

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Board of Scientific Counselors
Joint Climate Change and Social & Community Science
Virtual Meeting Minutes
December 20-21, 2023

Dates and Times: December 20-21, 2023, 12:00 – 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Location: Virtual

Executive Summary

On December 20-21, 2023, the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC) Climate Change and Social and Community Science Subcommittees convened in virtual meetings. The goal of the two-day meeting was to hold discussions about the responses to Charge Question 1, Charge Question 2, and Charge Question 3. The meeting format allowed for presentations, open dialogue, Committee deliberations and questions, and EPA responses to questions.

Day 1 consisted of opening remarks and introductions, charge question overviews, two concurrent breakout rooms focusing on Charge Question 1 and Charge Question 2, and group discussions. Day 2 consisted of three concurrent breakout rooms focusing on Charge Question 1, Charge Question 2, and Charge Question 3, and final discussions of each charge question.

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

The meeting generally followed the issues and timing as presented in the agenda provided in Appendix A of this meeting summary. The meeting convened at approximately 12:00 p.m., Eastern Time.

Mr. Tom Tracy, Designated Federal Officer, Office of Research and Development (ORD), welcomed the participants and noted that the meeting is being held in accordance with federal rules and regulations.

Office of Research and Development Welcome

Bruce Rodan, Associate Director for Science, Office of Research and Development

Dr. Bruce Rodan, Associate Director for Science, ORD, introduced himself and welcomed the participants to the BOSC Subcommittee meeting. He reviewed the agenda and goals for both days of the meeting and provided an overview of the charge questions. Dr. Rodan noted that the charge questions are forward-looking and are aimed at seeking the best paths forward with BOSC activities. He stated recommendations provided should be actionable and relevant to research agencies. Additionally, ORD staff are available to answer questions and clarify information for attendees as needed on both meeting days.

Board Introductions and Review Process

Tom Tracy, Designated Federal Officer, Office of Research and Development

Mr. Tom Tracy described the BOSC review process and timeline. He noted the working groups will meet to discuss the findings and then the report will be finalized. He announced the new and

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existing chairs for the Climate Change and Social and Community Science subcommittees and then introduced the board members.

Overview of the Day

Rebeca Dodder, Air, Climate, and Energy Associate National Program Director

Dr. Rebecca Dodder, Associate National Program Director, Air, Climate, and Energy Research Program, thanked the subcommittee for their work and time. She reviewed all three charge questions and their sub questions. She introduced herself, Bryan Hubbell, and Louie Rivers and explained their roles for this committee.

Public Comment

Mr. Tom Tracy opened the floor to public comments. There were no public comments.

Presentation of Charge Question 3 Response

Barrett Ristroph, Working Group 3 Co-Lead

Tracy Corley, Working Group 3 Co-Lead

Dr. Barrett Ristroph, Working Group 3 co-lead, reviewed the three sub parts of Charge Question 3 and described the strengths of the report. She discussed their suggestions of viewing through the lens of environmental injustice and incorporating resilience when thinking of these adaptations. For ethical considerations for community collaborations, suggestions included using community advisory boards for research and diversity in the participants to avoid research fatigue. Partnering with networks of environmental justice groups could help facilitate this. Suggestions also included coordinating with other agencies such as Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers (TCTAC) to help people write their own grants. She emphasized building trust in relationships and that community members should be included in the whole process and make sure they understand the policies for research and consultation. The working group suggested avoiding the use of any potentially offensive terminology and noted to ask community representatives about which terms would be acceptable. Dr. Ristroph noted another suggestion is proper compensation for community participation and suggested applying for grants in advance. She also suggested that the results be provided in different media formats and languages, and for a wide range of scientific knowledge.

Dr. Tracy Corley, Working Group 3 co-lead, shared recommendations for ensuring the community is included in the entire research process, from conceptualizing the research to having an ownership stake in the results. A second recommendation was emphasizing collaboration across agencies and other research entities.

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Full Group Discussion

Barrett Ristroph, Working Group 3 Co-Lead

Tracy Corley, Working Group 3 Co-Lead

Tom Tracy opened the floor to the group for discussions and questions. The discussion began with details on the structure of the comments and revisions. The discussion focused on power structures in the community, accurate representation of the communities being studied, compensation for the fact that some of these projects span years and there is potentially leadership turnover in that time, and root causes versus contributing causes. The discussion also included topics relating to mobilization funds, finding a strategy for knowing when to transport findings from one place to another, and integrating cultural issues into scientific work.

Breakout Session Report-Out

Gilbert Gee, Working Group 1 Co-Lead

Robyn Wilson, Working Group 1 Co-Lead

Bart Croes, Working Group 2 Co-Lead

Pamela McElwee, Working Group 2 Co-Lead

Working Group 1

Dr. Robyn Wilson and Dr. Gilbert Gee, Working Group 1 co-leads, discussed the three-part charge question. For Part One, regarding suggestions or recommendations for building ORD's social scientist capacity, Working Group 1 suggested continuing to hire additional social scientists. They also recommended creating an organizational framework that clearly defines social science hiring objectives. For Part Two, regarding the integration of social science into ORD's broader research portfolio, Working Group 1 suggested developing an approach to integrate social science built on previous reports. They recommended including social scientists in agenda setting, priority development, and problem identification, as well as taking steps to ensure the ORD community is welcoming to social scientists. A lack of understanding of social scientists' skillsets among non-social scientists was noted as an existing issue. For Part Three, regarding supporting social scientists at ORD, Working Group 1 recommended additional capacity-building at the individual and institutional levels that is specifically tailored to the needs of social science hires.

No discussion questions were asked of Working Group 1.

Working Group 2

Dr. Pamela McElwee, Working Group 2 co-lead, reported out on Charge Question 2, which focused on building interdisciplinary capacity in a newly established division, the Integrated Climate Sciences Division (ICSD). ICSD has three branches, which includes the Interdisciplinary Climate Assessment Branch, Regional Climate Assistance Branch, and Integration & Evaluation Branch. Working Group 2 stated that the quick response and integrated social science are valuable aspects of ICSD, though one difficulty is that the new division has

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resource constraints at this time. Dr. McElwee stated that EPA's work in leveraging its resources and position has been positive, but that they do have specific suggestions and recommendations to enhance that progress.

Dr. Bart Croes summarized Working Group 2's response to the second and third parts of their charge question regarding climate change impacts and health. Dr. Croes noted that there has been good integration into the program, but that there is occasional overlap with other agencies that have climate-related work, such as Department of Environment and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. EPA has had to choose its projects with care for the wider federal landscape. Working Group 2 suggested that EPA take an interest in pollutants that are not being spotlighted by other agencies and consider using its regulatory authority in those areas. For Part Three, Working Group 2 agreed that community-building efforts and listening sessions with stakeholders have been successful. In the early stages of these programs, it can be difficult to offer suggestions for moving forward. However, the group suggested that EPA base its work in this division on existing projects. Working Group 2 also proposed that EPA consider addressing multiple stressors or overlapping stressors in the climate change and health space. Working Group 2 noted that they will refine their suggestions into full recommendations on the second day of the BOSC meeting.

No discussion questions were asked of Working Group 2.

Full Group Discussion

Tom Tracy opened the floor to the group for discussions and questions. The discussion focused on the level of detail recommended for the charge question responses, and the timeline for final reports.

Closing Statements

Tom Tracy, Designated Federal Officer, Office of Research and Development

Mr. Tom Tracy thanked the attendees for their participation, provided an overview of Day 2 of the meeting, and adjourned the meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m., Eastern Time.

Thursday, December 21, 2023

Welcome – Day 2

Tom Tracy, Designated Federal Officer, Office of Research and Development

The subcommittee reconvened at 12:00 p.m., Eastern Time.

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Mr. Tom Tracy welcomed the participants to Day 2 of the meeting and opened the floor for any questions. He informed the subcommittees that they could adjourn from the breakout groups. He clarified the timeline for charge question responses and noted that there will be a time to meet in mid-January for groups to complete their draft responses. The Climate Change and Social and Community Science subcommittees will reconvene in mid-to-late February to finalize the report for the Executive Committee to review and submit to the Office of Research and Development.

Final Discussion of Charge Questions

There was no additional discussion of the charge questions after the subcommittee breakout groups adjourned.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m., Eastern Time.

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Appendix A: Agenda

**United States Environmental Protection Agency
Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC)
Joint Climate Change and Social & Community Science Subcommittees
Meeting Agenda – December 20-21, 2023
Virtual**

Wednesday, December 20, 2023		
Time (EDT)	Agenda Activity	Presenter
12:00 -- 12:05	Sign on & Technology Check	
12:05 – 12:10	Welcome and Opening Remarks	Tom Tracy, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) Charge Questions Working Groups (WG) chairs
12:10 – 12:20	ORD Welcome	Bruce Rodan, Associate Director for Science, ORD
12:20 – 12:35	Board Introductions Review Process	Tom Tracy, DFO
12:35 – 12:40	Overview of the day	Rebecca Dodder, ACE Associate NPD Louie Rivers, Senior Science Advisor, ORD
12:40 -- 12:50	Public Comment	
Charge Question 3 Session (Both Subcommittees participate)		
12:50 – 1:00	Presentation of Charge Question 3 Response	Barrett Ristroph, JD, PhD (WG3 Co-Lead) Tracy Corley, PhD (WG3 Co-Lead)
1:00 – 1:40	Full group discussion	Barrett Ristroph, JD, PhD (WG3 Co-Lead) Tracy Corley, PhD (WG3 Co-Lead)
1:40 – 1:55	Break	
Breakout Sessions (Charge Question 1 & Charge Question 2)		
1:55 – 2:55	Concurrent Breakout sessions (Charge Question 1 Social Science Subcommittee goes to one room; Charge Question 2 Climate Subcommittee goes to one room)	Gilbert Gee, PhD (WG1 Co-Lead) Robyn Wilson, PhD (WG1 Co-Lead) Bart Croes, PE, MS (WG2 Co-Lead) Pamela McElwee, PhD (WG2 Co-Lead)

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2:55 – 3:25	Subcommittees report back (10-minute presentations from each subcommittee)	Gilbert Gee, PhD (WG1 Co-Lead) Robyn Wilson, PhD (WG1 Co-Lead) Bart Croes, PE, MS (WG2 Co-Lead) Pamela McElwee, PhD (WG2 Co-Lead)
3:25 – 4:05	Discussion	Gilbert Gee, PhD (WG1 Co-Lead) Robyn Wilson, PhD (WG1 Co-Lead)
		Bart Croes, PE, MS (WG2 Co-Lead) Pamela McElwee, PhD (WG2 Co-Lead)
4:05 – 4:10	Closing	Tom Tracy, Designated Federal Officer (DFO)
Thursday, December 21, 2023		
12:00-12:05	Sign on & Technology Check	
12:05-2:00	Concurrent Breakout sessions (Charge Question 1 WG goes to one room; Charge Question 2 WG goes to one room; Charge Question 3 WG goes to one room)	Gilbert Gee, PhD (WG1 Co-Lead) Robyn Wilson, PhD (WG1 Co-Lead) Bart Croes, PE, MS (WG2 Co-Lead) Pamela McElwee, PhD (WG2 Co-Lead) Barrett Ristroph, JD, PhD (WG3 Co-Lead) Tracy Corley, PhD (WG3 Co-Lead)
2:00-2:30	Final discussion of the three Charge Questions	Gilbert Gee, PhD (WG1 Co-Lead) Robyn Wilson, PhD (WG1 Co-Lead) Bart Croes, PE, MS (WG2 Co-Lead) Pamela McElwee, PhD (WG2 Co-Lead) Barrett Ristroph, JD, PhD (WG3 Co-Lead) Tracy Corley, PhD (WG3 Co-Lead)
2:30-2:35	Closing	Tom Tracy, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) Bruce Rodan, Associate Director for Science, ORD

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Appendix B: Participants

Climate Change Subcommittee Members:

Bart Croes, *Co-Chair*
Daniel Cohan
Matei Georgescu
Adrienne Hollis
Manoj Jha
Patrick Kinney
Michael Kleinman
Kevin Lanza
Arthur Lee
Jane Lin
Pamela McElwee
Rebecca Neumann
Eri Saikawa
Gregory Simon
Michael Schmeltz
Berrin Tansel
Lloyd Treinish
Tim Wallington

Social and Community Science Subcommittee Members

Barret Ristroph, *Co-Chair*
Gilbert Gee, *Co-Chair*
Melissa Burroughs
Genny Carrillo
Christina Chanes
Timothy Collins
Tracy Corley
James Dearing
Rebeca de Jesus Crespo
Sara Grineski
Bonnie Keeler
Stephen Lee
Woo Hyoung Lee
Monica Ramirez-Andreotta
Corie Rockett Sapp
Derek Shendell
Sean Smith
Siddhartha Roy
Gerald Torres

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Robyn Wilson
Courtney Woods
Kelly Wright

EPA Designated Federal Officer (DFO): *Tom Tracy*

Presenters:

Bruce Rodan, *Associate Director for Science, ORD*
Gilbert Gee, *Working Group 1 Co-lead*
Robyn Wilson, *Working Group 1 Co-lead*
Bart Croes, *Working Group 2 Co-lead*
Pamela McElwee, *Working Group 2 Co-lead*
Barret Ristroph, *Working Group 3 Co-lead*
Tracy Corley, *Working Group 3 Co-lead*
Rebecca Dodder, *Air, Climate, and Energy Associate National Program Director*
Louie Rivers, *Senior Science Advisor, ORD*

Other EPA Attendees:

Madison Clark
Bryan Hubbell
Mary Ross
Emily Sokol

Contractor Support:

HC Bledsoe
Sagi Gillera
Leah West