

EPA's Small Communities Advisory Subcommittee (SCAS) Meeting Summary

2:00pm **Call to Order**

Opening Remarks and Member Roll Call

On behalf of the SCAS Chair, Lynzi Barnes, SCAS DFO, opened the meeting welcoming members and provided roll call. Lynzi then welcomed EPA Deputy Associate Administrator John Lucey to provide welcoming remarks from EPA.

2:05pm **Welcoming Remarks from EPA**

John Lucy, EPA Deputy Associate Administrator

Deputy Associate Administrator John Lucey thanked Lynzi for the warm welcome. John welcomed members of the SCAS to the virtual meeting and expressed excitement to listen to recommendations brought forth by the subcommittee. John mentioned that EPA values the advice received from our local officials across the country, and in particular from smaller communities that are represented at the meeting today.

Approximately a year ago, the Biden-Harris Administration passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to address climate change, clean up longstanding pollution, and support national infrastructure. Following the passage of the BIL, EPA made a special request for the SCAS to provide advice and recommendations on how the Agency can work to:

- Support clean and sustainable air, water, and land priorities for small and rural communities
- Support capacity needs/advancement for small and rural communities
- Ensure long-lasting communication between EPA and local officials from small and rural communities, and
- Ensure small communities are positioned to benefit from this generational investment in environmental infrastructure.

Based on this request, John mentioned that EPA looks forward to receiving a response to the SCAS charge that will be discussed and anticipates a continued collaboration with local officials that represent smaller communities.

2:10 pm **Discussion of Recommendations**

Lynzi Barnes facilitated the discussion on draft recommendations from the SCAS. The first set of recommendations focused on lack of capacity to find funding opportunities for smaller communities.

Tom Carroll spoke directly to his challenges as Town Manager in Cambridge, MD and the limitations to search for federal funding while addressing daily tasks with limited staffing. Limited workforce limits the capacity to search and apply for funding, he mentioned.

Dave Glatt mentioned mayor's of small towns are often times mayor's for life and are required to do everything they are asked. He also mentioned that it's tough to be forward-looking as a small-town mayor when they are trying to maintain what's currently happening in their towns. Finding some way to give small towns assistance to find funding and helping to manage through the process will be helpful.

Mayor Vincent DeSantis agreed with Tom and mentioned that daily operations as a small-town mayor are often shifted to address the concerns of his town. Oftentimes consultants are the best solution for hire to apply for grants. Relying on consultants to navigate federal funding opportunities can put communities in a better position to successfully be awarded grants, however there are upfront costs, and approvals, that are not always easy.

Mayor Pro Tem Hattie Portis Jones mentioned that state leagues are empowered to have resources that smaller communities need that can provide guidance on grant applications and research that's needed to receive funds

The SCAS recommended that EPA's regional offices work with state, county and town officials –including municipal leagues—to inform community leaders about available funding and ways to navigate the federal funding process.

A few barriers were mentioned underscoring limited timing to review grant opportunities, gambling limited funding to pay a consultant to submit a competitive application, and the timing to apply for federal funding.

The second section of SCAS recommendations are categorized under the lack of capacity to manage grants for small communities. Lynzi asked SCAS members to speak to any challenges for those that have limited staff with expertise and capacity to manage the implementation of grants.

Councilman Daniel Guzman mentioned the need for assistance in strategic planning for small communities. The development of a strategic plan that identifies funding places and opportunities while also providing direction for communities will help link funding for projects that are relevant to a community at their time of need.

Hattie Portis Jones mentioned a fear of federal grants from smaller municipalities and the unfamiliarity of the federal grant process. She believes that if there's a local organization to help navigate the process, smaller communities would have more of an advantage. EPA should empower state leagues to coordinate the education and the facilitation of grant management for smaller communities.

Lynzi transitioned the discussion towards project planning and the shifting of costs.

Mayor Pro Tem Hattie Portis Jones mentioned her support of the recommendation that allows communities for receive federal funding first and then allow communities to spread out expenses overtime.

2:40pm **Public Comments**

There were no public comments for the SCAS.

2:45pm **Break**

2:50pm **Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and Future Engagement**

Lynzi Barnes briefed SCAS members on the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), mentioned key programs within EPA that will account for the total of IRA funding (including the new Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund), and EPA's multiple stakeholder engagement activities.

Lynzi outlined a new charge for the LGAC that focuses on the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund and the \$7billion for competitive grants to States, municipalities, and Tribal governments to enable low-income and disadvantages communities to deploy or benefit from zero-emission technologies.

Lastly, Lynzi provided key dates for upcoming engagement for the LGAC and SCAS, including public meetings for Nov. 18th, and December 16th.

3:00pm Q&A

No questions were raised by SCAS members.

3:10pm Wrap Up & Next Steps

Lynzi Barnes thanked members for the discussion and closed the meeting.

3:15pm Meeting Adjourn

Meeting Attendees:

Mayor Julian McTizic, Bolivar, TN

Tom Carroll, City Manager, Cambridge, MD

Mayor Vincent DeSantis, Gloversville, NY

Brian Fulton, Jacksonville, MS

Dave Glatt, Bismark, ND

Daniel Guzman, Oneida Nation, WI

Hattie Portis-Jones, Fulton, GA

Ann Mallek, Albemarle, VA

Tina Sablan, Mariana Islands

Mayor Ella Jones, Ferguson, MO

EPA Attendees:

John Lucey, EPA Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations

Paige Lieberman, EPA Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations

Jamie Piziali, EPA Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations

Arnita Hannon, EPA Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations

Jack Bowles, EPA Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations

Lynzi Barnes, EPA Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations