



NEWS RELEASE

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Illinois Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Announces Public Meeting: Civil Rights and Environmental Justice in Illinois

Chicago, IL – The Illinois Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will convene a public meeting to hear testimony regarding the extent to which environmental concerns such as poor air quality may demonstrate a disparate impact on the basis of race, color, or national origin in Illinois.

The meeting will take place on Wednesday March 9, 2016 at the National Museum of Mexican Art, 1852 W. 19th Street, Chicago IL, 60608. This meeting is open to the public. Persons with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodations should contact the Regional Programs Unit at 312-353-8311 at least 10 days prior to the meeting to request appropriate arrangements.

The Committee will hear testimony from community members and families impacted by poor air quality and other environmental hazards; environmental advocates and experts; government officials including those from city, state, and federal environmental protection and public health agencies; relevant businesses that have been or may be directly implicated and impacted, including energy-generators; and other stakeholders. Members of the public will be invited to speak during the open forum period beginning at 6:20pm. The Committee will issue its findings and recommendations in a report to the Commission after the conclusion of these events. Committee Chairman Juan Carlos Linares said, “As we more closely examine the connections among our environment, energy resources and potential impacts on residents' civil rights, the Illinois Advisory Committee looks forward to convening government, industry experts, and members of the public to make its recommendations on environmental justice to the USCCR.”

The Committee’s findings will serve to support the Commission’s 2016 federal statutory enforcement report on Environmental Justice as it relates to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Commission Chairman Martin Castro said, “As the product of an Illinois community that has suffered from environmental racism, I commend our Illinois Advisory Committee for addressing this issue. This will ensure that affected Illinois communities will be a prominent part of our national report to the President and Congress on environmental justice for communities of color.”

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with studying and advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing a federal civil rights enforcement report. For information about the reports and meetings of the Commission and its State Advisory Committees, visit <http://www.usccr.gov>.

Agenda

Opening Remarks and Introductions (10:30-10:40am)

Juan Carlos Linares, Chairman, Illinois Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
Marty Castro, Chairman, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

Academic or Data Focused Panel (10:45am -12:00pm)

Carlton Waterhouse, Professor of Law and Dean's Fellow, Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law (Via Conference Call)
Dr. Antonio Lopez, Executive Director, Little Village Environmental Justice Organizations
Susan Mudd or representative, Environmental Law & Policy Center
Brian Urbaszewski, Director, Environmental Health Programs, Respiratory Health Association
Keith Harley, Attorney at Law, Environmental Law Program, Chicago Legal Clinic

Community Panel (12:10pm-1:25pm)

Peggy Salazar, Southeast Environmental Task Force
Christine Nannicelli and Faith Bugel, Sierra Club
Kim Wasserman, Little Village Environmental Justice Organizations
Naomi Davis and Jean Paul Thomas, Blacks in Green

Lunch (1:25pm-2:25pm)

Community Panel (2:25-3:35pm)

Dulce Ortiz, Clean Power Lake County
Barbara Klipp, Co-Founder of Incinerator Free Lake County
Celeste Flores, Most Blessed Trinity Catholic Parish
Susana Figueroa, Faith in Place, Lake County Office

Industry Panel (3:45pm-4:30pm)

Barry Matchett, NRG (not confirmed)
Lisa Albrecht, renewable Energy Specialist, Solar Service, Inc.
Omar Duque, President and CEO, Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Government Panel (4:45pm-6:15pm)

Stephen Sylvester, Assistant Attorney General of Environmental Bureau, Office of Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan
Christopher Wheat, Chief Sustainability Officer, City of Chicago
Representatives, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Ken Page, Environmental Justice Officer, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
David Villalobos, Waukegan 4th Ward Alderman

Open Forum (6:20-6:50pm)

Closing Remarks (6:50pm-7:00pm)

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