheries: fwfish2@dec.ny.gov Space is limited (First come, first served). Email for more information and weather related updates.
Kings	DEC Pop-Up Fishing Clinic at Marine Park	Wednesday, 7/19	4:00pm-6:00pm	Marine Park Salt Marsh (Jamaica Bay), 3078 Gerritsen Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11229 (at south end of Garretsen Ave on Garritsen Beach)	DEC Region 2 Fisheries: fwfish2@dec.ny.gov Space is limited (First come, first served). Email for more information and weather related updates.
New York	DEC Pop-Up Fishing Clinic at Harlem Meer	Tuesday, 7/25 Thursday, 7/27	12:00pm-2:00pm 5:00pm-7:00pm	Central Park, 55 W 110 St., Manhattan, NY 10026	DEC Region 2 Fisheries: fwfish2@dec.ny.gov Space is limited (First come, first served). Email for more information and weather related updates.
Richmond	DEC Pop-Up Fishing Clinic at Ocean Breeze Fishing Pier	Tuesday, 8/1 Thursday, 8/3	12:00pm-2:00pm 5:00pm-7:00pm	Ocean Breeze Fishing Pier (Raritan Bay), Father Capodanno Blvd., Staten Island, NY 10305	DEC Region 2 Fisheries: fwfish2@dec.ny.gov Space is limited (First come, first served). Email for more information and weather related updates.
Kings	Public Fishing: Rod and Reel at Brooklyn Bridge Park	Sunday, 8/27 Saturday, 9/9	4:00pm-7:00pm 10:00am-1:00pm	Pier 5, Brooklyn Bridge Park, 1 Brooklyn Bridge Park Drive, Brooklyn, NY 11201	Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy: (718) 412-1035; education@bbpc.net For more details on this event, visit the Brooklyn Bridge Park website (leaves DEC site)

For a complete list of free fishing clinics throughout the summer, visit: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/27123.html>

APPLY FOR FUNDING

Are you a community-based organization looking to fund a project? OEJ offers grants to not-for-profit organizations to address environmental harms in low income and environmental justice communities. For additional information on OEJ grants and a complete list of [previous project awardees](#), please visit our website: www.dec.ny.gov/public/31226.html.

WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU

Do you have concerns about the environment where you live? Do you want to make your voice heard? Do you want to stay informed about the different environmental issues affecting the state of New York?

JOIN OUR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE LISTSERV

Go to: www.dec.ny.gov/public/65855.html and sign up to receive regular updates from the Office of Environmental Justice. Stay current on the issues that are important to you. As always, you can contact the Office of Environmental Justice with any concerns by sending an e-mail to: justice@dec.ny.gov. Please include:

- Your location/address
- City, town, village or borough
- The environmental concerns you wish to address
- List the potential source, if you know
- How or whether you wish to be contacted

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