

PADEP Holds Public Meetings Regarding Climate Action for Environmental Justice Communities

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In April 2023, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's (PADEP) Energy Programs Office, local partners, and its contractor, Preservation Design Partnership, hosted meetings with leaders and residents of environmental justice (EJ) communities around the state. The meetings were intended as listening sessions to learn how PADEP can assist Pennsylvania's EJ communities become more sustainable and prepare for the effects of climate change. The meetings also provided information on the Energy Programs Office's Climate Action for Environmental Justice Communities Program and provided information on additional available resources. Sessions were held in Meadville, Pittsburgh, Scranton, Reading, Harrisburg, Norristown, and Philadelphia, and also provided for virtual attendance. Discussions covered a wide range of topics including fuel source strategies, land use regulations and building codes, infrastructure, and public health.

During its Philadelphia session, the Energy Programs Office representative indicated that PADEP plans to be more intentional about the inclusion of EJ in the Pennsylvania Climate Action Plan, which is updated every three years (the last update was released in 2021). In addition, what they learn from the meetings will inform other program development, such as grants. Lastly, the Energy Programs Office plans to incorporate community feedback from the meetings in the Guide to Climate Action for Environmental Justice Communities that is currently under development. The guide is intended to inform PADEP's climate action planning to ensure that strategies produce meaningful benefits in EJ communities and adequately prioritize state and federal funding. PADEP anticipates releasing the guide in summer 2023.

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