



Environmental Advisory Board

Meeting Agenda

December 17, 2025 3:00 P.M.

Centennial II HR Conference Room B

805 Central Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Virtual Attendance through Microsoft Teams

Order of Business

- I. Public Comment**
- II. Call to Order**
- III. Administrative Action***
 - Approval of November 19, 2025 – Meeting minutes
- IV. Office of Environment and Sustainability Comments**
 - TBD
- V. Information/Updates**
 - CM Owens meeting update
 - Proposed rule redefining waters of the United States under clean water act
 - i. <https://www.epa.gov/wotus/updated-definition-waters-united-states>
- VI. Items for Vote***
 - 2026 Meeting Dates
 - Proposed EJ Comment Recommendations
- VII. Presentations**
 - None
- VIII. Open Discussion**
 - None
- IX. Next Meeting**
 - TBD
- X. Adjournment**

**Board Action Requested*

Agenda Packet Materials:

- Draft meeting minutes from 11/19/2025
- 2026 Proposed Meeting Dates
- Draft EJ Recommendation Comment

Environmental Advisory Board

Minutes of November 19, 2025

Members Present:

- **In person:** Dave Schmitt; Douglas Walton; Kylie Johnson
- **Virtual:** Andrew Musgrave; Ashlee Young; Ericka Copeland; Nathan Alley; Nayana Shah; Rico Blackman; Susan Sprigg; Monica Perdomo;

Members Absent: Julie Shifman; Van Sullivan; Emmy Schroder;

Staff Present: Ollie Kroner; Amanda Testerman; Erin Kabel; Howard Miller; Macda Mulugeta; Lauren Clark

Meeting: A meeting of the Environmental Advisory Board was held on November 19, 2025 at 3:00 PM at Centennial II HR Conference Room B, 805 Central Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.

Meeting Agenda:

- I. **Public Comment**
- II. **Call to Order at 3:07 PM**
- III. **Administrative Action***
 - Approval of October 22, 2025 – Meeting minutes
- IV. **Office of Environment and Sustainability Comments**
 - Welcome new OES team member, Macda Mulugeta
 - Building Performance Standards updates; Council Motion Report # 202501915 requested
 - Municipal Investment Fund grant updates
 - Power A Clean Future Ohio (PCFO) Tour occurred on 11/13/2025
- V. **Information/Updates**
 - Board members please announce your name when arrive to Teams meeting online. This will help with attendance tracking.
 - Board membership appointments in process for member terms expiring 12/31/25. Applications were requested to be due by 11/15/25 and are under review by the City Manager for appointment or re-appointment. Intent is to have members approved and informed prior to January 2026 meeting.
- VI. **Items for Vote***
 - None
- VII. **Presentations**
 - Climate Equity Indicator Report- Howard Miller; Macda Mulugeta; Lauren Clark
- VIII. **Open Discussion**
 - Comments on Action with Policy Focus:
 - Codifying Environmental Justice
- I. **Next Meeting**
 - Wednesday December 17, 2025, at 3:00 PM
- II. **Adjournment at 4:32 PM**

DRAFT EAB EJ RECOMMENDATION

December 17, 2025

Dear Councilmember Owens,

The Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) respectfully submits this recommendation for your consideration to advance codification of environmental justice in city decision-making mechanisms, with the attached Fair Shake Environmental Services assessment and Climate Equity Indicators Report as supporting documents.

We recommend both immediate steps and long-term exploration. By starting with an administrative baseline (recommendations 1 and 2) and directing staff to analyze more complex tools (recommendations 3 and 4), Council can ensure that Cincinnati builds a defensible, equitable framework that prioritizes community voice and aligns with the city's Climate Equity Indicators report and the Green Cincinnati Plan.

Recommendations:

1. **Update Climate Equity Indicators Report:** Request that Council submit a motion to update the 2021 report to track progress and disparities (e.g., urban heat, air quality, energy burden).
2. **Improve Citywide Language Access:** Work with the Administration on language access processes. Pilot a centralized contract and appoint a Language Access Coordinator; begin with translation of essential EJ-related materials.
3. **Explore Participatory Budgeting:** Direct staff to conduct a feasibility study, referencing Columbus' successful 2025 initiative and Cincinnati's charter city authority.
4. **Explore Community Benefits Fund:** Request legal and financial analysis of whether a dedicated revenue model (similar to Portland's Clean Energy Fund) is viable under Ohio law and in Cincinnati.

These recommendations reflect several months of EAB discussions with Fair Shake Legal Services and the Office of Environment and Sustainability. We have distilled those conversations into a phased approach tailored to Cincinnati's community and government landscape. Included below are key findings from the Fair Shake assessment that support our recommendations. We welcome further discussion and stand ready to support you and Council in advancing this work. Thank you for your continued equity and climate justice leadership for our city.

Sincerely,

City of Cincinnati Environmental Advisory Board

Fair Shake Assessment Supporting Findings

- **Language Access (Page 4):** Cities budget \$200k-\$1.4M annually; centralized contracts reduce costs.
- **Participatory Budgeting (Page 8):** Columbus launched a \$9M initiative for 2026; Cleveland faced state preemption; Ohio law requires elected officials to sign off on expenditures, limiting community-only decision authority.
- **Portland Clean Energy Fund (Page 10):** Dedicated revenue stream for community-driven climate projects via surcharge on large retailers; governed by a community-appointed committee.
- **Cincinnati-specific considerations (Page 18):** Most tools in assessment are complementary; participatory budgeting must avoid state preemption; permit-denial authority may reduce needs for Community Benefit Agreements; administrative tools (language access, reporting) strengthen all other mechanisms by ensuring transparency and reducing redundancy.
- **Key Themes (Page 16):** Administrative actions are quick, low legal risk, low-cost; Contractual actions are enforceable with medium implementation complexity, but are limited in scope as they only apply to incentivized projects; Statutory actions are the strongest legal tool but legally complex.

Environmental Advisory Board – Proposed Meeting Schedule

Proposed regular meeting schedule for 2026: the last Wednesday of the month at 3:00 PM with in-person and virtual attendance. Proposed changes for November and December due to holidays.

- January 28, 2026
- February 25, 2026
- March 25, 2026
- April 29, 2026
- May 27, 2026
- June 24, 2026
- July 29, 2026
- August 26, 2026
- September 30, 2026
- October 28, 2026
- November 18, 2026
 - Last Wednesday of November is November 25th, the day before Thanksgiving
- December 16, 2026
 - Last Wednesday of December is December 30th