

AB 32 Environmental Justice Advisory Committee ("EJAC")
May 15, 2025, 1:00 PM
Meeting Minutes¹

Meeting Attendance (* notes virtual attendance)

Committee Member Attendees:

1. Martha Dina Argüello*
2. Dr. Catherine Garoupa
3. Thomas Helme*
4. Matt Holmes*
5. Luis Olmedo*
6. Jill Sherman-Warne*
7. Rey Leon*
8. Kevin Hamilton*
9. Juan Flores*

Committee Members not in Attendance:

10. John Harriel Jr.
11. John Kevin Jefferson III

CARB Staff Attendees:

12. Chanell Fletcher
13. Ashley Georgiou
14. Karina Jhaj
15. Christabel Ukomadu

Other Attendees:

16. Katie Valenzuela, Central Valley Air Quality Coalition
17. Edgar Barraza*, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Los Angeles
18. Megan Leary*, Emerald Cities Collaborative, Northern California
19. Chris Selig*, People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights (PODER), Healthy and Resilient Homes
20. Dr. Michael Wara*, Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment
21. Jane Harrington, Leading Resources (Facilitator)

¹ These minutes serve as a high-level summary of the meeting. They are not a verbatim transcript. Instead, they capture key topics, decisions, and directional insights from the discussion. To hear the full conversation in participants' own words, please see the meeting recording, available at [AB 32 Environmental Justice Advisory Committee Meeting | California Air Resources Board](#).

Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item #1: Housekeeping and Logistics

A quorum of EJAC members was reached at 1:03 pm and the public meeting began. The facilitator made housekeeping announcements.

Agenda Item #2: EJAC Member Roll Call

The facilitator conducted EJAC member roll call. Five EJAC members were present at the time, six were not. One EJAC member joined during Opening Remarks and announced himself. Three more EJAC members joined virtually during the discussion regarding the Building Energy, Equity and Power Coalition (BEEP) presentation.

Agenda Item #3: Introductions and Opening Remarks

Opening remarks from EJAC Co-Chairs, including ground rules, meeting agreements, agenda overview.

EJAC Co-Chair Dr. Catherine Garoupa provided an overview of the agenda. EJAC Co-Chair Martha Dina Argüello went over the meeting agreements.

Welcome from CARB.

Chanell Fletcher provided opening remarks. To follow up on questions from the April meeting, a Zero-Emissions Space and Water Heater Standards question-and-answer document has been emailed to members and posted on the website.

CARB will be scheduling a meeting with the Natural and Working Lands subgroup to discuss the next steps in developing a Natural and Working Lands Resolution.

The 2025 EJAC Calendar is being updated based on committee suggestions for meeting topics ahead of the September CARB/EJAC Board meeting.

CARB is working to process TEC documentation for the EJAC members. Members are encouraged to submit receipts in a timely manner to expedite payments.

EJAC Co-Chair Dr. Catherine Garoupa continued with opening remarks:

EJAC Co-Chair Dr. Catherine Garoupa stated that the proposed May revision to the state budget does not include necessary reforms for the Cap-and-Trade program. She believes that the work EJAC is doing to refine and elevate environmental justice priorities remains essential.

EJAC Co-Chair Martha Dina Argüello advised that EJAC can make changes that would benefit the most vulnerable regarding emissions reduction, air pollution, and a transition away from fossil fuels.

Agenda Item #4: March 13, 2025, EJAC Public Meeting Minutes

The facilitator, Leading Resources, introduced the topic and asked for discussion from the committee. There was no discussion from the committee.

Agenda Item #5: Public Comment

Public comment was held on agenda item 4. One member of the public provided comments.

Agenda Item #6: EJAC Motion to Approve the March 13, 2025, EJAC Public Meeting Minutes

Thomas Helme motioned to approve the minutes. Jill Sherman-Warne seconded the motion. Voting members who were present voted to approve the motion. Four members voted yes; two members abstained. Five members were absent. The motion passed.

Agenda Item #7: EJAC Guest Speaker Presentation on Building Decarbonization

Members of the Building, Energy, Equity and Power (BEEP) Coalition presented an overview of their findings regarding statewide efforts for equitable building decarbonization.

EJAC Questions and Answers on the Guest Speaker Presentation

Dr. Catherine Garoupa inquired about the level of receptiveness displayed by the various agencies during the meetings with BEEP. Katie Valenzuela replied that there has been robust engagement and ongoing conversations at listening sessions.

Edgar Barraza acknowledged the California Energy Commission (CEC) staff's ability to create community engagement, to co-develop policies and programs, and for the development of a robust funding program. He also appreciated the CARB team's monthly calls with the BEEP team.

Megan Leary stated that the reception and feedback from pilot initiatives has been very good. She appreciated the CEC and CARB for their continued engagement.

Jill Sherman-Warne asked if CARB had plans to create a fact sheet document that responds to the claims made by BEEP. Katie Valenzuela declined to answer the question on CARB's behalf but stated that there are real barriers in place for people wanting to drive an electric vehicle, and that similar barriers exist for building decarbonization. She acknowledged CARB's willingness to participate in a dialogue aimed at addressing the issue.

Jill Sherman-Warne expressed concern that the infrastructure for charging stations for electric vehicles is inadequate and unreliable and acknowledged BEEP's efforts to address these issues and to seek solutions.

Luis Olmedo expressed concern that government program policies do not facilitate the deployment of the intended purposes, citing the previous example of problems

with the electric vehicle charging station program. He urged State leaders, the State legislature, and the leadership of the State agencies to work together to remove these barriers.

Megan Leary agreed that high-level State coordination is necessary and added that there is also a need for a regional approach for issues like permitting, which are legislated at the city and county level. There was a discussion about permitting work on manufactured homes.

Christine Selig stated that one solution for individuals who are afraid of eviction or losing their homes is to work with trusted community-based organizations, creating a relationship that leads to successful retrofits.

Martha Dina Argüello emphasized the importance of working with trusted partners to create trust in communities where fear of the government is present. She recommended a comprehensive whole homes approach, that includes lessons learned from past programs.

Kevin Hamilton applauded the success that California's building code has had in mandating the installation of Zero-Emission Space and Water Heaters into new homes. He believes that CARB's role is to encourage passage of a statewide regulation that mandates retrofitting older homes, forcing local municipalities to update building codes. He encouraged a holistic approach rather than a piecemeal approach.

Christine Selig agreed that the piecemeal approach is ineffective, urging the formation of an interagency working group to study how the various programs impact each other.

Edgar Barraza responded to an earlier question about affordability by stating that the holistic whole homes approach lowers utility bills by installing energy efficient appliances.

Matt Holmes asked for data regarding the number of mobile homes in California and for an inventory of homes that have been excluded from weatherization programs or energy partner programs. Katie Valenzuela stated that much of the data that exists is at the macro level, offering averages that can be skewed by a few outlier statistics. There was a discussion of inequities in some programs.

Martha Dina Argüello reported that a lead remediation program in Los Angeles had been successful due in part to systematic code enforcement inspections of rental units. She suggested advocating for this policy at both the state and regional level. Katie Valenzuela replied that in contrast to Los Angeles, Sacramento has a voluntary

rental housing inspection program that allows landlords to self-certify that the units are up to code, creating a reluctance on the part of tenants who cannot afford to move to report code violations.

Luis Olmedo expressed concern that the people who need the most assistance would not receive it due to distrust of the government. He expressed a desire for local contractors to be added to statewide databases, and for more direct partnerships between the State and trusted community organizations. He volunteered himself and his team to assist in further research.

Martha Dina Argüello suggested that the committee draft a resolution focused on major issues, concerns and project design to present to the board as they make decisions regarding building decarbonization.

Dr. Catherine Garoupa stated that she is in favor of drafting the resolution as long as BEEP agrees to lend its expertise to the committee during the drafting process. Kevin Hamilton agreed and offered his participation.

Agenda Item #8: EJAC Guest Speaker Presentation on Cap-and-Trade Affordability Research

Dr. Catherine Garoupa provided an overview of Cap-and-Trade history, legislative context, and EJAC's longstanding concerns about insufficient emissions reductions and equity impacts.

Dr. Michael Wara presented research on affordability challenges linked to Cap-and-Trade, explained the California Climate Credit, and discussed potential increases in allowance allocations to utilities, public investment in grid infrastructure, and the need for targeted rebates and affordability programs.

EJAC Questions and Answers on Cap-and-Trade Affordability Research Presentation

Matt Holmes expressed support for allocating funds to the most vulnerable rather than allocating funds based on a competitive equity framework favoring investment towards higher income individuals.

Luis Olmedo expressed a distrust of California's environmental justice policies based on results from the past. He encouraged achieving energy cost savings through the creation of energy independence and emphasized the need for immediate policy changes and budget commitments.

Dr. Michael Wara agreed that the program has been relatively inequitable and that moving to public ownership of utilities is complex, costly and lengthy.

Kevin Hamilton stated that the disparities in energy costs vary greatly between the coastal areas and the inland areas. He favors the elimination of investor-owned utilities but recognizes that these entities have current State contracts.

Dr. Michael Wara discussed the challenges associated with changing the power infrastructure that communities rely on twenty-four hours a day for essential needs and outlined possible options.

Kevin Hamilton expressed concern that electricity prices would continue to increase unless changes are made.

Dr. Catherine Garoupa asked for confirmation that the reduction of emissions achieved by the energy sector was due to compliance with a direct regulation, not because of its participation in the Cap-and-Trade program. Dr. Michael Wara agreed with that statement and added that the emission reduction occurred due to a law passed in the early 2000s that forbids long-term contracts with out-of-state coal fired electric generators.

Dr. Catherine Garoupa asked if publicly owned utilities receive the California Climate Credit. Dr. Michael Wara explained that publicly owned utilities receive allowances that they are not required to sell to provide rebates for ratepayers.

Dr. Catherine Garoupa asked for more information regarding the California Alternative Rates for Energy (CARE) and Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) programs. Dr. Michael Wara explained that these programs provide a 30% discount on electricity bills for low-income individuals and families, and that a more equitable approach would be to limit bills to a certain percentage of income.

Luis Olmedo expressed concern that past programs have been inadequately funded and that regulations have not been enforced.

Martha Dina Argüello asked for examples of ways to mitigate some of the negative impacts on low-income communities. Dr. Michael Wara stated that in the future, the Cap-and-Trade program will likely involve higher prices, more government revenue, and greater impact on everyday people. Given that, Dr. Michael Wara argues this is a good opportunity to implement safeguards to protect people, especially if the program is going to be renewed or extended.

Dr. Catherine Garoupa thanked the Carbon Markets workgroup for having prepared today's presentation. The workgroup will amend its November 2024 resolution to add specific language in some areas. The proposed edits will be presented to the committee at the August 2025 meeting for adoption.

Agenda Item #9: Public Comment

Two members of the public provided comments.

Agenda Item #10: CARB Announcements

CARB provided reminders of upcoming meetings and events as they relate to AB 32 program implementation.

Christabel Ukomadu presented a slide listing relevant upcoming meetings in May and June 2025. She stated that the list will be emailed to EJAC members following the meeting.

Agenda Item #11: Next Steps and Closing Remarks

Dr. Catherine Garoupa thanked everyone for their attendance and participation. She reiterated her commitment to working with the Carbon Markets Work Group to bring a Cap-and-Trade Resolution to the July meeting, noting that she will be on sabbatical in June.

Martha Dina Argüello committed to working with committee members and the BEEP Coalition to develop the Building Decarbonization Resolution before the June 2025 meeting. She offered to follow up with public commenters on landfill fire issues.

Jane Harrington announced that the next EJAC meeting is planned for June 12, 2025, in Sacramento.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:14PM.