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amazing.

She also served as Staff Attorney at NY PIRG and she has a long and impressive history of using legal policy and legislative experience to promote environmental justice. Lisa, thanks for joining us.

**Remarks by Lisa Garcia,
EPA Associate Assistant Administrator for Environmental Justice**

MS. GARCIA: Thank you. Thank you, Elizabeth and the members of NEJAC, hello once again. It is nice to be here. Of course, thanks to Region VII for helping us host this in Kansas City. I think, as Cynthia said, we look forward to hearing your comments on Plan EJ 2014 and continuing to work together. So, I am happy to be here and continue that work but I have the honor today of introducing Bob Perciasepe, who is the Deputy Administrator at EPA.

He brings to the agency a wealth of experience in environmental stewardship, advocacy and management. His previous position was Chief Operating Officer at the National Audubon Society where he coordinated national and state programs for one of the country's leading environmental organizations. Before that, during the Clinton Administration, he served at EPA as the Assistant Administrator for Water.

He was also the Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation. So, he has a lot of experience. Prior to that, he held the post of Secretary of Environment for the State of Maryland and Assistant Director of Planning for the City of Baltimore. So, he brings, like I said, a wealth of knowledge and a lot of understanding with that. So, that is who he is on paper but many of you may not have heard the name Bob Perciasepe before working on environmental justice issues but make no mistake, he is a true ally on these issues.

He really understands what needs to be done for EPA to truly incorporate environmental justice principals into the everyday workings of EPA and he has truly been an advocate on the senior leadership team making sure that we really work on some of these challenging aspects and move the administrators priority forward on incorporating environmental justice and expanding the conversation on environmentalism.

So, I will turn it over to him so he can speak but definitely welcome him as one of our EJ advocates. Bob?

**Remarks by Bob Perciasepe,
Deputy Administrator, EPA**

MR. PERCIASEPE: Well, thank you. Thank you, Lisa. Elizabeth and Victoria, I thank both of you, as well. It is truly an honor to be here talking to all of you today. The -- I know that Lisa, I call her the lead Lisa, was here in June. We have a lot of Lisa's. The lead Lisa, Lisa Jackson, was here in June talking to all of you.

At that time, it became sort of a -- and many of you have been very involved with this, as well -- at least several of you from Louisiana, the update that she gave on the BP oil spill and what EPA was doing. You know, that was a hard time for many, many, many people. The EPA, you know, our supporting role to the Coast Guard that was the lead of the response, we took on a really significant role under Lisa's leadership of gathering information, doing monitoring throughout both in -- out in the water and also in communities with our mobile buses and called TAGA's, Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzers.

Also making a very concerted effort. I know Lisa Garcia had several trips to the region during the time of the spill. We made a special effort to make sure that we were able to communicate directly with lower income and minority communities that are not normally part of the discussion when something like that is going on and who end up being disproportionately impacted either economically, as the economy is effected, or even directly by pollution.

So, I think that was an important role that EPA played under Lisa Jackson's leadership. Now today, we are trying to turn our attention as a country and as a Region away from the ongoing onslaught of the oil to a recovery and restoration effort which is, in many ways, as complicated, if not more complicated, than fighting a very known enemy at the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico.

As hard as that was, trying to dig through what has happened, how do we move forward as a Region and as important as that Region is to the economy of the country and the peoples in that Region and their culture is very important. So, the President has issued an Executive Order and has appointed Lisa Jackson as the Chair of the Gulf Task Force, as it is called. The Gulf Task Force had its

first organizational meeting last week. At that meeting, they had the -- I really -- their first meeting with community groups.

So, we are going to make sure that the hallmark of that task force, as it looks at what the future should hold and how restoration and recovery takes place, that we involve those same communities and more in that longer and much more robust discussion about the future. It is kind of refreshing to a certain extent to change from talking about the immediate problem and start looking at the promise of the future, but it is also a region of the country that has had that conversation going on for a long time even before Hurricane Katrina and before this oil spill.

So, it is time -- and under this task force and Lisa's leadership, I am sure that we are going to be able to make that transition and really move that forward but the key component of it, and I think as a lesson from the task force to EPA at large, is the engagement and the expanding of the conversation with all the communities that are involved from Native American communities to communities of color to lower income communities all throughout that region.

So, it is an important step, an important lesson in how we are going to be and are approaching our job, as you have heard a lot about. You know, EPA -- this is our 40th anniversary and there is a lot to be proud of as an agency. Pollution -- air pollution in the country is down 40 to 50 percent. Blood levels in every child in America are lower today than they were 40 years ago but still what we know, as we have lowered pollution around the country, this has not been uniformly and evenly distributed.

We know that too often that low income and minority communities are still disproportionately impacted by pollution. From a public health perspective, if you think about heart disease, cancer, respiratory illnesses like asthma, these are three of the top deadliest health problems that are linked to pollution. We know that they line up with three of the most important health problems in many minority and lower income communities.

So, we really think from a public health perspective, you can look straight right at that -- those connecting dots there and see the work we have cut out for us even though, as a country, we have made tremendous progress reducing pollution, we still have not made and fulfilled that promise uniformly to all communities.

So, while we think about that, think about also the economic side of this. There -- these disparities exist and they adversely impact different communities. Well, in those communities that are impacted do not become the primary locations that people want to invest in. So when you have -- you now have not only the relationship between health but you also have the relationship between the long term economic viability of these communities.

So, when we talk about moving the agency in this direction, we are talking about not only fulfilling that promise of the public health protection but also the important link to the economic sustainability and long term viability of these communities. This is why it is so important that this task that the NEJAC and its work in how it is helping the agency move in this direction.

These -- what is probably equally important and really gets to the heart of the matter here is that these are the same communities that have had -- and I know I am preaching to the choir, as they say here. But these are the same communities that I just talked about that have had too little voice in what those policies should be and how the work of the agency should be conducted.

So, we now have an administrator and a President who are vitally interested to change that dynamic and to change the face of how we approach our environmental problems. The involvement and the engagement of all these communities are vitally important to our success. We cannot presuppose anything, to a certain extent, other than those disproportionate impacts that we have to deal with.

As the Deputy Administrator, I have the -- sort of the responsibility to make sure the operations of the agency are working. I am going to mention a few things here about the operational side of this because Lisa Jackson looks to me to make sure that while we have emerging will and policy and plans, how do we make sure that we build that into the fabric of the agency.

I want to mention a couple of things that we are working on there in that area. First of all, and I think you know this from the last meeting Elizabeth, the issuing of the EJ Rulemaking Guidance. You know, how the agency goes about making a decision on anything, we actually have a -- what I would call a user manual on how to do that at the agency so that all the proper steps are taken, the proper involvement -- it did not really mention environmental justice in the past.

Today, it has -- it has been revised to include a whole section that says that part of that

decision making process in the agency, no matter what it is, this part of the work has to be considered. That won't make it happen automatically but you at least have the user manual, as I call it, and get on with it. The second thing I want to mention, and this is going to be talked about quite a bit today and there has been involvement already, is the Plan EJ 2014.

That is a dynamic and emerging powerhouse of a plan in the agency but the plan, in and of itself, you know, is not self-implemented. So, we have to make sure that as that plan -- and as good as that plan has become, that that plan gets translated into concrete specific actions and commitments that the agency has to take each year that then get built into the accountability system of the agency.

So, one of the things that you all commented on before was the weakness perhaps of our overarching strategic plan for the agency and whether or not it had enough of a structure in it to deal with the environmental justice issues. What we have done with the recently approved strategic plan is we have created these crosscutting strategies.

There is a crosscutting strategy in there that cuts across all the programs of the agency and it has very specific things that we are going to work on, but it does not have the actual annual measures that we would do. That will come from the 2014 planning process. That will tell us what we need to do next year and then that will become part of the accountability system all the way down to performance evaluation at the personnel level for the agency.

So, it is very important that you see that the work that goes on on that plan and how it will now fit into the strategic plan as the door on the strategic plan has been constructed for that to go through. The other thing I will mention in brief, and I think you are going to talk a lot more about it today so I will not say too much about it, is the next step is at the operational level of how do we incorporate some of these issues into our day to day work life in permits or in making decisions at the -- not in the regulatory framework but also the application level.

That is where we are working now. I know that you are going to be having a conversation about it during the next day or so and all your advice is going to be very, very helpful in that regard. That is going to require obviously analytic tools and many other policies that we will have to work on. So, from a strategic level, those are some of the strategies that we are changing and how we are trying to construct that in the agency to make sure that we have everything aligned to make progress.

The last thing I am going to mention, in terms of structure on incorporating and building on the foundation here, is the area of partnerships. In September, the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice, which has been dormant for a longtime, was reactivated. Administrator Jackson hosted that meeting. Many cabinet level folks came to that meeting and made renewed commitments to the subject and to working with EPA and the other agencies in terms of whether it is public health, the law, with the Department of Justice and Attorney General holder.

All of these folks were at the meeting. They are all pledging now to work together through that task force so that the partnership at EPA is trying to expand to these other federal agencies is really important. The other one that I wanted to mention is in December, the White House is going to host a forum on EJ and invite not only administrative officials but other folks from around the country to really talk through how we should be building these partnerships.

I want to say one last thing. A vital NEJAC is an important part of the partnership. You all come from many different walks of life in the United States and have all your different perspectives and expertises that then you volunteer your time to help EPA do a better job at what we are trying to embark on here and move forward on.

So, I want to thank you for doing it but I want you to know that one of the key touchstones in our ability to have strong partnerships is working with a vital and vibrant NEJAC. So, I want to thank you for all that work that you are going to do and you have been doing to help us do that. The last thing I am going to do is just echo what Cynthia said and congratulate Lisa on being our new -- what we call "AAA"; Associate Assistant Administrator for Environmental Justice.

So, thank you all for having me here today and I will turn it back to you, Elizabeth.
(Applause.)

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Thank you so much. I think that your presentation is a great segway to our next panel. It is true, for members of the public, that every single member of the NEJAC is someone with a lifelong investment in addressing environmental justice issues and really addressing the issues of our most vulnerable communities.

While we talk a lot and you will hear a lot about all of the -- how our communities of color and low income communities are saturated with environmental burdens and we talk about the

environmental and health disparities, there is also a lot that is being done on a grassroots level to address these disparities and to work towards environmental remediation.

It is coming out of different kinds of partnerships. So, we have a panel on the Green Impact Zone. The panel is entitled Implications and Lessons -- I am sorry?

MS. ROBINSON: ---.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: I am sorry. I did not realize that was not on the agenda but we do have questions for -- and maybe comments for Bob. So, before he leaves -- he has got until about 2:10. Members of the -- Shankar?

MR. PRASAD: Bob, welcome back to EPA and congratulations. We are glad to have you back and the -- and we know that you have been a great leader, have done very well in the previous time and we expect the same in this tenor as well. One of the things that are very key to make any kind of a significant progress is the issue of resources.

So, while certainly it has improved with the OEJ, maybe an effort can be made somehow to integrating to your dialogue at the OMB or into some fashion or the other so that there can be a long-term funding that could be established not just to expand the OEJ piece of regional offices, but to see that could there be a way to put money into the various communities --- in each region.

That could be identified using an EJ seat or some other such tool is something that I want to throw open for you to seriously consider about that and how we can help you to move that agenda forward.

MR. PERCIASEPE: Well, that is a very good question and I guess, you know, there is the -- first of all, whatever advice you guys have on structural things that we need to be doing at EPA is going to be welcome and highly respected and considered. One of the things, as I mentioned, that I am trying to make sure we do is even within the existing programs -- you know, there is this -- and I think Lisa is very sensitive to this.

There is, on one hand, you could have resources that you identify that say these are our EJ people or these are our EJ workers or this is -- on the other hand, you could work very hard to make sure everyone in the agency, particularly in the decision making chain, are building this as part of their day to day work. So, you have to do a little bit of both.

You have to have enough resources to develop tools and to develop the analytical capacity and the legal frameworks that we need to have but on the other hand, we have to really instill this into our normal day to day work. I think that that is what I am toiling on. That is, my inner working kind of effort is to make sure that Lisa Jackson's priorities are built into the fabric of the agency.

So, a little bit of both of those but certainly any recommendations that you all have because even with declining -- potentially declining resources, we will still have to take the time to build into the structure that we have to make sure these things are done on the -- again, going waxing back again to the 40th anniversary and all the great accomplishments that EPA has had, I personally think it is the greatest bargain the American people ever had.

We have this lingering, you know, last step almost that we have to take to make sure that it is now evenly distributed and delivered. I think that we are all committed to doing that, but any advice would be welcome and well considered.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Any other questions or comments from the Advisory Council?

(No response.)

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Okay. Well -- I am sorry. Lang?

MR. MARSH: Let me add my gratitude for your taking on this role again, Bob, and welcome back to the agency. We look forward to a good working relationship with you. I am interested in following up on a couple of things you said about the -- first that the President and Lisa Jackson are very committed to -- I do not know your exact words but to making sure that communities have a greater voice in the things that affect them.

Also, to your notion of integrating EJ into the fabric of the agency. One of the -- I will call it an obstacle or difficulty. As a former regulator, I am very aware of how this happens is the problem of breaking down barriers among programs and of course among agencies, as well.

So, I think one of the things we are struggling with is how to give that community voice in a way that is most relevant to the way that government is organized and the notion of partnerships where the government role changes a little bit from the traditional application, response, public comment and decision to one where the agency folks participate in a collaborative way with members of the community.

With businesses, with local government, state government crimes and so on in

communities that have EJ issues and apply their knowledge, technical expertise and resources to helping making decisions such as on permits or on technical assistance or enforcement so that they support the priorities that have been established through that partnership, including the communities, but also including EPA and other federal and state agencies.

I guess I am not trying to pin you down on anything but just to say as a reality, the role of government has to change and part of it is breaking down some of those stovepipe barriers, part of it is being open to engagement with communities upfront about priorities and so forth.

The challenge that I certainly ran into, and I know you have, is how do you change the mindset of the folks who have been used to reviewing permits and applications and requests for technical assistance and funding and so forth so that they are enabled and encouraged to participate in these local and regional partnerships.

I don't expect an answer but I think that is the challenge that we are probably both going to be struggling with over the coming years.

MR. PERCIASEPE: Lang, those are very important challenges but let me just say a couple of things about those two -- the two larger issues that you framed. The barriers inside the agency for working across, you know -- obviously working a concept into our strategic plan that did not exist before of a crosscutting goal and strategy is part of our internal structural hope to build a component of the strategic plan that would have annual commitments that have -- that would be met as part of the annual measures.

It would be distributed appropriately and coordinated appropriately between the different programs. Fundamental inside of our capacity to be better at that is to not think so much how does the air program affect this community or how does combined sewer overflow program affect this community or what about this brown field site?

It is turning it the other way and think about community as the organizing principle, as opposed to the programs as the organizing principle and then figuring out how you have to coordinate them. So, we are working pretty vigorously in the agency to develop community -- and I do not mean community organizer here.

I mean, you know, an organizing principle of thought on how our programs work together and use the needs of -- at the community level, whether it is rural or urban, that will help guide the coordination of our programs. That does not take away the prerogatives and the need to fix the combined sewer overflow but it is a way of how we communicate and that leads into your second part.

So, we have an effort underway to build tools, get understanding, see how our programs work. I had a presentation this morning from Karl's staff, who have done some amazing work here in Region VII, looking at how they coordinate at the community level and what additional work they need to do that. So, that conversation is happening very strongly in the agency right now in terms of building those tools and those techniques and skills.

The -- but that leads to the point of where -- that is sort of like, to me, a necessary step to be able to then go on to start talking about the skill sets and the -- of our staff and how they communicate at the community level. We have a situation where you could find places in the United States where there are different EPA programs going on for the betterment of the community and they may not have been coordinated.

They are all doing good things but could they do more? Could they -- could it build the capacity of the community? Could it be changed slightly to achieve multiple goals? All those things are possible when you start thinking a community as the organizing principle but this clearly (laughter) -- I am getting hints over here. The -- not about this.

(Laughter.)

MR. PERCIASEPE: About time. So, the idea of EPA listening to and engaging communities is not new. In fact, we do it as well as many agencies do and sometimes we have to recognize that we have many of these skills already in place. It is just a matter of nurturing them and growing them inside the agency and doing it -- I might add, we have to do it in coordination with the local governments, with the local NGO community and with the states.

We cannot just swoop in and do it but that is the power of the convening power and some of the resources we can bring that EPA can have. So, I am anxious to continue working on this. It was mentioned very briefly in my introduction by Lisa, but I spent 11 years as a city planner in Baltimore. So, I might be the first city planner that has been EPA Deputy, I have been called worse things, but the idea of really being at that neighborhood level is something that is sort of in my public service DNA.

So, I think EPA does it a lot better than people sometimes gives itself credit for. I think I am going to have to go. I apologize Elizabeth.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Thank you so much and I know Karl was leaving.

MR. BROOKS: Right. I also need to go over to the youth workshop. So, I will see most of you back in just a couple of hours. Thanks so much. Thanks Elizabeth.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Thank you. Thank you. That is great. Karl is joining the youth workgroup. We have, since our last NEJAC, convened a youth gathering at every NEJAC to try to engage our young people in a meaningful way and to the work that we do. So, I think that presentation again is a great segway to what communities are doing on the ground to address these very complex and serious issues that affect the environmental health of the people who are most affected who are usually really in vulnerable communities.

We have on our panel -- I am going to introduce you to you the members of the panel. We have John Frece, Director of the EPA Office of Sustainable Communities. John serves as Director of this office, which houses the agency Smart Growth program. Prior to joining EPA, he was Baltimore's Maryland State House Bureau Chief for 11 years until 1996, then Special Assistant for Smart Growth under Governor Paris and Glendenine.

MS. ROBINSON: Glendinging.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Glendinging. There is my bilingual limitation right there. In 2000, he was instrumental in creating the University of Maryland's National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education. Having helped coordinate Smart Growth efforts among state agencies for Governor Glendinging, Director Frece envisions close federal cross-agency coordination to promote Smart Growth principals and policies on transportation, housing and urban development and post-disaster recovery. We have with us also Anita Mall --

MS. ROBINSON: Maltbia.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: -- Maltbia, Director of the Green Impact Zone of Missouri. Did I say Missouri right?

MS. : ---.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Did I say it with a Brooklyn accent?

MS. : Missouri.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: As Director of the Green Impact Zone of Missouri, Anita (laughter) oversees the staff responsible for implementing and coordinating various initiatives in the Zone working with neighborhood leadership to coordinate programs and outreach in the Zone, building partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders and fiscal and program monitoring evaluation and reporting.

Ms. Maltbia has many years of management and community experience, including eight years as Assistant City Manager for the City of Kansas City. Her focus has been on business development, infrastructure, energy and water. Let us see.

MS. ROBINSON: Paula Schwach.

MS. YEAMPIERRE: Paula Schwach is Regional Counsel for U.S. Department of Transportation for the Federal Transportation Administration, Region VII. Paula Schwach is currently -- let us see the way this is written. She is responsible for legal issues arising in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska related to real estate development and infrastructure finance.

She was part of the FTA working group on the re-draft of Joint Development Guidance and is currently a member of the HUD FTA Interagency Working Group. She was previously with the Kansas City Office of the Resolution Trust Corporation where she handled real estate loan workouts. She was lead attorney for tax exempted industrial revenue bond transactional matters.

She holds a Master's Degree in Urban Affairs from St. Louis University's Center for Urban programs where she was a HUD fellow and holds a J.D. from the University of Missouri. Finally, but not least, we have Margaret May who is a member of the NEJAC. Ms. May has been the Executive Director of the Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council since October 2001.

Organized in 1967, Ivanhoe is one of the oldest and largest organized neighborhoods in Kansas City facing the challenge of vacant lots, illegal dumping and criminal activity. Under Ms. May's leadership, Ivanhoe initiated several community projects, including the Ivanhoe Land Trust lots maintenance program, to improve the appearance and safety of the neighborhood and provide neighborhood youth with jobs in the Ivanhoe Rehab Program to reclaim vacant abandoned houses, rehab the houses and sell them to homeowners.