

May 7, 2020

Subject: Equity Analysis of Bay Adapt provided by the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Projects and BCDC Staff Response

Thank you for providing recommendations on how Environmental Justice (EJ) and Equity can be better centered in the Bay Adapt process. BCDC staff convened to assess and respond to your comments. We hope the below responses provide a clear summary of the intentions at the core of the Bay Adapt process as they pertain to EJ and Equity.

The goal of this multi-stakeholder initiative is to organize the diversity of the critical players in regional shoreline adaptation, and to enable alliances between groups who might not otherwise find an opportunity to connect and collaborate on such an important issue to the health and security of the Bay region as a whole.

Please see BCDC's responses in blue to each of your points below. Also included below is an outline of the opportunities for your participation (with affiliated time commitments for each), which were mentioned in the original invitation BCDC extended to each of your organizations. I'm also attaching the Draft Outreach and Engagement Strategy to this email for your reference.

We appreciate your interest and look forward to having you join this effort, should you decide to do so. As always, feel free to reach out to Nahal Ghoghaie, BCDC's EJ Manager with any questions or concerns, either via email at nahal.ghoghaie@bcdc.ca.gov, or via phone at (360) 464-5114.

WOEIP: When reading through the documents presented by Bay Adapt, 3 main points jumped out as opportunities for more equitable engagement. They are:

1. Overall Language

- A. Should reflect the EJ principle that communities most vulnerable to the effects of climate change lead in policy making and implementation. How are we thinking about putting these communities at the forefront at every moment of the process? Language mentions equity and disadvantaged communities, but not as leaders of this process.

BCDC:

- Invitations were extended to at least five EJ-focused organizations to join the Bay Adapt Leadership Advisory Group (LAG), including your organization and four others. The LAG serves as the primary leadership for this effort. While BCDC is project managing this effort, there are currently no other groups or positions that employ a higher degree of leadership than the LAG. The LAG is composed of approximately 30 leaders from diverse perspectives, such as ecosystem protection, flood agencies, public health, housing, economic development, transportation and others. Five representatives from EJ organizations seemed like an adequate number to serve on this group.

- We also seek broad, diverse perspectives in the three Working Groups. Actions for the Joint Platform are being discussed and developed through three Working Groups before going to the LAG for review and approval. Invitations have been extended to all five groups, plus we will also be including invitations to additional EJ, Equity and other relevant CBO representatives in joining the three working groups. We think this offers another substantial opportunity for community-based leaders to influence the conversation and the action outcomes, which are the ultimate objectives of Bay Adapt.
- You have mentioned the idea of offering an EJ/ Equity presentation at the LAG. This is something we would very much like to offer at an upcoming LAG meeting on May 29th, as it would be an ideal opportunity to educate LAG members who may not be as informed on EJ and Equity issues. This will also serve as an effective trust building activity in a forum that aims to help cultivate unlikely alliances. We hope to work with you on this if this.
- Nahal Ghoghaie, BCDC's EJ Manager, serves on the Project Management Team, and her goal is to bring the EJ/ Equity perspective to Bay Adapt's meetings and public forums. Nahal is a relatively new staff member at BCDC, and we view her role on the PMT as a meaningful way to ensure Equity is front and center in this process.
- The Outreach and Engagement Strategy seeks to address this concern. See the DRAFT Strategy document attached.

2. Outreach and Communications Strategy

- A. Should begin in the communities most vulnerable to sea level rise and climate change and be reflective of their particular needs and accommodations.

BCDC:

- We completely agree with this recommendation, and have considered the idea of co-convening community round table discussions and/ or education campaigns with you all as our EJ partners. As mentioned on our May 6th phone call, this could be carried out in partnership with the Exploratorium, SFEI, and other partners with resources and skills that should be leveraged for the success of this effort. We'd like to discuss this concept with you in more detail.
- The recently released Adapting to Rising Tides Bay Area report includes a detailed analysis that highlights potential impacts to socially vulnerable communities on the shoreline (http://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/ARTBayArea_Regional_VulnerableCommunities_Final_March_2020_ADA.pdf). We believe this data and analysis can serve as a baseline to guide our outreach efforts in communities. We hope to work with you all on this strategy to ensure we are not forgetting any high priority neighborhoods.

- B. Communications should be community specific and outreach conducted in coordination with local CBO's.

BCDC:

- The Outreach and Engagement Strategy seeks to address this concern. See the DRAFT Strategy document attached.

- C. CBO's on the LAG could and should be commissioned to work closely on an outreach plan in coordination with Nahal Ghoghaie.

BCDC:

- We would welcome your input and support on the attached DRAFT Outreach and Engagement Strategy. While we very much hope to find additional funding to commission CBO partners to work closely on the Bay Adapt outreach plan, there is none currently available. Nahal has reached out to the Resources Legacy Fund, and we are exploring other potential funding sources to compensate you for this support. Let us know if you have suggestions on where else we might want to look.

3. The Structure of the Working Groups

- A. One of the co-chairs from each of the working groups should be from vulnerable, disadvantaged, or underrepresented communities. The participants would represent a wide range of ethnicities, abilities, languages, socio-economic status, etc. The participants would not necessarily come from cbo's, but could be staff of agencies that represent disadvantaged communities.

BCDC:

- There are a total of 6 co-chairs for the three working groups (two co-chairs each). Each co-chair represents a different type of organization/ perspective essential to successfully achieving a broad base of consensus for regional sea level rise action. Working Group co-chair representatives come from the following perspectives:
 - 1 Private Sector/Industry Group Org
 - 1 Regional Environmental Agency
 - 1 Local Planning Director
 - 1 Environmental Justice CBO
 - 1 Flood Control Engineer
 - 1 Scientist/Restoration Specialist
- We believe that several of the non-CBO co-chairs would be considered Environmental/ Social Justice and Equity "allies." One is a woman of color. We would like to find an opportunity to learn more about LAG members' and co-chairs' backgrounds in EJ/ Equity-related work.
- As stated above, we are also seeking to seed the working groups with a range of representation based on areas of expertise and individual backgrounds, and hope to work with you all on identifying additional participants.

- B. Any participants from cbo's should be fairly compensated for their time as experts, paid equivalently to other consultants for BCDC.

BCDC:

- At the present, we have funding for small stipends through a donation to Friends of BCDC, and we are exploring further funding possibilities. At present, this includes \$100 for 4-5 CBOs at each LAG meeting or Working Group meeting, and \$200 per meeting for the Co-Chair role for Working Group meetings.

- C. Having one committee co-chaired by a CBO represents a somewhat tokenizing approach to equity, and is not ideal.

BCDC:

- This is not the intention. As mentioned above, the success of this work depends on achieving consensus amongst a strikingly large and diverse group of stakeholders across geographies, sectors, interest areas and expertise. The 6 co-chairs represent a fraction of these perspectives.
- The lack of funding to compensate CBO's for more time also serves as a barrier to requesting more time to serve as a co-chair.
- BCDC's EJ Manager, Nahal Ghoghaie, will "float" among all three of the working groups in order to ensure EJ/ Equity is considered and addressed in these discussions and in the action outcomes each working group develops.

4. Equity Training for LAG Members

- A. CBO leaders should be paid to train the members of the LAG on equity and environmental justice principles prior to the meeting of the working groups.

BCDC:

- This is an excellent idea. We could dedicate a segment of the next LAG agenda (May 29th) for this, and could offer a deeper dive with LAG members who are less savvy on EJ/ Equity issues. As this date is coming up soon, please let us know if this is something you want to work with us on.
- Again, lack of funding poses a barrier to asking you all as EJ CBOs to lead this training. We can commit Nahal's time to providing this training if you are unable to support in the absence of funding.

5. What is the strategy for engagement of CBO's after this initial process? We want to see that there is forethought in not repeating these missteps in the next phase. It is no longer acceptable to not include CBO's from the beginning and throughout the entire process.

BCDC:

- We apologize for not engaging with CBOs earlier in this process; the dialogue over the past few weeks has made clear how we could have gotten off to a better start if we had done so earlier.
- We hope to work with all of our CBO partners on building equity into all of the actions that make up the Joint Platform resulting from this effort. Your participation in designing these actions will help ensure that they are carried out in a more equitable manner.
- The specific strategy for CBO engagement is drafted in the communications strategy, and we welcome your input on how to refine this part of the work. See the DRAFT Strategy document attached.

6. How will this all be implemented? It is unclear what the next steps are and how you intend to ensure that this process reflects equity throughout.

BCDC:

- The first two Guiding Principles of this effort, which the LAG co-developed and agreed to, are focused on equity and community-led governance. These guiding principles are meant to guide this entire process, and shape the actions that emerge from it.
 - **Practice Inclusive, Community-Led Governance and Decision Making:** Remove barriers and enhance capacity for transparent, coordinated decision-making amongst community members and groups, and local, regional, state, and federal government that acknowledges and leverages the unique roles, responsibilities, and authorities at each scale. Adaptation outcomes will better protect the entire region when all scales, including those who know their neighborhoods and communities best, contribute and collaborate in reducing risk.
 - **Support Socially Vulnerable Communities:** Actively ensure that socially vulnerable communities don't just bounce back in the face of sea level rise, but "bounce forward" by providing additional resources and support to areas where socially vulnerable communities live, work, and play and reducing negative impacts to these communities. Climate change will disproportionately impact marginalized communities with fewer resources.
- We plan to co-develop an equity analysis to help vet each of the joint platform actions proposed by the working groups. This analysis would serve as an equity test that must be passed to be considered for the final joint platform. We hope to work with you and our CBO partners on defining what this "test" looks like.
- The actions in the Joint Platform will be implemented through the members of the LAG, each with their respective roles, strengths and authorities. It is our hope that the LAG members will "adopt" the Joint Platform and work together to implement it. While we don't know yet what those actions will be, we know that they may require (1) political support; (2) funding; (3) legislative actions; (4) regulatory changes; and (5) partnership projects. We believe that an unlikely coalition like the LAG is the best way to try to get this accomplished.