

**Friends of Casco Bay**  
**EJDEI Committee Meeting**  
**2/13/2023 3:00-4:30 p.m. via Zoom**

Attendance

Board: Howard Gray, Pat Ianni, Sandy Marsters, Joan Samuelson

Staff: Will Everitt, Ivy Frignoca, Robby Lewis-Nash

1. EJDEI Definitions

The Committee had an in-depth discussion about the attached EJDEI definitions. Our goal is to come up with easy-to-understand **and** operational definitions for these concepts as they apply to Friends of Casco Bay's work and mission.

The committee will draft definitions that it feels comfortable and recommend them to the board as a whole for adoption.

Overall, the definitions were too complicated and will be re-worked. The overall feeling was that the second sentence of each of them was largely not needed and that those concepts could be used conversationally, if needed, but not in the exact definitions. Also, we want the definitions to read "EJ is," "Diversity is" etc.

2. Pat shared a DRAFT EJDEI statement.

The committee agreed that we need an updated EJDEI statement. There was consensus that this committee could help draft a new statement and recommend it to the board for adoption. Consensus on the draft statement at this point was:

- We want to see what flows from the strategic plan.
- We want a statement that stands for the organization as a whole—we do not want there to be distinctions between the board and staff. Operationally, of course the actions of board and staff would be different, but for a public-facing document, we do not want to separate our organization into "the board" and "the staff."

3. CBEP and Friends of Casco Bay

Howard shared that Casco Bay Estuary Partnership is doing important work on its EJDEI plan and that Will and staff should talk to Curtis. Will shared that Ivy and he are both in conversations about how our overlapping work could benefit from working closer together on our EJDEI work.

## **What Environmental Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Mean to Friends of Casco Bay (Draft 2, 1/20/2023)**

### **Environmental Justice:**

The right to an equitable, safe, healthy, productive, and sustainable environment for all members of a community, city, or region. The recognition that vulnerable and marginalized populations, including people of color, indigenous people, and people living in poverty, have disproportionately experienced the brunt of pollution and the effects of climate change.

### **Diversity:**

A broad demographic mix (including race, age, gender, sexual orientation, income, ethnicity, cultural background, and geography), within a group or organization, which reflects the makeup of the communities it serves. The recognition that there are differences between us by which we experience advantages or encounter barriers to opportunities and resources.

### **Equity:**

Ensuring that differences in need and ability are accounted for in order to create fair access to resources and opportunities for all members of the community. This means that resources may be divided and shared unequally in order to make sure that each person can access an opportunity.

### **Inclusion:**

The active, intentional, and continuous process to address inequities in power and privilege in order to build a respectful and diverse community that ensures welcoming spaces and opportunities for all individuals to flourish. While a truly “inclusive” group is necessarily diverse, a “diverse” group may or may not be “inclusive.”

## DRAFT FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

### FOCB Board of Directors Statement on Environmental Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (EJDEI)

(Draft 1.9.2023)

The **purpose/mission** of Friends of Casco Bay, as outlined in the By Laws of the organization, is:

*“To ensure that the water quality of Casco Bay is improved,  
to protect the ecosystems of the bay from degradation,  
to promote the sustainable use and enjoyment of the bay’s resources,  
to educate the public about the marine environment of Casco Bay, and  
to support continued scientific study of that environment.”*

The **Board of Directors** of ***Friends of Casco Bay*** serves as a steward of the organization, and thus, each board member is a trustee who owes a duty to act in the best interests of the organization and in accordance with the mission of the organization.

To fulfill our duty as members of the Board, and to fully accomplish the mission of the organization, we strongly believe that all people deserve to live, work and play in a safe and healthy environment in and around Casco Bay.

We, the FOCB Board of Directors, hold the following core values:

**Science** grounds our work; as a board, we value the use of technology and scientific principles to achieve sound scientific conclusions on which to base our actions and decisions.

**Stewardship** of not only the inhabitant species and habitats supported by Casco Bay, but also of our diverse community members within and outside the watershed who care about Casco Bay.

**Diversity** of our community perspectives helps strengthen our organization and make it more likely to adapt to changes and thrive and be better able to achieve the mission of the organization. We understand that this will necessitate seeking and implementing a multiplicity of ways to communicate with our public and to do so effectively, we may need to think beyond our typical engagement strategies.

**Inclusion, Collaboration & Teamwork** greatly enhances our ability to achieve our goals and ensures we are resilient as we endure the many changes which are inevitable.

**Equity & Justice** – As we strive to achieve a strong balance of all the above core values, we feel environmental justice and equity will be an attainable and worthy goal.

The Board of Friends of Casco Bay endeavors to incorporate the goals of achieving environmental justice, diversity, equity and inclusion as a “strategic” imperative. The Board is committed to these principles and we will work to achieve them through the following actions:

1. Commission an audit of our current governance structure and decision-making processes to better understand the EJDEI deficiencies that may be inherent in our practices and develop specific recommendations for needed changes.

2. Increase the diversity of our board, staff, contractors, volunteers, collaborators, members, and supporters.
3. Expand the extent of, and approach to, our communications, member activities, and community outreach, and increase opportunities for meaningful engagement with new partners on matters of mutual importance.
4. Actively encourage/invite involvement and engagement with members of our communities of color and other marginalized or minimalized groups to increase their voices, ideas, and narratives in our work.
5. Work with the staff to assist them with incorporating these changes into the operations of the organization.
6. The EJDEI Subcommittee will continue to meet regularly to evaluate the progress and future needs of the Board in accomplishing the recommended changes and improvements.

In conclusion, Friends of Casco Bay, and specifically the Board of Directors, is committed to continuing to identify and address systemic inequities within our organization and our work practices. In doing this, we will commit to maintaining a dialogue with a more diverse and inclusive community of partners, listening to their questions and feedback, and building a strategy to best serve the needs of our community as we fulfill the objectives of our mission. While we acknowledge that these goals will take time and effort to both develop and achieve, we understand they are necessary to continue to fulfill our mission.

*Note: We recognize that this statement is a working document that will grow and evolve as we grow, evolve, and learn. We welcome feedback, questions, and concerns from all who are interested in supporting the work of Friends of Casco Bay.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Qs:

1. Should this be a Board Statement or should we agree to draft a joint Staff & Board/Organization Statement? Should this be an Internal or External Statement (i.e., posted on our website)?
2. Should this statement be included in the forthcoming 5-year strategic plan...?
3. Do we specifically mention that inclusion/diversity means expanding our reach (i.e., membership, volunteers, donors, collaborators, etc.) to all members of our community including (but not necessarily limited to):
  - Those within and outside the watershed;
  - people of color in our community who have been subject to many land-based injustices past and present through redlining, racial mortgage discrimination, and the taking of land for urban renewal;
  - Indigenous peoples (e.g., the First People who lived here for millennia, and/or the Wabanaki people whose ancestors once walked the lands in and around Casco Bay and who still live here);
  - low income or economically marginalized people, who may live in areas susceptible to sea level rise and flooding, industrial pollution hazards, and other environmental risks;
  - members of the LGBTQ community,
  - people with disabilities,
  - people of all ages, (e.g., school children) and any other people whose voices are not typically heard or are under-represented.