



## CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & PROTECTION ADVISORY COUNCIL

### Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council

**Tuesday, May 13, 2025**  
**9:00am – 10:30am**

#### MINUTES

##### Members:

Subha Chandar (Chair)

Alexander Lehmann

Alicia Mezu

Frederick Banks

Laura Allen

Paul Ferraro

Camille Burke

Lisa Horne

Matthew McConaughy

Kylan Simpson (staff)

##### Guests:

Linda Gustafson

Sean Lynch

Kelly Love

Veronika Carella

#### Welcome

- The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Subha Chandar, Chair of CEHPAC.
- Chair Chandar welcomed members and guests, thanking them for attending the May meeting of the Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council.
- She noted that the meeting would cover updates on PFAS regulations, legislative session highlights, and planning for the remainder of 2025.

#### **Introduction of New Members**

- Chair Chandar welcomed Matthew McConaughy, the newly appointed representative from the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo).
  - Although he had previously attended a meeting as a guest, this was his first meeting as an official CEHPAC member.
  - Chair Chandar acknowledged the importance of having a county perspective, especially on issues like environmental monitoring, school compliance with IPM, and local public health impacts.
- Dr. Frederick Banks was formally recognized as the new Vice Chair of CEHPAC.
  - He was appointed to the Council as the representative from the Maryland Department of the Environment, filling a seat that had been vacant for several months.
  - Chair Chandar expressed appreciation to MDE for designating a representative and noted Vice Chair Banks's long-standing involvement with environmental justice issues.

- Vice Chair Banks thanked Chair Chandar and the Council for the warm welcome and expressed enthusiasm about supporting CEHPAC's mission.
  - He emphasized the need to strengthen collaboration across agencies and with the community, particularly in response to environmental health threats impacting children.
- Matthew McConaughey (MACo) shared that he looked forward to bringing in perspectives from local government and working to connect county-level action with CEHPAC's broader initiatives.

## **Old Business**

### **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

- Chair Chandar opened the meeting by referencing the previously circulated December 19, 2024, and January 16, 2025 meeting minutes.
- She explained that because a quorum was not met, the Council could not take formal action to approve the minutes.
- Members were encouraged to review the drafts and share any edits or corrections by email in preparation for a future meeting where formal approval could occur.

## **New Business**

### **PFAS Presentation – Linda Gustafson (MDE)**

#### **Overview of PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances):**

- Linda Gustafson (MDE) provided an in-depth presentation on the characteristics, health concerns, regulatory standards, and environmental presence of PFAS.
- PFAS molecules have both hydrophilic and hydrophobic ends, making them ideal surfactants and resistant to heat and water.
- She emphasized PFAS persistence, noting they have been found in remote regions such as the Arctic and Antarctic.

#### **Health Concerns:**

- PFAS exposure has been linked to infertility, developmental delays, and cancers.
- PFOS (a PFAS subtype) is particularly bioaccumulative and found in fish tissue.
- The persistence of PFAS at environmental interfaces was emphasized due to their strong molecular bonds.

#### **EPA Regulations:**

- In April 2024, the EPA finalized maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for six PFAS chemicals—levels set in parts per trillion.
- The low MCLs highlight toxicity and challenge water monitoring due to contamination from common sampling materials.

#### **Sources of Contamination:**

- Common PFAS sources include:
  - Airports and firefighting foam
  - Fire stations

- Industrial processes like metal plating
  - Biosolids used as fertilizer
  - Household sources like carpet cleaner disposed into septic systems
- Jess and Tate (MDE) are using GIS to track potential PFAS source locations and cross-reference contamination data.
- Data visualization supports tracking surface water and fish advisories and prioritizing private well testing.

#### **Questions:**

- Chair Chandar asked about PFAS treatment in public water systems.
  - Linda responded: granular activated carbon (GAC) filtration systems have been installed in high-risk areas like the Perryman Wellfield in Harford County.
- Laura Allen inquired about private well testing.
  - Linda explained well owners must arrange and pay for their own PFAS testing; treatment systems (GAC and osmotic resins) are effective but costly.
- Matthew McConaughy (MACo) added that susceptibility of private wells depends on their depth and aquifer type.
- Veronika Carella raised concerns about PFAS pesticide use despite EPA label warnings about groundwater risks.
  - Linda stated she would investigate the specific pesticide applications and enforcement measures.

### **2025 Legislative Session Updates**

- Chair Chandar opened the legislative session recap by explaining CEHPAC's role in monitoring and supporting bills that impact children's environmental health. She emphasized the importance of using legislative debriefs to evaluate strategy, identify missed opportunities, and begin planning for the 2026 session.
- Veronika provided a detailed presentation on key bills followed by CEHPAC and other environmental health advocates during the 2025 session.

#### **1. HB 386 / SB 345 – PFAS Restrictions in Biosolids and Pesticides**

- **Purpose:** Sought to limit the use of biosolids and pesticides containing PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) in Maryland.
- **Status:** Did not pass.
  - Veronika explained that the bill was heavily amended during session. The original language was significantly weakened due to industry lobbying, particularly by the agriculture and chemical sectors.
  - She noted that in its final form, the bill merely directed further study of PFAS presence and impacts—far from its original mandate to restrict usage.
  - Members expressed disappointment, emphasizing that this issue remains urgent due to PFAS persistence and toxicity.
  - Veronika encouraged CEHPAC to support a stronger version of this bill in the next session and engage earlier with bill sponsors and stakeholders.

#### **2. HB 1342 – Notification of Pesticide Applications Near State Property**

- **Purpose:** Would have required public notification prior to pesticide use near state-owned property (such as parks, schools, and facilities).
- **Status:** Failed to advance out of committee.
  - Veronika reported that the **Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA)** opposed the bill, asserting that current notification and signage requirements were sufficient.
  - Several council members questioned whether current practices truly provide meaningful notice to the public or vulnerable populations, especially children.
  - No formal vote was taken due to the absence of quorum, but members signaled continued interest in improved pesticide transparency legislation.

### 3. HB 114 –Revisions to Pesticide Applicator's Law and Repeal of Obsolete Provisions

- **Purpose:** Required certification and detailed recordkeeping for all users of restricted-use pesticides.
- **Status: Passed;** effective July 1, 2026.
  - Veronika celebrated this bill's passage as a major policy win for children's environmental health.
  - She explained that it closes a significant loophole in Maryland law that previously allowed uncertified individuals to apply RUPs under certain exemptions.
  - The new law mandates that all commercial pesticide applicators be certified and maintain comprehensive application records, enhancing accountability in sensitive areas such as school grounds.
  - Chair Chandar and others agreed this aligns well with CEHPAC's long-standing concerns about pesticide use around children.

### 4. HB 1080 - Healthy Babies Equity Act

- **Purpose:** Expands access to prenatal care and healthcare coverage for immigrant mothers and infants, regardless of immigration status.
- **Status: Passed and signed into law.**
  - Though not directly tied to environmental exposure, Chair Chandar noted the bill reflects CEHPAC's concern with structural determinants of health and its commitment to improving outcomes for all children in Maryland.
  - Members expressed support for policies that address maternal and child health inequities.
- Veronika emphasized the need for CEHPAC to:
  - Develop and circulate legislative priorities earlier in the year.
  - Identify and engage champions in the General Assembly well before bill drafting begins.
  - Prepare draft testimony templates and policy briefs before session.
- Chair Chandar supported this recommendation and suggested scheduling a legislative strategy discussion at the upcoming July or September meeting.
- Vice Chair Banks proposed that CEHPAC coordinate more directly with agency legislative liaisons, such as those in MDH, MDE, and MSDE, to ensure consistency and stronger positioning.
- Camille Burke echoed this and encouraged outreach to cross-council partners, including CEJSC and the Children's Justice Act Committee (CJAC), to amplify advocacy efforts.

### Agenda for 2025

- Chair Chandar led the discussion focused on identifying priority topics, planning future presentations, and structuring CEHPAC's work through the end of 2025. She emphasized the importance of maintaining momentum following the recent legislative session and ensuring that CEHPAC's activities continue to align with its statutory charge.

- **Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in Schools**
  - Chair Chandar confirmed that IPM implementation and accountability in Maryland schools would remain a standing topic on CEHPAC’s agenda.
  - She encouraged members to continue sharing updates, concerns, and ideas related to pesticide data access, transparency, and school compliance with IPM regulations.
- **PFAS Contamination**
  - Following the day’s presentation by MDE on PFAS monitoring and regulation, Chair Chandar noted that PFAS exposure and mitigation strategies—particularly those impacting children—would continue to be a recurring theme throughout 2025.
  - Several members agreed that CEHPAC should help inform public education campaigns and policy efforts regarding PFAS in drinking water, food, and consumer products.

## **Proposed Topics for Future Meetings**

1. **Air Monitoring and Environmental Justice Mapping**
  - Camille (CEJSC) recommended an update on Maryland’s new air monitoring initiatives under the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG).
  - Chair Chandar suggested this could be combined with a broader environmental justice (EJ) mapping update from the University of Maryland, focusing on how new screening tools and data can support CEHPAC’s mission.
  - The group agreed this would be a strong topic for the joint CEHPAC–CEJSC meeting in September 2025.
2. **Children’s Environmental Health Report – Reissue or Update**
  - Chair Chandar introduced the idea of revisiting the **2013 Children’s Environmental Health and Protection Report**, noting that it remains one of CEHPAC’s most cited outputs.
  - She suggested exploring a streamlined update or addendum to this report with a focus on:
    - Emerging contaminants (e.g., PFAS, microplastics)
    - Data gaps (e.g., pesticide exposure, asthma rates)
    - Policy outcomes since 2013
  - Members were encouraged to review the 2013 report ahead of a discussion at a future meeting.
3. **Review of CEHPAC’s Statutory Charge**
  - Chair Chandar recommended the Council formally revisit its statutory charge, last reviewed in detail several years ago.
  - The goal would be to ensure CEHPAC’s current work remains aligned with its legal responsibilities and to identify any outdated language or mandates.
  - She offered to circulate a link to the statutory language before the next meeting for review.

## **Meeting Schedule and Transparency Improvements**

- Kylan shared that a full CEHPAC 2025 meeting calendar had been prepared and would be posted on the CEHPAC website by noon that day.
  - This was in response to prior feedback about meeting date uncertainty and difficulty with long-term planning.
  - Members expressed appreciation for the improved transparency and structure.
- Chair Chandar acknowledged that meeting participation during legislative session months (such as January–March) can be difficult. She proposed considering shorter, topic-focused meetings or scheduling flexibility during those months to ensure member engagement.

## **Public Comment**

- Chair Chandar opened the public comment portion of the meeting by thanking attendees and inviting members of the public to share their thoughts, concerns, or updates relevant to CEHPAC's mission of protecting children's environmental health in Maryland.
- She reminded participants of the Council's commitment to transparency and community input, noting that public comments are a valued component of CEHPAC's decision-making process.
- Veronika delivered structured public comments focused on three primary concerns that she urged CEHPAC to elevate as action items:
- Veronika began by following up on public input she had submitted during the January 16, 2025 CEHPAC meeting, stating that the Council had yet to respond or take clear action on three specific concerns she raised at that time.
- She requested that CEHPAC provide an official update on the status of those items, which include:
  - Data Gap in Drinking Water Oversight – Alleged refusal by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to cooperate with CEHPAC in addressing statutory obligations related to the human right to safe drinking water.
  - State-Sponsored Environmental Racism – Concern over the pattern of lax environmental enforcement and decision-making disproportionately affecting low-income and minority communities, including state school construction siting.
  - PFAS Contamination in Schools – Continued application of PFAS-containing pesticides and biosolids near or on school property despite known health risks.
- Veronika expressed frustration with legislative inaction during the 2025 session, stating that bills aimed at curbing PFAS use in biosolids and pesticides were weakened or blocked entirely.
- She called for CEHPAC to:
  - Reaffirm its support for removal of PFAS from Maryland's pesticide and fertilizer systems.
  - Take a formal stance against the repeated application of PFAS-contaminated biosolids on farmland and school grounds.
  - Submit a recommendation to the Maryland Secretary of Health urging cross-agency coordination to eliminate PFAS from the child exposure pathway.
- Veronika cited a statutory obligation for Maryland agencies to ensure access to safe drinking water, referencing prior discussions and reports submitted to CEHPAC and the Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities (CEJSC).
- She stated that existing agency practices have not adequately ensured access to clean water in marginalized communities.
- She urged CEHPAC to:
  - Formally respond to MDA's refusal to assist CEHPAC in acquiring pesticide and PFAS-related application data.
  - Push for a joint resolution or position paper with CEJSC that emphasizes Maryland's duty to uphold environmental health protections for all children, regardless of ZIP code.
- Chair Chandar thanked Veronika for her detailed comments and acknowledged receipt of the written documentation she submitted in support of her remarks.
- Camille suggested that the Council revisit the prior public input during the next meeting and explore options for official response or follow-up.

## Adjourn

- Motion to adjourn was made by Vice Chair Banks and seconded by Laura Allen.