

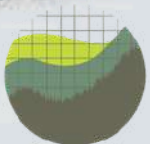
AT THE INTERSECTION OF
DISABILITY JUSTICE
& ENVIRONMENTAL
CLIMATE JUSTICE

NEXT STEPS IN CONSIDERING IMPACTS ON PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES IN ENVIRONMENTAL AND
CLIMATE DECISIONMAKING



EVENT PROGRAM

Agenda • Biographies




Institute for
Policy Integrity

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

NATIONAL
DISABILITY RIGHTS
NETWORK
Protection & Advocacy for Individuals with Disabilities



Environmental
Justice Initiative

 NYU | LAW

CENTER
FOR RACIAL &
DISABILITY
JUSTICE
UCLA

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EVENT PROGRAM:

9:00 - 10:00 am | Welcome and Fireside Chat

Welcome & Introduction

- **Anakaren Santana & Carmen Roberta Taboada**
NYU Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service

Fireside Chat: Setting the Stage - Moving from Recognition to Action: How We Integrate Consideration of People with Disabilities into Environmental and Climate Justice Analysis and Decision-Making

- **Richard Moore**, Executive Director, Los Jardines
- **Steven Schwartz**, Special Counsel and former Executive Director and Legal Director, Center for Public Representation
- Moderated by **Marianne Engelman-Lado** and **Al Huang**, NYU School of Law

10:00 - 11:00 am | Session

Fault Lines: Disability as a Stress Test for Environmental Justice

- **Kate Caldwell**, Director of Policy & Research
- **Jordyn Jensen**, Community Engagement & Communications Manager
- **Dimitri Nesbitt**, Civic Planning & Design Manager
Center for Racial & Disability Justice, UCLA School of Law

11:00 - 11:15 am | Break

11:15 am - 12:15 pm | Session

What Data is Available for Use in Decision-Making?

- **Tai Lung**, formerly EJ Tools Team and EJ Screen Lead, Environmental Protection Agency
- **Jayajit Chakraborty**, Professor and Mellichamp Chair in Racial Environmental Justice, Bren School of Environmental Science & Management, UC Santa Barbara
- **Bonnielin Swenor**, Professor and Director of the Johns Hopkins University Disability Health Research Center
- Moderated by **Marianne Engelman-Lado**, NYU School of Law

12:30 - 1:30 pm | Lunch

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EVENT PROGRAM:

1:30 - 2:30 pm | Session

Considering the Impacts on People with Disabilities in Rulemaking

- **Andy Stawasz**, Faculty Fellow, University of Michigan Law School
- **Cary LaCheen**, Former Senior Civil Rights Counsel, Civil Rights Division of the Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- **Rick Keigwin**, Former Deputy Assistant Administrator for Management, Officer of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Moderated by **Al Huang**, Environmental Justice Director, Institute for Policy Integrity, NYU School of Law

2:30 - 2:45 pm | Break

2:45 - 3:45 pm | Session

Considering the Impacts on People with Disabilities in Emergency Planning & Response

- **L. Vance Taylor**, Chief, Office of Access and Functional Needs, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
- **Curtis Hill**, Supervising Advocate, Disability Rights North Carolina
- Moderated by **Marlene Sallo**, Executive Director, National Disability Rights Network

3:45 pm - 4:45 pm | Session

Where Do We Go From Here? Promising Practices

Eugene Massey, Project Manager, Climate & Air, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Daphne Frias, Climate and Disability Justice Organizer and Activist

Moderated by **Anakaren Santana**, Social Sector Leadership Diversity Fellow, NYU Changemaker Center, and Graduate Student, Master of Public Administration, NYU Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service

4:45 - 5:00 pm | Closing Remarks: Lessons Learned & Next Steps

Dinner to Follow for In-Person Participants

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ABOUT THE PANELISTS:



Richard Moore

Richard Moore currently serves as the Co-Chair of the inaugural White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council (WHEJAC). Richard has also served on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC), where in 1993 he was the first elected Chair. Richard is the Co-Coordinator for Los Jardines Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and national Co-Coordinator of the Environmental Justice & Health Alliance for Chemical Policy Reform, advocating for stronger, safer, and just chemical policies. He is also Co-Founder and Board Member of Just Transition Alliance and a Board Member of Coming Clean, Inc.



Steven J. Schwartz

Steven Schwartz is the Special Counsel, and former Executive Director and Legal Director of the Center for Public Representation in Easthampton, Massachusetts. He has practiced disability and civil rights law since 1972. Mr. Schwartz has extensive experience litigating class action cases related to the reform and development of community services systems for persons with disabilities, as well as civil rights damage cases for institutionalized persons. He currently is litigating seven community integration class action cases in Alabama, Kansas, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Texas, and Massachusetts, as well as supporting disability organizations who are overseeing implementation of similar cases in eight other states. In response to the recent federal attack on disability rights and services, he has organized a rapid response team of experienced litigators to protect critical laws, rules and programs that allow people with disabilities to remain in their home communities. Mr. Schwartz has authored a number of law review articles related to issues affecting the rights of persons with disabilities and has testified before Congress on several occasions. He has been on the faculty of the Harvard and Western New England Law Schools. Mr. Schwartz also provides litigation support and technical assistance to attorneys throughout the United States on disability issues.

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Al Huang

Al Huang is the Environmental Justice Director at IPI and a lawyer. His work utilizes a model that focuses on providing legal and technical assistance, when invited, to grassroots groups in low-income communities and communities of color facing disproportionate burdens, such as toxic pollution. The foundation of his work is deeply rooted in the Principles of Environmental Justice and Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing, where social change comes from the ground up.

Prior to coming to IPI, Al directed the environmental justice work and served as a Senior Attorney at Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) for 17 years. During his time at NRDC, he guided the growth and development of environmental justice and equity work institutionally, while also litigating cases on behalf of environmental justice communities around the country. He also provided legal, policy and technical assistance to countless community-based grassroots organizations.

Al has also worked as a staff attorney at the Environmental Health Coalition, a grassroots environmental justice organization in San Diego; legal fellow at the ACLU of Northern California; Senior Legal and Policy Analyst for Coming Clean; and legal fellow at the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment. He has taught environmental justice law and practice as an adjunct professor at Fordham Law School and NYU Law School. He currently serves on the Environmental Justice committee of the American Bar Association and is also an appointed member of the New York City Environmental Justice Advisory Board. He received his J.D. and Masters degree in Environmental Law & Policy from Vermont Law School, and his B.A. from Hamilton College.



Eugene Massey

Eugene Massey (they/them) works on the NYC Health Department Climate Health team as a Climate and Air Project Manager. They oversee a Climate Resilience Advisory Network of eleven community-based organizations as part of their focus on integrating community input into their team's research, policy, and data analysis and has included expanding outreach to include LGBTQIA+ communities and disability communities. They lead the Climate Team's efforts to develop accessible, dynamic, and socially attuned communications materials that address topics such as preparedness for extreme heat, flooding, and poor air quality days. They are especially passionate about identifying opportunities to adapt and improve their work to better serve all New Yorkers.

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Bonnielin K. Swenor

Dr. Bonnielin Swenor is the endowed professor of Disability Health and Justice and the founding director of the Johns Hopkins Disability Health Research Center, which strives to shift the paradigm from living with a disability to thriving with a disability. Drawing on her experience with low vision, Dr. Swenor’s research focuses on advancing disability health equity, improving disability data, and making research more disability-inclusive. Her work bridges policy and science, and she has provided advice and expertise to numerous organizations and agencies, including the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Census Bureau, the World Health Organization, and the National Governors Association. Dr. Swenor was named a Health Equity Champion by the CDC in 2024, was a member of the U.S. Census Bureau Statistical Advisory Committee, and is an elected member of the National Academy of Social Insurance. Currently, she serves on the Lancet Commission on Disability and Health and is an advisor to the World Health Organization Disability Health Equity Initiative. She has published more than 200 peer-reviewed research articles, including in leading journals such as The New England Journal of Medicine, JAMA, and The Lancet, and her work has been featured in major media outlets such as The New York Times, The Washington Post, and TIME magazine.



Cary LaCheen

Cary LaCheen was Senior Civil Rights Counsel at the Civil Rights Division of the Office of General Counsel at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services until she retired in 2025. At HHS, she played a significant role in advising the Department on regulations implementing the nondiscrimination provision of the Affordable Care Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Prior to working at HHS, she was a Senior Staff Attorney at the Welfare Law Center, later renamed the National Center for Law and Economic Justice, where she created a national protect at the intersection of disability rights and poverty. Previously, she was a Lawyering Instructor at NYU School of Law, and a Senior Staff at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, Inc., where she practiced disability rights law. Prior to that, she worked at The Legal Aid Society of New York, where she represented tenants in housing court and in public benefits matters. She clerked for William B. Bryant in the Federal District Court for the District of Columbia. She attended Brown University, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude and NYU School of Law, where she was a Root Tilden Scholar and graduated Order of the Coif.

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Jayajit Chakraborty

Dr. Jayajit Chakraborty is a Professor and Mellichamp Endowed Chair in Racial Environmental Justice at the Bren School of Environmental Science and Management at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His research activities encompass a wide range of concerns related to the human dimensions of climate and environmental change, with an emphasis on environmental justice and social vulnerability to hazards and disasters. Dr. Chakraborty's recent publications have focused on the disproportionate impacts of climate-related disasters, environmental pollution, and public health risks for people with disabilities. His research utilizes a variety of methodologies, including applications of GIScience and spatial statistical techniques, as well as social surveys and mixed methods approaches. Dr. Chakraborty recently served as a member of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Science Advisory Board and the inaugural EPA Environmental Justice Science Committee. He also chaired the Scientific Review Panel for the EPA's EJScreen Mapping and Screening Tool and served on a National Academies of Sciences Committee that provided recommendations regarding data and tools for meeting the goals of the White House Justice40 Initiative.



Marianne Engelman-Lado

Marianne Engelman-Lado's career has been devoted to civil rights and environmental justice. She recently joined New York University School of Law to serve as Director of a new Environmental & Climate Justice Initiative. During the Biden Administration she served as Deputy General Counsel for Environmental Initiatives in the Office of General Counsel and as Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator in the newly launched Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights at EPA, where she focused on equity, environmental justice, and civil rights enforcement. She previously directed Environmental Justice Clinics at Yale and Vermont Law Schools, which trained students in community lawyering and civil rights enforcement in the environmental justice context, and served as Lecturer at both the Yale University School of Public Health and the Yale School of the Environment. She has served as senior staff attorney at Earthjustice, general counsel at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI), and staff attorney at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF). Before joining EPA, she served as co-chair of the Equity and Environmental Justice Working Group of Connecticut's Governor's Council on Climate Change, and as a board member of WE ACT for Environmental Justice and the Center for Public Representation. Marianne holds a B.A. in government from Cornell University, a J.D. from the University of California at Berkeley, and an M.A. in Politics from Princeton University. Recent publications include "Pipeline Struggles: Case Studies in Ground Up Lawyering," with Kenneth Rumelt, and "No More Excuses: Building a New Vision of Civil Rights Enforcement in the Context of Environmental Justice."

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Rick Keigwin

Rick Keigwin spent his entire 35-year professional career at the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), serving in several senior leadership roles. For the last five years of his time at the EPA, Rick served as the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Management in the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, the senior-most career position in the Office that implements the nation's chemical and pesticide safety laws. He previously served as the Director of the Office of Pesticide Programs, overseeing the Agency's pesticide registration and re-evaluation efforts. Rick holds a bachelor's degree in government from Colby College and a master's degree in public management from the University of Maryland



Tai Lung

Tai Lung is an environmental policy, mapping, and environmental justice leader with more than 20 years of experience advancing cross sector solutions to complex environmental challenges. He holds a bachelor's degree in Environmental Geography from West Virginia University and a master's in Public Policy from University of Maryland. After serving in the Peace Corps as an Environmental Education volunteer, he joined the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, where he worked in the Office of Environmental Justice until its closure in 2025. There, he led EJScreen, EPA's flagship environmental justice mapping tool, using geospatial technology and public data to help communities, policymakers, and advocates better understand and address environmental and health disparities. His work centered on translating complex environmental information into practical tools, strengthening partnerships across government and civil society, and embedding equity into environmental decision making.

Since leaving EPA, Tai has continued working at the intersection of data, governance, and frontline environmental justice. As a Rapid Response Fellow with PolicyLink embedded at Bayou City Waterkeeper, he provides strategic data and governance support to a rapidly growing environmental justice organization navigating heightened federal policy risk. He is also a co-founder of the Environmental and Health Data Analysis Trust, where he advances the expansion, protection, and refinement of environmental and public health datasets and tools for advocacy, research, and community groups nationwide. Across these roles, Tai focuses on building durable, community centered data infrastructure and strengthening institutional capacity to advance equity, transparency, and accountability in environmental policy and practice.

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Anakaren Santana

Anakaren Santana is the Social Sector Leadership Diversity Fellow at the NYU Changemaker Center and a current graduate student in the Master of Public Administration program at the NYU Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. She focuses on environmental and climate justice, including consent education, community resilience, and the intersection of climate and public health and its disproportionate effects on Black and Hispanic communities. Anakaren was awarded a Social Change Fellowship in 2024 by the Leadership for Democracy and Social Leadership Institute and has followed for the New York City Climate Justice Hub, co-presenting a research project on “Tracking Climate Justice Across CUNY Campuses.” She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from York College, City University of New York.



L. Vance Taylor

Luis “Vance” Taylor is the Chief of the Office of Access and Functional Needs at the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services. Vance leads the team responsible for ensuring the needs of individuals with disabilities and persons with access or functional considerations are identified and integrated into the State’s emergency management systems before, during, and after disasters.

Vance was appointed by President Biden to serve as a member of the President's National Infrastructure Advisory Council (NIAC) in 2022. As a member of the NIAC, Vance advised the White House on how to reduce physical and cyber risks and how to improve the security and resilience of the nation's critical infrastructure sectors.

Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, Vance was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy as a child and uses a power wheelchair. He has worked in Washington, D.C. as an advisor for two different members of Congress, directed security policy at a national water association, and been a principal at a ranked homeland security and emergency management consulting firm. Vance is a nationally recognized public speaker and advocate for individuals with disabilities.

Vance has a Master’s degree in homeland security from the University of Connecticut and an undergraduate degree from Brigham Young University in communications. He is married to his sweetheart, Casey, and they have two wonderful daughters. Vance and his family live in Rancho Cordova, CA

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Daphne Frias

Daphne Frias, a 28 year-old activist, is an unapologetic Latina and proud advocate for her community's diversity. Living with Cerebral Palsy and using a wheelchair, Daphne is a fierce champion for disability rights. Her activism began at age 19, with March For Our Lives, where she was eventually appointed as New York State Director. She played a pivotal role in passing over 15 state laws aimed at curbing gun violence and safeguarding lives. As the Founder and Executive Director of Box the Ballot (BTB), Daphne mobilized youth nationwide to collect over 20,000 absentee ballots during the 2020 midterms, amplifying civic engagement. For this groundbreaking work, she was honored with Univision's "Agente De Cambio" award at the 2021 Premios Juventud.

Daphne is equally committed to addressing the climate crisis through an intersectional lens. As spokesperson for the 2019 Global Climate Strikes, she highlighted the critical links between disability and climate justice. Her insights as a panelist at the New York Times Climate Hub, moderated by Emma Watson, further established her as a voice for change. Most recently, Daphne led accessibility efforts for the March to End Fossil Fuels, which drew over 75,000 participants.

A member of the Natural History Museum's Generation Hope Advisory Board, Daphne works to amplify youth activism in museum spaces. In 2025, she was named to Forbes' 30 Under 30 North America list in the Social Impact category as well as a TIME Magazine Latino Leader.



Kate Caldwell

Dr. Kate Caldwell is the Director of Research & Policy at the Center for Racial & Disability Justice at UCLA School of Law, a role she tackles with gusto as a disabled researcher committed to ensuring policy decisions are informed by marginalized and disenfranchised voices. As a Disability Studies Professor, Kate specialized in interdisciplinary mixed-methods research. She is known for her work on participatory intellectual disability research methods, knowledge translation, and inclusive curriculum and program design. As a leading expert on disability-entrepreneurship, Kate works with policymakers at the Federal, State, and Local levels. She received a B.A. in Psychology from Colby College, a M.A. in Interdisciplinary Social Sciences from the University of Chicago, and a Ph.D. in Disability Studies from UIC.

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Marlene Sallo

Marlene Sallo is the first woman, first Latina, and first person with a disability to lead NDRN. She believes that amplifying where disability intersects with other identities such as LGBTQIA+, non-native English speakers, and Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color is critical component of successful advocacy.

Before joining NDRN, Sallo served as Director of Preventing Targeted Violence at the McCain Institute for International Leadership. She previously served for almost four years as executive director of the Massachusetts Disability Law Center (DLC), the federally designated Protection and Advocacy agency for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Earlier in her career, Sallo was an education attorney with Disability Rights Florida, providing protection and advocacy to students with disabilities and children in the state's child welfare system.

Sallo was appointed by President Barack Obama to serve as the staff director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in 2013. She later worked for the Obama Administration at the U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service as chief of staff and senior counsel. Sallo has a B.A. from Manhattanville College and a J.D. from Florida State University.



Curtis Hill

Curtis Hill is a dedicated advocate, community leader, and nonprofit executive committed to advancing equity, accessibility, and community resilience across North Carolina. He serves as the Supervising Advocate for Outreach and Disaster Response at Disability Rights North Carolina (DRNC), the state's federally mandated Protection and Advocacy organization, where since 2019 he has supported individuals with disabilities during disasters and public health emergencies through collaborations with government agencies, VOAD partners, and community-based organizations.

Curtis is also the Executive Director of Columbus County Forum, Inc., a nonprofit dedicated to civic engagement, disaster preparedness, and community empowerment. He serves as a Commissioner for the Town of Brunswick, Chair of the Columbus County Disaster Coalition, and in leadership with the North Carolina Reading Service and the Whiteville Civitan Club.

A native of Columbus County and graduate of Whiteville High School, Curtis earned his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from North Carolina State University. His work is grounded in a deep passion for justice, service, and faith, and he continues to advocate for those whose voices are often unheard.

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Andrew Stawasz

Andrew Stawasz is a Faculty Fellow at the University of Michigan Law School. His teaching and research explore what values are reflected in the economic analyses that guide legal decision making, especially agency benefit-cost analyses. He draws on his experiences as an Adviser at the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs during the Biden-Harris administration, as a Legal Fellow at the Institute for Policy Integrity at New York University School of Law, and as a Research Associate at Data for Decisions LLC. Before moving to Michigan, he clerked on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit.



Jordyn Jensen

Jordyn Jensen is the Community Engagement & Communications Manager at the Center for Racial & Disability Justice at UCLA School of Law. She is a disabled leader with expertise spanning urban planning, critical disability studies, special education, and community development. Driven by lived experience, her work focuses on non-punitive crisis response models, the criminalization of disability, and systemic inequities at the intersection of disability, race, and gender. Jordyn holds a B.S. in Applied Learning and Development, an M.Ed. in Special Education, and a master's portfolio in Critical Disability Studies from The University of Texas at Austin. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Urban Planning & Policy at the University of Illinois Chicago.



Dimitri Nesbitt

Dimitri Nesbitt is an urban design, planning, and editorial design practitioner whose work focuses on spatial justice, climate resilience and adaptation, and the role of design justice in shaping more equitable environments. He serves as the Civic Planning & Design Manager for the Center for Racial & Disability Justice at UCLA School of Law. There, he contributes to research, publications, and program development, exploring how planning, design, culture, and knowledge production can support more inclusive and accessible spaces and systems. He also serves as a City Design Fellow at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), where he supports applied urban design education and research. He holds a B.A. in International Studies from the University of Wyoming and both a Master of Urban Planning & Policy and Master of City Design from UIC.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

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Christine Billy

Shehla Chowdhury

Center on Race, Inequality and the Law

Kyla James

NYU Law

Drea Somers

Anna McSorley

Fernanda Oliveira

David Peer

New York University Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service

Anakaren Santana

Carmen Roberta Taboada

Patrick Farrell

John Gershman

National Disability Rights Network

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Center for Racial & Disability Justice, UCLA School of Law

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Dimitri Nesbitt