

The State of New Jersey

# Environmental Justice Advisory Council

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## Organization and Meeting Structure By-Laws

Adopted by the  
For The Environmental Justice Advisory Council  
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# Environmental Justice Advisory Council

## Organization and Meeting Structure: By-Laws

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- I. **Organization Name:** The Environmental Justice Advisory Council (EJAC) is appointed by the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.
- II. **Mission and Purpose:**  
The Environmental Justice Advisory Council (EJAC) shall serve as an advisory body to the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the New Jersey Environmental Justice Task Force in accordance with Executive Order No. 96. The EJAC will make recommendations to the NJDEP Commissioner and the New Jersey Environmental Justice Task Force to ensure that the Department develops effective communication programs, implements and enforces environmental laws so that such actions do not unfairly burden any NJ population of people with a disproportionate share of environmental pollution. Further, the EJAC will strongly encourage and advise NJDEP on how to provide mechanisms for outreach, and how to direct community participation in environmental decision making.

In summary, the EJAC is committed to the basic tenet set forth by the Environmental Justice Movement that all communities, regardless of their racial, ethnic, or economic composition, are entitled to equal protection from the consequences of environmental hazards.

- III. **Membership:** Members of the EJAC are appointed by the Commissioner of NJDEP for a term of two (2) years. Membership shall consist of a minimum composition of one-third membership from grassroots or faith-based community organizations with additional membership to include the following: academic, public health, statewide environmental, civil rights and public health organizations; large and small business and industry; municipal and county officials, and organized labor.

In the composition of the EJAC the Commissioner of NJDEP shall strive to reflect the regional, racial, gender, religious, and ethnic diversity of New Jersey.

- IV. **Officers and Executive Committee: *Elections & Appointments shall take place at the Annual Reorganization Meeting.***
- a. Chairperson - *Elected by Council Members*  
Presides at meetings and is an ex-officio member of all committees.
- b. Vice-Chair - *Elected by Council Members*  
The primary responsibility of the Vice Chair is to be prepared to assume the chair when called upon to do so - should the Chair not be present or wish to take part in the discussion. Other responsibilities may include supervision of committees or heading up critical areas of work, such as chairing a special committee.
- c. Secretary - *Elected by Council Members*  
The role of the Secretary will be to take true and accurate minutes of the meeting. Other duties include:
- Notifying members of the time and place for each meeting.
  - Preparing & distributing copies of the agenda to members prior to meetings.
  - Maintaining an accurate roll call and attendance sheet.
  - Reading the minutes of the previous meeting.

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- Collecting and record all invoices before submitting them to the treasurer.
- d. Recording Secretary - *Elected by Council Members*  
The role of the Recording Secretary is to attend to all official correspondence.
- e. Parliamentarian - *Elected by Council Members*  
It will be the responsibility of the parliamentarian to insure that correct parliamentary procedure is followed at all meetings, and to act as time keeper. The parliamentarian should notify the group when the time for an agenda item has expired or is about to expire. The roll of the parliamentarian will/may be rotated among members.

#### V. **Meeting Guidelines**

The EJAC will meet at least four (4) times a year. Meetings will be held at the DEP offices in Trenton, NJ unless notified otherwise.

##### a. Agenda

Each meeting must have an agenda, preferably one drafted at the previous meeting and developed in detail by the chairperson and executive committee prior to the actual meeting. Any member of the Advisory Council may submit an agenda item to the Executive Committee prior to ten days before the next meeting. If the issue is of an emergent nature, the member would be responsible for getting the information to the Advisory Council at least three days in advance. The member can then petition the Council at the beginning of the meeting to hear the topic under New Business. The agenda will be sent to participants at least 10 days prior to the next meeting.

Agendas may include the following information:

- The agenda topics with a sentence or two, when necessary, that defines each item.
- The agenda should define the process to be used in coming to a decision (e.g., brainstorming, voting, etc.) and not simply “discuss...”
- The agenda should prioritize topics in a logical order.
- List presenters or guest speakers.
- A time guideline (the estimated time in minutes needed to discuss each item). Should an item require additional discussion time the group will decide whether to continue at the expense of other agenda items or table until another meeting.

##### A sample agenda

Call to Order

Roll call

Adoption of the agenda

Minutes

Committee Reports

Treasurer's report

Correspondence

Unfinished business

New Business

Announcements

Adjournment

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b. Facilitator

The Chair serves as the meeting facilitator, responsible for keeping the meeting focused and moving. Should the need arise, the Council will request that DEP provide a facilitator to oversee problem solving issues.

c. Minutes

The minutes must accurately reflect all discussions and actions taken by the Council and following the order of the agenda should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following information:

- The name of the organization
- Date, time and place
- Roll call
- Disposition of the previous minutes
- Exact wording of every motion, names of individuals that moved and seconded the motion(s), result(s) of the vote, and action(s) taken
- Plan/outline for next meeting - clearly referencing items to be carried over
- Time of adjournment
- Name and signature of submitter

Minutes of previous meeting should be sent with the upcoming agenda ten (10) days prior to the next scheduled meeting. Prior to adoption Meeting Minutes are considered confidential and not to be shared outside of the Council membership.

## **VI. Code of Cooperation**

The code of ethics sets a norm for behavior at meetings and should be developed, adopted, improved and/or modified by the entire Council.

- Every member is responsible for the Council's progress and success.
- Members are expected to attend, and be on time to all Council meetings.
- Members must come prepared to discuss issues at hand.
- Members are expected to carry out & complete assignments on schedule.
- Members are expected to be active listeners.
- Members are expected to (constructively) criticize ideas, not people.
- Members are expected to resolve conflicts constructively.
- Members are expected to avoid disruptive side conversations and behavior.
- Members are expected to understand that everyone participates, no one dominates.
- Members should be succinct and avoid long anecdotal comments & statements.
- Members are expected to respect ALL members of the Council at all times.

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#### **VII. Removal from Council**

A recommendation for member removal from EJAC may be made to the NJDEP Commissioner for one or any combination of the following:

- a. Transgression(s) of the code of Cooperation.
- b. Missing three (3) consecutive meetings without notification or approval.
- c. Demonstration of unprofessional conduct unbecoming of an officer or member of EJAC.
- d. Members may also be removed by the Commissioner at his/her discretion or for behavior unbecoming.

#### **VIII. Emergency Meetings**

- a. Any member may request an executive committee member to call for an emergency meeting of the full Council.
- b. Any member of the executive committee may request an emergency meeting of the full Council.
- c. The emergency meeting notice should state the purpose of the meeting, and only the business stated in the notice may be considered at the meeting.
- d. Rules of procedure for an emergency meeting are the same as for a general meeting.

#### **IX. Quorum**

There are fifteen (15) Council members, therefore a quorum of eight (8) members in attendance is required to take/make official action/decisions. If membership is less than fifteen (15), a simple majority will constitute a quorum.