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1	STATE OF NEW JERSEY
2	DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
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6	ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE RULE PUBLIC HEARING
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9	BEFORE: SEAN MORIARTY, HEARING OFFICER
10	HELD ON: MONDAY, JULY 11, 2022
11	TIME: 3:00 P.M.
12	
13	ALSO PRESENT:
14	MELISSA ABATEMARCO, ESQ.
15	KANDYCE PERRY
16	ARMANDO ALFONSO
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22	J.H. BUEHRER & ASSOCIATES
23	884 Breezy Oaks Drive
24	Toms River, New Jersey 08753
25	(732) 295-1975

TRANSCRIPT of the hearing called for Oral Examination in the above-entitled matter, said hearing being taken pursuant to Superior Court Rules of Civil Practice and Procedure, by and before MARIBEL SYPNIEWSKI, a Certified Court Reporter and Notary Public of the State of New Jersey, held at the Offices of NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, 401 East State Street, Trenton, New Jersey, on Wednesday, July 11, 2022, commencing at 3:06 in the afternoon.

HEARING OFFICER MORIARTY: So, good afternoon. My name is Sean Moriarty. I'm the Deputy Commissioner at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. I will be the hearing officer for this public hearing. This hearing is being held to receive oral and written comments on the proposed Environmental Justice rulemaking, which implements New Jersey's Environmental Justice Law.

In September 2020, Governor Murphy signed New Jersey's landmark Environmental Justice Law, the first of its kind and the nation's most empowering Environmental Justice legislation.

The Environmental Justice Law recognizes that because environmental standards are often formulated on the effect pollution has on general populations spread over wide geographic areas, existing environmental laws fail to fully consider the impacts that certain pollution-generating facilities may have on their local communities.

And that this failure has created pockets of high pollution across New Jersey, where many pollution-generating facilities have

become concentrated in predominant minority and low-income communities that may lack -- awesome. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thanks. And it's much louder. The financial and political power to shape their local landscape and avoid disproportionate adverse impacts upon their health and environment.

At its most basic, the law requires us to consider whether a specific facility seeking a specific type of permit will contribute to environmental or public health stressors in an overburdened community considering whether and how those stressors might have a disproportionate impact when compared to the OBCs neighbors, this is a comparative analysis.

The law requires the New Jersey
Department of Environmental Protection to assess
relevant environmental and public health
stressors affecting New Jersey's overburdened
communities and to deny or condition permits for
certain facilities that cannot avoid causing or
contributing to adverse environmental or public
health stressors in that overburdened community.

The law applies where three

criteria are met:

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First, the facility is located or proposed to be located in an overburdened community.

Second, the proposed or existing facility is one of the eight types of facilities listed in the Act, such as major source of air pollution, scrap metal facilities, and other solid waste.

Number three, the applicant seeks a type of New Jersey's Department of Environmental permit or approval covered by the Act.

Where the EJ Law applies, an applicant must submit an Environmental Justice Impact Statement, or "EJIS", to the Department evaluating how the proposed action, whether a new facility, the renewal of a major source of air pollution or the expansion to an existing facility would contribute to environmental and public health stressors in its host OBC. The EJIS must also address how the applicant proposes to avoid, and where avoidance is not feasible, minimize such impacts, and under certain circumstances provide a net environmental or

public health benefit to the overburdened community. The EJIS will be available to the public in advance to the public hearing.

participation of members of the overburdened community, an applicant is required to hold a public hearing in the overburdened community to present the proposed project and the EJIS, with a public comment period of at least 60 days to provide opportunity for feedback from those most impacted by the proposed project. Notice and materials would be made available in languages accessible to community members and the applicant will be required to address all comments received.

The Department will evaluate the EJIS and the information presented at the public hearing and through public comment to determine whether the additional environmental or public health stressors expected from the actions in the permit application would, together with the baseline of stressors already impacting the community, cause or contribute to adverse cumulative environmental or public health stressors in that overburdened community that are

higher than those of non-overburdened communities in the State. If that is the case, a disproportionate impact would be present and the Department may deny the permit and approve it with conditions to avoid or minimize those impacts.

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On June 6, 2022, the Department proposed rules in the New Jersey Register to The implement the Environmental Justice Law. public comment period on this proposal closes on September 4, 2022. As indicated in the proposed Published notice -- the public -- excuse me. notice, written comments are to be submitted electronically to www.nj.gov/dep/comments or to Melissa Abatemarco. The Docket Number for that is 05-22-04, and those comments need to be submitted to the Office of Legal Affairs at the address set forth in the proposal. All relevance comments -- all relevant comments received during the public comment period, including at today's hearing, will be addressed in the New Jersey Register should the Department adopt this rule proposal.

This public hearing is being held in accordance with the Administrative Procedures

Act, and, as required, the Department has provided additional notice of this public hearing through the Department's website, through electronic mail, through written communication with a number of news outlets.

The goal of today's hearing is to receive verbal comments into the record concerning the rule proposal. This hearing is not intended as a question-and-answer session, but rather an opportunity for interested individuals to voice support -- voice their concerns and suggestions regarding this rulemaking. If you have not done so yet, we ask that you please sign in at the front desk and indicate whether you're going to be speaking tonight.

We will now begin inviting individuals who have requested an opportunity to speak. When your name is called, ask you to step up to the microphone, state your name, any affiliation you might have and ask you to spell it for the stenographer to ensure that the record is correct. We're going to ask everyone at this point to limit their comments to three minutes. If there's additional time after you've spoken,

we will provide additional time for folks who would like to speak again. Also remind everyone that you have an opportunity to provide written comments if you're not able to speak about today. Could certainly be provided in writing or one of the other four public hearings we will be having on this throughout the next couple of weeks.

So I'm going to now give the microphone to Armando to read the opening statement in Spanish. Armando.

(Opening statement translated in Spanish by Armando at this time.)

HEARING OFFICER MORIARTY: Thank you, Armando. Let's get to it. First name on the list appropriately so.

MR. CANTOR: Thank you. My name is Ray, Raymond Cantor, C-a -- R-a-y-m-o-n-d C-a-n-t-o-r. I am with the New Jersey Business and Industry Association. We will be submitting written comments later. I will summarize one of our points here today. As I mentioned before, we appreciate the process that DEP employee to get us to this point, but we believe that these rules are missing an opportunity to actually improve conditions in the communities that we are

concerned about. We're afraid that in 10 to 20 years from now, we will be looking back at this moment wondering what went wrong. We have the opportunity to fix these rules now.

The proposal uses stressors as surrogates for standards or for health impacts. Yet, these are not actual standards, not actual health impacts. Despite these soft standards, proposal in employing a very hard line. We're only looking at one side of the ledger of potential harm and ignoring the benefits that come from a number of these facilities, the economic benefits. We're missing a key point. The law itself recognizes that -- and devise OBC as having a 35 percent low-income level. That makes you an OBC.

The rule itself also stresses that

-- or the response to stressor, unemployment. It

details that both the physical and emotional

impact of being low-income or not having a job,

the lack of health benefits that comes with that

and the other impacts. Yet, it rejects a key

solution to those fundamental problems by

focusing on the minor potential impact of

stressors and ignoring the real benefits of

having a job.

We are faced with a potential situation where a facility could be coming into a community, or proposing to, having good paying jobs, having a net environmental benefit, having support of the elected officials, even having support of the Environmental Justice advocates in the area. But because on a ledger sheet you have more stressors than not, you have to turn them down. The Department is not allowing for the flexibility it needs to actually make a real world impact in this community.

We're talking about facilities
that are now meeting all environmental standards
that could have a positive environmental impact,
a positive economic impact, which the rule
recognizes has real world impacts on everyone's
health and well-being.

So we ask the Department to revisit this position to provide more flexibility, do not tie your hands. Let's look how to really improve communities and not just have a prescriptive standard. Thank you very much.

HEARING OFFICER MORIARTY: Thank

you, Raymond. Nathan Fishman.

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MR. FISHMAN: My name is Nathan Fishman, N-a-t-h-a-n F-i-s-h-m-a-n. I'm from Stolen (Phonetic) Lenape Land, East Brunswick, New Jersey, and I'm with the New Jersey Poor Peoples's Campaign. The New Jersey Environmental Justice Law rules need to ensure that there is absolutely -- are absolutely no loopholes in the compelling public interest exception, and absolutely full access to participation to the permit process for multilingual communities to participate, and maximizing permit process participation for most impacted people and the wider public. And absolute commitment to reducing pollution rather than just preventing more.

You might call me an out-of-work social worker, but I would argue that being available and being here makes me a very much at work social worker. The nine national core competencies for social workers include advancing Environmental Justice. I think that's because we can't uphold the other functions, like being ethical, like engaging in research and foreign practice and like valuing the local wisdom of

diverse culture without doing EJ advocacy. My
town is not subject to the immediate impacts of
polluting facilities that overburdened
communities are already experiencing, like higher
rates of asthma, cancer, elevated particulate
blood levels and developmental problems.
However, if I was in the last row of a bus that
was going off of a cliff, I would still advocate
for the driver to press on the brakes.

environmental degradation crisis, the brakes are adhering to and accountability to the public demand for protecting our overburdened communities. Besides my interest as an invested and outraged social worker, I'm also deeply emersed in my desire for a safe and healthy future for the children of our planet, for racial justice, equity and liberation that's required for that healthy future. And for God sake for appreciation and mutual enjoyment of our natural spaces, scenery, air and the wonders of the world.

What we're doing here today is salvaging those things, all those things.

Thanks.

HEARING OFFICER MORIARTY: Thank 1 Next, Dan Ortega. 2 you, sir. MR. ORTEGA: Good afternoon. My 3 name is Daniel Ortega, O-r-t-e-g-a. I lead 4 Community Affairs for the Engineers 5 Labor-Employer Cooperative, the labor management 6 fund for the more than 8,000 men and women of the 7 operating engineers union and the more than 1,000 8 signatory contractors who employ them. 9 As we plan our state's future, it 10 is important that we take all factors into 11 account, not just the ones we want or what the 12 fashionable of the day. 13 We question whether do we have --14 how do we protect our environment for generations 15 How can we ensure our economy is strong 16 to come? for the long term? What are we doing to provide 17 good jobs for our economy? What type of 18 development do we want to see in our communities? 19 Sadly, this has not been the case 20 for our state's Environmental Justice Law from 21 the beginning and the regulations that have been 22 hastily rolled out miss the mark entirely. 23 Progress is not always a straight line as some 24

here are suggesting.

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Under these proposed rules, almost two-thirds of the state of New Jersey is designated as being overburdened under the proposed rules, 90% of those same areas will be determined to have disproportioned impacts. In plain terms, this means the type of economy we are trying to attract, such as, advanced manufacturing and supply chain logistics, will be halted entirely.

Moreover, expansions at universities, transportation centers, economic opportunities and even healthcare centers will be at risk of being blocked completely. This is not progress. Rules that pick winners or losers rather than allowing the local market to determine what works and doesn't have never worked out in our state's history.

We have testified from the beginning that this law and now regulations were going to do more harm than good and needed to be overhauled significantly. Those comments were ignored. So here we are again to tell you that these regulations will do more harm than good and have completely missed the mark of striking a balance between economic opportunity and

community protections. It is our hope that the state will listen at this time.

This needs to be an open and working progress -- process, excuse me. Not just hearings for the sake of hearings and to fast track a predetermined outcome. The working people of New Jersey deserve better. Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER MORIARTY: Thank you, sir. Eric Benson. Sorry. Okay. The last person I have is Paula Rogovin indicated.

MS. ROGOVIN: Hi. I'm Paula
Rogovin and I live in Teaneck, New Jersey. Since
retiring as a teacher, I've been involved in
efforts to stop the Meadowlands Power Plant in
North Bergen, New Jersey gas plant in Kearny,
PVSC plant in the Ironbound, all in Environmental
Justice communities.

In April, I participated in the Ironbound Community Corporation's truck count. We tabulated the number of huge and medium size trucks and smaller vehicles. Nearly every minute there were huge trucks from Port Newark, warehouses and heavy industry. Thousands of huge trucks spew diesel exhaust there everyday. Nearby were three power plants and the

incinerator. Every few minutes, huge jets from Newark Airport spewed toxic pollutants.

I was in tears. I live in
Teaneck, New Jersey. We don't have any power
plants, incinerators, heavy industry, or
warehouses. No one would even consider applying
for a permit to build that in Teaneck. Huge
trucks are forbidden on most Teaneck streets.
Rules for EJ Law must be used to stop this
injustice imposed on Environmental Justice
communities.

When PVSC held meetings about their proposed power plant, they said that pollution from the power plant would be, quote, negligible. I say that new pollution in the Ironbound is just wrong or any Environmental Justice community is just wrong. Currently, the impact of pollution on maternal health, miscarriages, stillbirths, premature births, is unacceptable. The potential health impacts of a PVSC gas power plant were documented in a letter sent to the DEP and Governor Murphy by 139 healthcare providers and scientists. They documented that it is the toxic mix, the combined impact of pollution from those many sources, not

just pollution from one project, that must be essential in an environmental impact assessment.

Rules for the EJ Law which you, the DEP, are considering must be -- can be part of the remedy of this gross injustice.

These are specific rule -suggestions. The only purpose of these rules
must be to protect the host community. If the
project or renewal for the project is wrong, just
say no. No compromise on people's health.

Number two, the potential stressors in the host community for a proposal must not be higher than in those in other New Jersey communities like my town of Teaneck.

And three, new project must not allow any additional pollution in the host community. None. Renewals must prioritize substantially reducing pollution.

Four, regarding the so-called compelling public interest, that exception must be drastically limited. This must not be about economic benefits such as profits or job creation. No loopholes. There must be an extremely narrow interpretation of compelling public interest.

Five, pollution travels.

Therefore, public hearings must involve people far beyond the 200 feet near a project, to at least 1,000 feet. Efforts to reach out to community -- residents in community must be multilingual and thorough. Every singe resident within 1,000 feet must be contracted.

Six, applicants for permits or renewals must respond to each public comment.

And seven, applicants must withdraw or make changes to their applications based on concerns of the public.

And I am -- you know that I feel very strongly about this. It's a crime what's going on in New Jersey. Environmental Justice communities, it's a crime. The health impacts of -- that are faced by people in overburdened -- you know, communities overburdened by facilities, polluting facilities, it's just a crime. It's wrong. And there should be no loopholes, no way around the rules, no way at all. This is about correcting historic injustices and it must be done. These rules can do it. Please, no loopholes. No way of getting around the Environmental Justice rules. Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER MORIARTY: Thank We have exhausted our list of you, ma'am. speakers who signed up. Is there anyone who did not sign up or who signed up after we started that would like to speak? Anyone who spoke would like another three minutes? All right. That's it? Well, I would like to very good? Okav. sincerely thank everyone for being here today. Want to encourage you again, if you have any further comments to please submit in writing. Also, check the proposal, we have several other public hearings coming up and we'd love to see you there as well. So, thank you. Have a wonderful day. All right. So we have -- we're going to -- obviously we're keeping the record open for the time period that we set. So we'll be here until five, so if anyone comes in after that we'll continue to take those comments. And this brings us to Mr. Terrance Bankston. MR. BANKSTON: Good afternoon. My name is Terrance Bankston. I am the Environmental Justice organizer for Clean Water The state's -- one of the state's, I Action.

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should say, largest environmental federation.

First of all, thank you for this opportunity to speak. Just a few points on the rule. I think -- obviously, I'm preaching to the choir in terms of the importance of this particular rule. And not just that, but the enforcement and the accountability that comes along with it. And I think that that's what our concern is. We want to ensure that there are no loopholes. We want to ensure that folks who come from black and brown communities, like Camden, Trenton, Newark, where I'm from, that there's fair access to the process in terms of answering public comments. Anything else that I wanted to point out. Sorry about that.

We just had a recent experience and we're celebrating a victory. Some of you may have heard about in terms of a recent correlation involving warehouses. So Amazon was a prime example. And so my last point is just, economics and jobs just can't be an offset, right, because you give us jobs, because you say you will plant trees, that's not good enough to continue to pollute overburdened communities. And so we just want to, again, ensure that those things are

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taken into account as we move forward in this
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    process. Thank you.
                     HEARING OFFICER MORIARTY:
                                                 Thank
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    you, sir.
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                     (Whereupon there was a break at
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    this time.)
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                     HEARING OFFICER MORIARTY: Okay.
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    So we've reached -- sorry. We've reached 5
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    o'clock, which is the end of this portion of the
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    public hearing. We're going to close the record
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    for an hour and then we're going to restart at 6
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    o'clock. We'll do from six to seven for whoever
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    has an interest in the meeting. You are all
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    welcomed to stay, of course, and we will be back
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    to reopen and we'll read the opening statements
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    in about an hour.
                     (Concluded at 5:03 p.m.)
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CERTIFICATE

I, MARIBEL SYPNIEWSKI, a

Certified Court Reporter and Notary Public of the State of New Jersey, do hereby certify that prior to the commencement of the examination, the

witness was duly sworn by me to testify the

truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of the testimony as taken stenographically by and before me at the time, place and on the date hereinbefore set forth, to the best of my ability.

neither a relative nor employee nor attorney nor counsel of any of the parties to this action, and that I am neither a relative nor employee of such attorney or counsel, and that I am not financially interested in the action.

MARIBEL SYPNIEWSKI, C.C.R. LICENSE NO. JOXIO0203200

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