Centering Environmental Justice in Our Work

HCSE Subcommittee

of the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change

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MILWAUKEE WATER COMMONS

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Introduction & Goals

- Acknowledge realities in our world & communities

- Milwaukee Water Commons & Environmental Justice

- Focus on *the How* more than *the Why*

- Goals for today:
  - Set the table with intro, terms & best practices
  - Share EJ frameworks
  - Discuss recommendations through those frameworks

The Why

- The Task Force has been charged to center Environmental Justice in our recommendations

- "...throughout this work, we are maintaining a lens of environmental justice, so that communities of color and low-income communities—who too often experience the first and worst consequences of climate change—are part of the conversation and the solution." – Lt Gov Barnes (from website)

- We will make better decisions

Environmental Justice

- **Environmental Justice-** An outcome, where a healthy environment and wellness are respected as a human right for all people and future generations regardless of identity. Ethical issues of justice arise when people, communities, or regions are subject to greater environmental degradation, excluded from a healthy environment, or disconnected from the process of shaping their environment. Environmental justice links environmental sustainability with social justice, to ensure that no population, community, or individual is subjected to bear a disproportionate burden of environmental risks.

– from MWC Branch Out Milwaukee Report

Process Agreements

1. Consider the perspectives, experiences, and position of others

2. Acknowledge the background: understand that we are not isolated from things happening in the world around us

3. Speak from experience, not categorically

4. Enter this space with good intentions, to grow as individuals and as an organization

5. Be mindful of the difference between intent and impact

6. Listen for understanding not disagreement

7. Honor complexity, as individuals we do not hold the whole story

8. Step up, step back

9. Lean into discomfort: Don't be afraid to ask the necessary questions

10. Share responsibility for success

11. Recognize that this conversation can be harmful

12. This conversation, and the trust we are building, will take time. We are committed to continuing this conversation if it is necessary

The How

- We need frameworks to shape our decision-making

- Six frameworks for EJ with examples:
    - Representation and accountability
    - Avoiding unintended impacts
    - Barriers to implementation and access
    - Decision-making, input, power
    - Checking our work
    - Cultural competency
        - Messaging and framing

Assessing recommendations through an EJ Framework

1. Representation and accountability

2. Avoiding unintended impacts

3. Barriers to implementation and access

4. Decision-making, input, power

5. Checking our work

6. Cultural competency