

**AB 32 Environmental Justice Advisory Committee ("EJAC")
August 14, 2025, Meeting Minutes¹**

Meeting Attendance (* notes virtual attendance)

Committee Member Attendees:

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

Committee Members not in Attendance:

10. John Harriel Jr.
11. Rey León

CARB Staff Attendees:

- Chanell Fletcher, Deputy Executive Officer for Equity, Communities, and Environmental Justice*
- Radhika Majhail, Branch Chief of the Environmental Justice and Equity Branch*
- Ashley Georgiou, Manager, Office of Environmental Justice, Tribal Affairs and Border Relations
- Christabel Ukomadu, Equity Analyst, Office of Environmental Justice, Tribal Affairs and Border Relations
- Karina Jhaj, Air Pollution Specialist, Office of Environmental Justice, Tribal Affairs and Border Relations

Other Attendees:

- 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 1:01 pm and the public meeting began. The facilitator, Leading Resources, made housekeeping announcements.

Agenda Item #2: EJAC Member Roll Call

The facilitator, Leading Resources, conducted EJAC member roll call. Six EJAC members were present; five were absent. Two members joined during Opening Remarks and one member joined during the discussion of agenda item four.

Agenda Item #3: Introductions and Opening Remarks

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

Chanell Fletcher, CARB's Deputy Executive Officer for Equity, Communities and Environmental Justice at the California Air Resources Board, provided a brief overview of the agenda. She also advised of a correction made to the May EJAC Public Meeting minutes which have been posted on the website.

EJAC Co-Chair Dr. Catherine Garoupa thanked the facilitation team for their support of the Co-Chairs, thanked everyone for their presence, and for their hard work on behalf of environmental justice communities. She reminded everyone of the critical conversations taking place as the end of the legislative session is approaching. These conversations include the potential extension of the Cap-and-Trade Program, and how greenhouse gas reduction funds will be spent. Additionally, she confirmed that a letter concerning the Cap-and-Trade Program was sent to the legislature and circulated to CARB staff to share with board members.

EJAC Co-Chair Martha Dina Argüello reminded the committee of the upcoming September 11 CARB and EJAC joint meeting. She stated that this is a critical moment where they are going to reauthorize Cap-and-Trade, and the importance of keeping the AB 32 promise. She emphasized the importance of having goals for the meeting, the sense of urgency and the stakes surrounding the Cap-and-Trade offset allowance, Low Carbon Fuel Standard, our managed decline, and commitments the administration has made to reduce drilling in our communities as well as reducing the demand for fossil fuel.

EJAC Co-Chair Dr. Catherine Garoupa reviewed the meeting agenda. EJAC Co-Chair Martha Dina Argüello reviewed the meeting agreements.

Agenda Item #4: EJAC Discussion on the Cap-and-Trade Program Recommendations

Dr. Catherine Garoupa provided context for the recommendations on the Cap-and-Trade Program. She stated that the Cap-and-Trade Program Resolution, as amended,

does not radically change any of the language or recommendations previously enacted; it refines and sharpens the language. The Resolution language was modified to address the public health and social costs of air pollution, the climate crisis, and the disparate impacts on communities of color and low-income communities, as they continue to be challenging to quantify and are underestimated and inadequately represented by existing models and plans.

Thomas Helme inquired as to whether CARB has provided explanations for their rejection of specific EJAC requests related to EJAC's Cap-and-Trade Program recommendations. Dr. Garoupa stated that the Committee needs a level of specificity in response to each individual Cap-and-Trade Program recommendation, separately clarifying whether the specific recommendation is within CARB's authority. This would better direct the Committee's recommendations.

Radhika Majhail, CARB's Branch Chief of the Environmental Justice and Equity Branch, noted the request for clarification and said she would talk with the team concerning this request. She reminded everyone that the Cap-and-Trade Program is currently in the legislature.

Matt Holmes thanked Dr. Garoupa for asking the questions in her summary of the Cap-and-Trade Program recommendations. He emphasized the need for an answer to these questions, and the need for clear legal rulings as it informs the Committee's advisory work. He asked Radhika Majhail whether CARB is under a gag order during the legislative process. Radhika Majhail responded that there is no restraint placed on CARB staff. However, CARB does not want to get ahead of the legislative direction.

Dr. Catherine Garoupa stated that the Cap-and-Trade Program Recommendations were passed in November 2024 due to an understanding that there would be conversations in the legislature this year. She stated they had gotten recommendations that if they needed to make changes they had to go to the legislature. She further stated that EJAC is looking for clarity to understand where they can collaborate with CARB and where they can give CARB further direction. Dr. Catherine also stated she understands the legislative session may result in changes and that will take time for CARB to process but wants to understand the places in CARB's authority that can be strengthened to meet their climate goals in a way that reduces burden in environmental justice communities.

Martha Dina Argüello stated they have asked for things that would help the EJAC, the legislature, and lots of people better evaluate the Cap-and-Trade Program and its impact on low-income communities and air quality like the adaptive management plan and that hasn't happened. She said they also recognize staff is talking to the legislature about the reauthorization of Cap-and-Trade and what it will look like. Martha Dina further stated she thinks that it's important for EJAC to continue to make their point and hope CARB staff is more open to the changes they are suggesting.

Kevin Jefferson III asked what are the current EJ recommendations to legislature by CARB, who are the members, and who is negotiating EJ concerns? Chanell Fletcher responded that the legislature gives CARB direction since we are a state agency. She stated that the legislature can call on CARB to speak to legislators and inform them on items but CARB is not in the negotiations. Kevin Jefferson III followed up to that response asking if it's clear that we have no idea whether EJAC's recommendations and priorities are in the legislature's conversations. Chanell stated that Co-Chairs did submit a letter that was sent to the legislature and Board Members and CARB is not having the conversations with the legislature. Dr. Garoupa stated there is a letter they developed as Chanell stated. Dr. Catherine stated, in her opinion there are discussions that take place between CARB and the legislature on how the Cap-and-Trade Program should be modified. From her perspective, there is a two-way communication between the entities.

Note: CARB wanted to clarify discussion here. As noted on CARB's website, the [Office of Legislative Affairs](#) provides technical expertise related to pending legislation and serves as a resource to the Legislature and legislative staff. The Governor's Office negotiated the extension of the Cap-and-Invest program with the Legislature, not CARB.

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 Cap-and-Trade Program Recommendations

Dr. Catherine Garoupa motioned to approve the Cap-and-Trade Program recommendations. Kevin Jefferson III seconded the motion. Voting members who were present voted to approve the motion. Nine members voted yes; two members were absent. The motion passed.

Agenda Item #7: EJAC Discussion on the Building Decarbonization Recommendations

Kevin Hamilton provided a reminder to all EJAC members that a document was attached to the CARB email reminder concerning the Building Decarbonization Resolution. He called attention to CARB, which needs to continue moving upstream ensuring local communities are involved in the community co-design from inception to evaluation of regulatory building decarbonization initiatives. Communities need to be involved and engaged as resources become available, and technology evolves. He addressed the need for funding for building decarbonization and mentioned that there are funding sources. He provided an example of the Air Pollution Control Fund

and emphasized the need for a similar approach to managing this program. He stated that the building decarbonization program should be managed, budgeted, and operated similarly to the one that California Energy Commission (CEC) is operating. Kevin Hamilton stated that there needs to be a ranking system so that the Committee can move forward in a deliberate and intentional fashion. He emphasized the need for CARB to collaborate with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and CEC.

Martha Dina Argüello commented that this resolution is timely given that the Equitable Building Decarbonization Fund was reduced in the budget trailer. There is a need to ensure the programs are designed for low-income communities so that we are relieving their energy burden, making it affordable, and protecting housing. She recommended that EJAC continue to engage with CARB, and EJAC can bring the community voices to push for coordination and this unique process. The Resolution will be presented to the Board and hopefully the Board will instruct CARB to adopt the recommendations contained within the Resolution.

Dr. Catherine Garoupa expressed her gratitude and support for the Building Decarbonization Resolution. She noted the importance of defining each acronym the first time it appears in the document. She stated the need to spell out the acronym CEC in the Resolution.

Thomas Helme recommended a couple of minor edits to the Resolution.

Kevin Jefferson III requested a response from CARB if they will identify the resources needed to support successful implementations as what is requested in the Resolution.

Radhika Majhail stated that the Building Decarbonization team at CARB is working very closely with EJAC on this process of the Resolution so the team can take this question into account as well. She stated that currently there is also a request from CARB to meet with the sub group members Martha Dina and Kevin Hamilton.

Martha Dina Argüello stated this has been a different process with CARB. She stated the Resolution is to present to the Board and hopefully the Board will be instructing CARB to do the requests in the Resolution. Martha Dina said over the last two years, EJAC has worked closely with CARB staff and the Building and Energy Coalition so there was a lot of work in co-design and listening throughout the phases. She emphasized that there is still a lot of work to go, but the work was done to build a trusting relationship. She expressed that the process isn't perfect but feels different from other processes.

Matt Holmes reflected on Kevin Jefferson III's earlier comment that building decarbonization is a generative problem. He emphasized that there are deep racial inequities embedded in the housing system, and it is critical to acknowledge and

address the historical context behind it. This requires building codes and funds to co-design. Co-design is not going to be convenient, but it is going to be more efficient and more cost effective than ignoring these communities.

Agenda Item #8: Public Comment

Public comment was held on agenda item 7. One member of the public provided comments.

Agenda Item #9: EJAC Motion to Approve the Building Decarbonization Recommendations

Kevin Hamilton motioned to approve the Building Decarbonization Recommendations. Kevin Jefferson III seconded the motion. Voting members who were present voted to approve the motion. Eight members voted yes; three members were absent. The motion passed.

Agenda Item #10: EJAC Discussion on the Natural and Working Lands Recommendations

Matt Holmes introduced the Natural and Working Lands recommendations for discussion.

Kevin Hamilton stated that they are confident that the Resolution document is complete and asked whether the Committee can vote to approve the document at this time or if the vote will have to wait until the next EJAC meeting.

The facilitator, Leading Resources, stated that since a vote on this resolution was not publicly posted on the agenda and noticed, the Committee cannot vote on it today. She anticipates that the vote will be on the agenda for the October 2025 EJAC meeting and it can be agendaized for action.

Dr. Catherine Garoupa asked for clarification as to whom she should direct potential edits to the Natural and Working Lands Resolution. She also asked to hear from an expert or two as she is not an expert in this area. Matt Holmes advised that edits should be directed to Kevin Hamilton or Jane Harrington.

Martha Dina Argüello committed to add an agenda item to the October EJAC meeting for experts to speak on this topic. She suggested the Natural and Working Lands EJAC sub group should reconvene to clarify how this resolution fits in with the reauthorization process for the Cap-and-Trade Program. She stated that the legislature and the staff need a deeper education and understanding of why these Natural and Working Lands recommendations are viable. She also asked how the Committee can develop a relationship with CARB similar to the one established when collaborating on the Building Decarbonization program that is not adversarial but is rooted in promoting practices that will help our communities.

Kevin Jefferson III stated that the Resolution does not address the unnatural practices that the district continues to support, fund, and legislate. Specifically, their support of the use of pesticides, refueling refineries, and oil industries that continue to pollute our waters and airways by violating rules and regulations. He requested that the Committee define those unnatural practices that the state and agencies are supporting. This would provide the Committee with a roadmap outlining what needs to be eliminated, and how legislature and funding can support these efforts.

Matt Holmes expressed a need to identify the silos in government sectors and agencies, where they are not sharing what they are doing to address this issue. At the California Energy Commission (CEC), they have peer-reviewed scientific guidance from the AB 1757 expert advisory committee over natural resources. There is a host of carbon knowledge and expertise within the Air Resources Board. Matt further stated he does not think the EJAC is taking into consideration the value of these types of investments.

Martha Dina Argüello proposed that the National and Working Lands subquorum group meet soon to prepare language for these suggestions, identify potential speakers, and determine how to create dialogue with CARB and other agencies for the October meeting.

Kevin Hamilton requested that individuals who have suggestions present them in writing. He relayed that even though he was not a part of developing this resolution he would be willing to work on it now.

Agenda Item #11: June 12, 2025, EJAC Public Meeting Minutes

The facilitator, Leading Resources, introduced the topic and asked for discussion from the Committee.

Agenda Item #12: Public Comment

Public comment was held on agenda item 11. Two members of the public provided comments.

Agenda Item #13: EJAC Motion to Approve the June 12, 2025, EJAC Public Meeting Minutes

Thomas Helme motioned to approve the minutes. Kevin Hamilton seconded the motion. Voting members who were present voted to approve the motion. Six members voted yes; two members abstained, and three members were absent. The motion passed.

Agenda Item #14: Public Comment

One member of the public provided comments when public comment was reopened after item 16.

Agenda Item #15: CARB Announcements

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

Christabel Ukomadu provided information concerning upcoming meetings and events.

Agenda Item #16: Next Steps and Closing Remarks

Martha Dina Argüello reviewed the next steps for the Committee. She stated that the committee will complete the Natural Working Lands Resolution in preparation for the October meeting. The subgroup will be reestablished in preparation for the joint EJAC and CARB board meeting that is taking place in September. The Committee can expect emails to be part of the preparation calls. The resolutions will be a key part of the conversation with the Board.

Kevin Hamilton expressed appreciation for the Committee's tremendous effort, time, and energy spent on these endeavors.

The facilitator, Leading Resources, stated that she will coordinate the revisions for the Natural and Working Lands Resolution and coordinate with the subgroup to ensure we get revisions from all the Committee members and that they are reviewed and incorporated. She also provided a reminder of the Joint EJAC/CARB Board meeting on September 11th.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:47PM.