§ 75-0111. Climate justice working group.

1. There is hereby created within the department, no later than six months after the effective date of this article, a "climate justice working group". Such working group will be comprised of representatives from: environmental justice communities, the department, the department of health, the New York state energy and research development authority, and the department of labor.

a. Environmental justice community representatives shall be members of communities of color, low-income communities, and communities bearing disproportionate pollution and climate change burdens, or shall be representatives of community-based organizations with experience and a history of advocacy on environmental justice issues, and shall include at least three representatives from New York city communities, three representatives from rural communities, and three representatives from upstate urban communities.

b. The working group, in consultation with the department, the departments of health and labor, the New York state energy and research development authority, and the environmental justice advisory group, will establish criteria to identify disadvantaged communities for the purposes of co-pollutant reductions, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, regulatory impact statements, and the allocation of investments related to this article.

c. Disadvantaged communities shall be identified based on geographic, public health, environmental hazard, and socioeconomic criteria, which shall include but are not limited to:

i. areas burdened by cumulative environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative public health effects;

ii. areas with concentrations of people that are of low income, high unemployment, high rent burden, low levels of home ownership, low levels of educational attainment, or members of groups that have historically experienced discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity; and

iii. areas vulnerable to the impacts of climate change such as flooding, storm surges, and urban heat island effects.

2. Before finalizing the criteria for identifying disadvantaged communities and identifying disadvantaged communities pursuant to subdivision one of this section, the department shall publish draft criteria and a draft list of disadvantaged communities and make such information available on its website.

a. The council shall hold at least six regional public hearings on the draft criteria and the draft list of disadvantaged communities, including three meetings in the upstate region and three meetings in the downstate region, and shall allow at least one hundred twenty days for the submission of public comment.

b. The council shall also ensure that there are meaningful opportunities for public comment for all segments of the population that will be impacted by the criteria, including persons living in areas that may be identified as disadvantaged communities under the proposed criteria.

3. The group will meet no less than annually to review the criteria and methods used to identify disadvantaged communities and may modify such methods to incorporate new data and scientific findings. The climate justice working group shall review identities of disadvantaged communities and modify such identities as needed.