



**Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) of North America
31st Regular Session of the CEC Council
and
Session 24-01 of the Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC)**

24–26 June 2024

Wilmington Convention Center
10 Convention Center Drive
Wilmington, North Carolina, United States
28401
(Hybrid Event)

Program of Public Events

Monday, 24 June 2024

JPAC Public Forum on Advancing Environmental Justice in North America

Societies and governments worldwide are increasingly struggling with the devastating impacts caused by the current triple planetary crisis, which have unfortunately exacerbated environmental injustices, disproportionately affecting the most at-risk, impoverished, marginalized, and excluded individuals and communities, jeopardizing the protection of human and collective rights. The escalating, unequal burden of environmental deterioration calls for urgent action in North America and beyond, not only to address the impacts that climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss have had on their populations, but also to build a fair, just, equitable, and sustainable future for everyone.

As part of its 30th anniversary celebration, the Commission for Environmental Cooperation will reflect upon its decades of work to broaden its approach to environmental protection, by embracing an Environmental Justice (EJ) perspective to address this challenge. This year, the JPAC Public Forum will offer a platform to analyze and discuss the different dimensions of EJ and the way they are addressed in Canada, Mexico and the United States.

The Forum will draw from JPAC's network of partners, highlighting stories and examples of at-risk and historically marginalized communities where, through EJ action, key actors, including local community-led organizations, individuals, NGOs and Indigenous community representatives, have worked to raise awareness of environmental justice issues and address them.

Time Zone: Eastern Time

Location: Convention Center, Ballroom ABC

7:30–9:00 Registration of Public Participants

9:00–9:10 JPAC Public Forum Welcoming Ceremony

9:10–9:25 Welcoming Remarks by Jorge Daniel Taillant, CEC Executive Director

9:25–9:30 Opening Remarks by Esteban Escamilla Prado, JPAC Chair

9:30–10:00 Keynote Presentation

Over the next decade, North America will confront a multitude of pressing environmental and social challenges, ranging from climate change and biodiversity loss to disparities in resource access and social inequities. These critical issues demand our urgent attention and concerted efforts to tackle environmental degradation, while simultaneously addressing systemic inequalities and injustices entrenched within our societies.

Through the lens of environmental justice, this keynote will delve into the interconnected complexities that shape our journey to 2030. It will examine how environmental degradation disproportionately impacts at-risk, impoverished, marginalized, and excluded populations, threatening their health, livelihoods, and human and collective rights. Furthermore, it will explore how environmental justice is understood and addressed in North America, shedding light on the most relevant environmental justice topics and challenges in Canada, Mexico, and the US today.

10:00–10:15 Break

10:15–12:00 Panel 1. Legal and Policy Instruments to Access and Implement Environmental Justice in North America

Historically, the environmental burdens resulting from the use and misuse of the land and its resources have been distributed unequally, with the poor, marginalized and minority communities bearing much of the load. Environmental law and policy need to prevent this from occurring by addressing the gap with clear legislative requirements, accountability mechanisms, and public policies.

This panel session will present various examples from Canada, Mexico and the United States of legal and policy mechanisms and instruments used to access and implement environmental justice.

12:00–13:15 Lunch [Provided]

13:15–13:30 Report from the U.S. National and Governmental Advisory Committee Representatives

13:30–15:00 Panel 2. Community Mobilization and Environmental Justice Challenges

Environmental justice acknowledges the overlapping nature of injustices affecting marginalized communities and the Earth, and identifies how they are interconnected. As a grassroots movement, EJ is redefining the sustainability agenda: bringing injustices done to the most marginalized communities, and to the Earth, to the forefront and integrating a strong social justice dimension.

This panel session will present the principles of environmental justice by showcasing community examples that reflect each of them. Additionally, it will provide a platform to discuss current EJ challenges in Canada, Mexico, and the United States and to share reflections on the future trajectory of EJ in North America.

- 15:00–15:15** **Break**
- 15:15–16:50** **Open Dialogue on Opportunities for Environmental Trilateral Cooperation: Can We Think about Environmental Justice From a Regional North American Perspective?**
- 16:50–17:00** **Closing Remarks by Esteban Escamilla, JPAC Chair**

Tuesday, 25 June 2024

Time Zone: Eastern Time

Location: Convention Center, Ballroom ABC

- 9:00–10:00** **Registration of Public Participants**
- 9:00–11:00** **Visit to the CEC Exhibition**
- 11:00–12:00** **CEC Presentation on Environmental Justice Work (Part 1): Air Quality Improvement for Environmental Justice and North American Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) Initiative**
- 12:30–14:00** **Lunch [Provided]**
- 14:00–15:30** **Youth Panel: Bridging the Gap: A Conversation on the Generational Fight for Environmental Justice**
- 15:30–16:00** **Break**
- 16:00–17:15** **Expert Roundtable with the CEC Executive Director on Environmental Justice: Origins, Evolution and Emerging Policy in North America**
- 17:30–18:00** **Transportation to Official Opening (*Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St, Wilmington*)**
- 18:15–18:45** **Official Opening of the 31st Regular Session of the Council (*Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St, Wilmington*)**
- 18:45–20:00** **Welcoming Reception**
- 20:00–20:30** **Transportation to the Hotel**

Wednesday, 26 June 2024

Time Zone: Eastern Time

Location: Convention Center, Ballroom ABC

- 8:00–9:00** **Registration of Public Participants**
- 9:00–10:00** **Visit to the CEC Exhibition**
- 10:00–11:30** **CEC Presentation on Environmental Justice Work (Part 2): EJ4Climate Grant Program and Communities for Environmental Justice Network**
- 11:30–11:45** **Break**

11:45–13:30 **Lunch** [Provided]

Council Public Meeting
Strengthening Environmental Justice through Community Empowerment

In accordance with the Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (ECA) Article 3(4), the CEC Council shall hold public meetings in the course of all regular sessions. These public meetings have been held since 1995 and represent a unique opportunity for members of civil society in North America to engage with senior environmental officials and learn about North American environmental collaboration in the context of free trade. This year’s public meeting will focus on “Strengthening Environmental Justice through Community Empowerment.”

Location: Convention Center, Ballroom ABC

13:30–13:40 **Welcoming Remarks by Jorge Daniel Taillant, CEC Executive Director**

13:40–14:10 **Generation of Environmental Leaders Program Youth Teams (GELP)**

14:10–15:40 **Dialogue with the Council on Environmental Justice**

15:40-15:55 **Break**

15:55–16:25 **CEC’s 30 Year Anniversary Celebration**

16:25–16:45 **Council Announcements**

16:45–17:00 **Council Session Closing**