

Assembly Bill 32 Environmental Justice Advisory Committee ("EJAC") July 17, 2025, Meeting Minutes¹

Meeting Attendance (* notes virtual attendance)

Committee Member Attendees:

1. Martha Dina Argüello*
2. Juan Flores*
3. Dr. Catherine Garoupa
4. Thomas Helme*
5. Jill Sherman-Warne*
6. Luis Olmedo*
7. Matt Holmes
8. Kevin Hamilton*

Committee Members not in Attendance:

9. John Harriel Jr.
10. John Kevin Jefferson III
11. Rey Leon

CARB Staff Attendees:

- Radhika Majhail, Branch Chief of the Justice and Equity Branch
- Ashley Georgiou, Manager, Office of Environmental Justice, Tribal Affairs, and Border Relations (OEJTB)
- Christabel Ukomadu, Equity Analyst, OEJTB
- Rajinder Sahota, Deputy Executive Officer, Climate Change and Research
- JT Eden, Student Assistant, OEJTB

Other Attendees:

- Dr. Tara Seely, Air Pollution Specialist, Nature-Based Strategies
- Dr. Adam Moreno, Manager, Nature-Based Strategies, CARB
- Jane Harrington, Leading Resources (Facilitator)

¹ These minutes serve as a high-level summary of the meeting. They are not a verbatim transcript. Instead, they capture key topics, decisions, and directional insights from the discussion. To hear the full conversation in participants' own words, please see the meeting recording, available at [[AB 32 Environmental Justice Advisory Committee Meeting | California Air Resources Board](#)].

Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item #1: Housekeeping and Logistics

A quorum of EJAC members was reached at 1:04 pm and the public meeting began. The facilitator made housekeeping announcements.

Agenda Item #2: EJAC Member Roll Call

The facilitator conducted EJAC member roll call. Five EJAC members were present; seven were absent. Two members joined virtually during Opening Remarks and one member joined during the discussion of Agenda Item #8.

Agenda Item #3: Introductions and Opening Remarks

Opening remarks from EJAC Co-Chairs, including ground rules, meeting agreements, agenda overview.

EJAC Co-Chair Dr. Catherine Garoupa reviewed the meeting agenda. EJAC Co-Chair Martha Dina Argüello reviewed the meeting agreements.

Welcome from CARB and acknowledgement of CARB participation.

Radhika Majhail provided the following opening remarks:

In response to Matt Holmes' request that remote sensing data from the Methane Satellite Project be made available, CARB is developing a public dashboard which it hopes will be available in the coming weeks. CARB will also be releasing a grant solicitation for the development and implementation of community engagement plans in the fall of 2025.

CARB has revised the April 17, 2025, meeting minutes to reflect the change requested by Matt Holmes. The revised minutes are available on the CARB webpage.

Today's meeting will include a presentation from CARB and discussion regarding Natural and Working Lands in response to the committee's request.

The draft resolution on building decarbonization discussed at the June 2025 EJAC meeting reflects CARB's corrections, stating that water heating standards are greenhouse emissions standards, not energy efficiency standards.

In response to Martha Dina Argüello's request for a meeting with the SB 1137 team, a meeting has been arranged for the week following this meeting.

CARB fully supports co-creation between EJAC and CARB, citing its active support and engagement with EJAC in the work being done on the Zero-Emission Space and Water Heater Standards.

CARB has made a technical writer available as a resource to the EJAC.

EJAC Co-Chairs continued with opening remarks:

EJAC Co-Chair Dr. Catherine Garoupa just back from the second half of her sabbatical, shared she would mostly observe this meeting and ceded her time.

EJAC Co-Chair Martha Dina Argüello stated that much of what the EJAC has been working on for many years is under attack, noting that the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is under attack, the AB 617 Program is being defunded, and the Cap-and-Trade Program is about to be reauthorized. She called for the elimination of offsets, which allow polluters to pay to pollute the air, and for real strategies that deliver clean air, climate action, and a just and fair transition for workers that support a democratic economy. She asked the committee to consider sending a letter to the legislature outlining EJAC's recommendations, so that EJAC can be directly heard regarding justice, good climate policy, and what needs to be done.

Agenda Item #4: May 15, 2025, EJAC Public Meeting Minutes

The facilitator, Jane Harrington from Leading Resources, introduced the topic and asked for discussion from the committee. Dr. Catherine Garoupa made one spelling edit to the minutes.

Agenda Item #5: Public Comment

Public comment was held on agenda item 4. No members of the public provided comments.

Agenda Item #6: EJAC Motion to Approve the May 15, 2025, EJAC Public Meeting Minutes

Dr. Catherine Garoupa moved to approve the minutes as written with one edit. Matt Holmes seconded the motion. Voting members who were present voted to approve the motion. Seven members voted yes; four members were absent. The motion passed.

Agenda Item #7: CARB Presentation on Natural and Working Lands

Dr. Tara Seely from CARB provided an overview of how California's natural and working lands contribute to the State's climate goals, as well as an overview of the work that CARB is doing to accelerate climate action in these lands.

Matt Holmes inquired about the progress being made to meet the SB 1747 2045 objectives. Adam Moreno from CARB replied that the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) are leading the way on implementation.

Matt Holmes asked if the expert advisory committee's work would be extended for a few months. Adam Moreno explained that the extension is to allow the committee members to read and provide comments on the Climate Smart Strategy document.

Matt Holmes stated that although nature-based solutions may not have the same impact as engineering solutions in the overall carbon budget, he appreciated CARB's inclusion of the co-benefits of investing in people and places. He emphasized addressing the solutions within the first five or ten years because waiting longer will be too late. Adam Moreno agreed, stating that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says that natural working lands are a critical piece of climate strategy for health, the environment, and climate change.

Kevin Hamilton stated that California needs a quality assurance system to measure carbon sequestration through nature-based solutions, ensuring other funded states use the same metrics and tools.

Jill Sherman-Warne asked how tribal lands are classified on state maps, how tribal fuel reductions are counted, and how tribal management is included in targets. Adam Moreno explained that the trust lands shown on the map were categorized as federal lands, and all other lands were local. Tribal lands were calculated separately, and tribal management is incorporated in the targets like other ownership or land management activity.

Jill Sherman-Warne expressed concern that Federal budget cuts will significantly reduce funding for hazardous fuel reductions and stated that it is important to foster partnerships with tribes and recognize their contributions. Adam Moreno confirmed that the Federal budget cuts will have an impact. He acknowledged the need to learn more from tribes and to expand cultural burning. Rajinder Sahota from CARB stated it is important for the State to know what tribes are doing and contributing to State targets, especially as data is now being removed from the Federal website.

Jill Sherman-Warne expressed concern that the State's return-to-office mandate contradicts its climate policies. Rajinder Sahota cited a statute that requires California State government operations to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and work toward carbon neutrality.

Thomas Helme asked about the planning for the organic crops goal of 20% by 2040, the future of San Joaquin Valley crops, what it means for organics, climate change, water conservation, and the economic future of using biomass as the main driver of the local economy. Adam Moreno replied that the CDFA is aware of this target, is thinking about how to accomplish this, and what the impact will be on carbon and greenhouse gases. With the explicit targets of AB 1757 in place, CARB will be assessing the benefits and impacts of organic agriculture and how different crops might be distributed.

Dr. Catherine Garoupa asked for clarification of the slide titled Wildfire Emissions in Perspective. Adam Moreno explained that the point of this slide is to look at the entire system with all its losses and gains to understand the contribution of natural and working lands rather than looking at an individual year of fire emissions.

Dr. Catherine Garoupa commented that California's wildfires shouldn't stop efforts to reduce carbon emissions elsewhere. She noted that the accelerating climate crisis has raised wildfire risk, citing research showing recent Los Angeles wildfires were worsened by climate change.

Dr. Catherine Garoupa cited the 2020 Assembly Bill (AB) 32 Scoping Plan Update, which limits carbon stock loss from California's land to 4%. She asked if carbon stock is the same as carbon sequestration. Adam Moreno explained that carbon stock is the amount of carbon that exists in any one moment in time in all the vegetation in all the soil in all of California. He further explained that, in the future, there is an anticipated loss of carbon stock even with accelerated climate action.

Matt Holmes commented that forest thinning practices by local land use authorities have been proven to exacerbate the impacts of wildfires and that misalignment through regional and local planning highlights the need for alignment across agencies. He requested an exploration into how tribal contributions can be represented and recommended that CARB follow its parent agency's tribal consultation protocol.

Luis Olmedo asked if CARB has done or plans to do an analysis of AB 131, known as the Abundance Bill, regarding potential carbon impacts. Adam Moreno replied that the bill had passed a few weeks ago and that the bill is still being evaluated.

Luis Olmedo asked if CARB had informed the legislature about AB 131's carbon impacts. Rajinder Sahota explained that CARB wasn't asked to evaluate the bill during its development. CARB is committed to understanding land conversion and carbon loss implications.

Luis Olmedo asked if the agency could comment on bills proactively or only by request. Rajinder Sahota said CARB only weighs in when requested.

Kevin Hamilton asked about the data accuracy behind the scoping plan graph. Adam Moreno replied that exact numbers are in the plan, and the graph shows CARB's data in context with other models—all indicating future carbon loss.

Kevin Hamilton commented that although the loss of carbon has been attributed to wildfires, experience suggests that this is an area with the potential for recovery. Adam Moreno responded that the main drivers are drought, extreme heat, and climate change itself.

Kevin Hamilton commented that allowing those who have been managing these areas for hundreds of years and using strategies that allow for recovery of forests is a good idea that is underplayed too often.

Agenda Item #8: EJAC Discussion on the Natural and Working Lands Recommendations

Matt Holmes led the discussion on this item. The group decided to do further work on the Natural and Working Lands Resolution, postponing action on the motion until the August 2025 EJAC meeting.

Agenda Item #9: Public Comment

With the action postponed, no public comment was held.

Agenda Item #10: EJAC Natural and Working Lands Recommendations Motion

No action was taken at this meeting.

Agenda Item #11: EJAC Discussion on the Building Decarbonization Recommendations

Martha Dina Argüello led the discussion on this item. The subcommittee agreed to do further work on the Building Decarbonization Resolution recommendations, postponing action on the motion until the August 2025 EJAC meeting.

Agenda Item #12: Public Comment

With the action postponed, no public comment was held.

Agenda Item #13: EJAC Building Decarbonization Recommendations Motion

No action was taken at this meeting.

Agenda Item #14: EJAC Discussion on the Cap-and-Trade Program Draft Amended Resolution

Dr. Catherine Garoupa presented the revised version of the Cap-and-Trade Program Draft Amended Resolution. The Committee made edits to the document, which will be presented for a vote at the August 2025 EJAC meeting. The edits included spelling out Best Available Control Technology (BACT) and Best Available Retrofit Control Technology (BARCT) and removing “largest” and “major” from the language referring to sources on subitem 3iv.

Dr. Catherine Garoupa will work with Martha Dina Argüello and Kevin Hamilton to draft the letter that will be sent to the legislature outlining the committee’s recommendations.

Agenda Item #15: Public Comment

No members of the public provided comments.

Agenda Item #16: CARB Announcements

CARB provided reminders of upcoming meetings and events as they relate to AB 32 program implementation.

Christabel Ukomadu presented upcoming meetings that will take place through mid-August 2025.

Agenda Item #17: Next Steps and Closing Remarks

Martha Dina Argüello clarified the items that must be completed before the next meeting are to finalize both the Building Decarbonization and Natural and Working Lands resolutions, ensuring that input is received from community partners, and for a work group to draft the letter that will be sent to the legislature. Dr. Catherine Garoupa will work with Martha Dina Argüello, Kevin Hamilton, and other non-EJAC members in a work group to draft the letter that will be sent to the legislature as quickly as possible. The request was made by Martha Dina and Dr. Catherine to have the CARB Legal Team provide direction on the Bagley Keene requirements for sending out the letter to the EJAC Members and other parties to review, sign and send out prior to the August 14, 2025, EJAC Public Meeting. They specifically wanted to know if it had to come from the EJAC Co-Chairs, or if it could come from the work group and additional parties outside of EJAC. CARB Legal agreed to follow up and provide their response. Matt Holmes, Kevin Hamilton, and Jill Sherman-Warne will work to incorporate committee direction on the Natural and Working Lands resolution.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:16 PM.