

**Collaborative on Health and the Environment – Washington (CHE-WA)
Environmental Justice (EJ) Working Group Meeting
EPA Region 10 Office – Seattle
May 4, 2006**

NOTES

Participants:

- Morgan Barry, Public Health – Seattle & King County
- June Belefond, Public Health – Seattle & King County
- Richard Gelb, City of Seattle, Office of Sustainability and Environment
- Linn Gould, Erda Environmental Services
- Running Grass, EPA Regional 10
- Elise Miller, Institute for Children’s Environmental Health
- Melanie Wood, EPA Regional 10

Notes:

1) Update on current discussion and proposed ideas

Elise provided an overview of the evolution of the discussions the EJ Working Group has had over the last few months in regards to possibly organizing a conference with the Health Justice Network on the nexus between environmental justice and health disparities, hosting listening sessions that would help shape the agenda for this conference, and focusing on transportation as a key issue. Elise explained to the group that as the conversation has revealed the complexities of organizing such a conference (and the listening sessions) — one that would truly be “value-added”; she has come to realize that CHE-WA simply does not have the staff resources and funding to spearhead this. Though CHE-WA could co-sponsor or be supportive in doing this, another organization would need to take the lead.

Elise added, however, that what CHE-WA could offer — something that seems to be feasible and that a number of people have already said would be useful — are what might be called “Science Salons” for interested community groups. This idea, originally conceived by Kate Davies, chair of CHE-WA’s Research and Information Working Group, would provide workshops for community groups regarding how to access data and information on the links between health problems and environmental exposures, particularly focusing on environmental justice and health disparities. The intention would be to help community groups have the information they need to go to their local council or other entities in order to create healthier neighborhoods. Elise noted she would still need to look for funding for CHE-WA to do this, and of course, would need help from Yalonda Sinde and others working in communities to determine which groups might find this of interest and helpful. Participants in the meeting all agreed this is an excellent idea and something to pursue.

June noted that the Health Justice Network would likely not be able to take the lead on a large conference like the one originally proposed either. But that offering smaller workshops might actually be more effective anyway at this time.

2) Other ideas

The group briefly discussed an array of topics, including a) Linn's new nonprofit, the Population Health Project, that has developed a five-week curriculum for middle and high school students on food security and hunger, transportation and toxics, etc.; b) Richard's work with the City of Seattle on food systems enhancements and health disparities, air quality in low income residences and obesity/diabetes issues; c) the challenges of collecting information from hospitals on race and ethnicity; and d) the need for an environmental justice training at the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency.

3) Recommendation for next steps

After exploring these concerns and needs, the group agreed that what might be very helpful is to organize a "listening session" for 25-30 agency, nonprofit and community groups during which we might share and discuss "Emerging Approaches to Addressing Environmental Justices and Health Disparities Issues." Participants realized that there are good programs and initiatives on the grassroots and on agency levels, but most of us aren't aware of what models are already out there so that we can collaborate more effectively and enhance each other's efforts. One way of framing such a meeting (which might be a full-day gathering), would be to have four different areas that all participants might rotate through, such as web-based data and information, education/outreach, community-based approaches and policy. Then we would share the ideas that emerged in discussions in an open plenary at the end of the day and determine next steps and opportunities. Melanie mentioned that she could likely find a free meeting space for this, but we would need to come up with additional funding for food and to cover the time/travel of community groups.

4) Action items:

- Determine the facility and date (some suggested the week of July 10th, but a couple people said that wouldn't work, so it may need to wait until the fall)
- Develop a list of participants
- Finalize the agenda and presenters
- Send out invitations
- Set up a conference call by the end of May with those interested in helping to plan this.