

Assembly Select Committee on the Social Determinants of Health
Informational Hearing: Environmental Health in Urban Communities

Panelist Biographies

Panel #1 – Clean Water

Cori Bell, Senior Attorney, Natural Resources Defense Council

Corinne Bell, a champion for clean water and a protector of our natural resources.

With over six years of dedication at the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Corinne Bell has carved a path as a fierce advocate for environmental protection. Her expertise lies in the realm of water policy, where she navigates the complexities of ensuring clean and accessible water for all.

Corinne's journey began with a passion for environmental justice, leading her to Pace University School of Law, where she earned her J.D. cum laude. Further honing her skills, she pursued a Master's in Environmental Management from Yale University School of Forestry, solidifying her knowledge and commitment to environmental stewardship.

Before joining the NRDC, Corinne gained valuable experience at the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, where she honed her legal acumen as a Staff Attorney. She also held positions at the Environmental Protection Agency and Opportunity Maine, demonstrating her versatility and unwavering dedication to environmental causes.

Today, Corinne stands as a pillar of the NRDC, her dedication evident in her tireless efforts to safeguard our water resources. From advocating for clean drinking water to protecting vulnerable ecosystems, she is a relentless force for positive change.

Beyond her impressive professional achievements, Corinne's spirit is one of collaboration and community. She believes in the power of collective action and strives to empower individuals and communities to become stewards of their environment.

Corinne Bell is more than just an attorney; she is a voice for clean water, a protector of our natural world, and an inspiration to all who share her passion for a sustainable future

Waylon Matson, Co-Founder, 4 Walls International

Waylon Matson - Co-Founder and Director of 4Walls International, a California-based nonprofit dedicated to advancing systems level change for a balanced coexistence between societies and ecosystems. Guided by this steadfast commitment, his work leads groundbreaking efforts to address urban watershed challenges. 4Walls champions smart solutions to complex problems through Science, Policy, Finance, and Community programs and initiatives. In 2017, 4Walls introduced the Border Impact Bond, pioneering binational cooperation and innovation to tackle sediment and solid waste management along the México - U.S. border. Waylon is a dedicated naturalist utilizing his diverse roles as an artist, advocate, and albañil (builder) to engage

communities on shared environmental issues, uniting diverse stakeholders around source-based solutions. Over fifteen years, Waylon has developed and tested behavioral engineering concepts, prioritizing collaborative decision-making and collective action. His commitment is reshaping regional resilience strategies to form profound long-term impact, one watershed at a time.

Sam Brown, Treasurer, Viejas Tribal Council

Samuel Q. Brown was elected in 2011 as the Viejas Tribal Treasurer. As Tribal Treasurer, he oversees tribal finances, coordinates tribal business and government budgets, and monitors all income and expenses. He also represents the tribe in the pursuit of economic development to ensure a sound financial future. Giving future generations the same rights and opportunities are Treasurer Brown's main priorities while serving on Tribal Council. Like the other 6 members who serve on the Viejas Tribal Council, he is also a representative for government-to-government relations. Tribal Council is one of two bodies that approve all government decisions which includes the 400 voting members of the Viejas General Council.

Samuel has a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from SDSU '96 and a B.S. in Casino and Hospitality Management from National University '13. Samuel is also the current SDSU Alumni Board of Advisors President.

Samuel lives in the Viejas Indian Reservation next door to his parents and has a daughter who attends college in New York and a younger brother who is a programmer and lives in Salt Lake City with his wife.

Panel #2 - Clean Air

Domingo Vigil, Deputy Director, San Diego County Air Pollution Control District

Domingo Vigil is a Deputy Director at the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) where he oversees the Monitoring and Technical Services Division and the Office of Environmental Justice. Domingo leads the implementation of the Community Air Protection Program (AB 617) to improve air quality in communities disproportionately burdened by air pollution. Domingo has a B.A. in International Business from SDSU and a Master's in International Affairs with a focus on Environmental Policy from UCSD's School of Global Strategy and Policy.

Brady Van Engelen, Policy Advocate, California Chamber of Commerce

Brady Van Engelen joined the California Chamber of Commerce in November 2022 as a policy advocate specializing in energy issues. He also leads CalChamber advocacy on climate change, environmental regulation and transportation matters.

Before joining the CalChamber policy team, Van Engelen served as a senior policy manager at Bloom Energy, representing the company before the California Legislature and California Public Utilities Commission.

He previously was a gubernatorial appointee to the California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) and served as special assistant to the state oil and gas supervisor. Van

Engelen also was defense legislative assistant to then-U.S. Senator John Kerry and prior to working on Capitol Hill, worked in policy and advocacy roles at Veterans For America.

Van Engelen served in the U.S. Army from 2002 to 2005, and received a Purple Heart and Bronze Star. He earned a master's degree in government from Johns Hopkins University, and has an M.B.A. from the University of California, Davis.

Maritza Garcia, Advocate, Environmental Health Coalition

Maritza Garcia is a second-generation Logan Heights resident. She has been involved with Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) since 2020. Through this, she has advocated for the neighborhood she loves and is proud to call home. Maritza is currently in school for Child Development and hopes to one day create a program centered around the arts, crafting, and expressing your true self. She loves to crochet, sing, and go on adventures with her husband and daughter.

Panel #3 – Green Open Spaces

Sameera Rao, Assistant Deputy Director, San Diego City Planning Department

Sameera Rao works as an Assistant Deputy Director with the City Planning Department in the City of San Diego. In this role, she works with an incredible team of Planners, Park Designers, and Engineers. Sameera doesn't really have a "typical" day, but she loves the varied nature of projects (from Citywide programs such as Build Better SD and Spaces As Places to park planning initiatives like updating recreational planning elements for various communities and natural areas) she gets to work on with her talented colleagues.

While policy initiatives are complex and involve various important factors, data plays a significant role in helping shape these initiatives in a way that can be shared and perceived in a user-friendly manner. Sameera uses data visualization tools to help share that information and strongly believes that leveraging the right tools can make data interesting and exciting for both the storyteller and the audience.

In her time away from the office, Sameera enjoys taking long walks, going to the beach, and playing with her kids.

Roman Partida-Lopez, Senior Legal Counsel, Greenlining Institute

As Senior Legal Counsel of Transportation Equity, Román Partida-López (he/him/his) leads our mobility and transportation electrification work. He advocates for legislative and regulatory laws that improve access, affordability and lasting socio-economic and environmental benefits for low-income communities of color. He focuses on advancing equitable policies and programs that deliver clean air, zero-emission mobility options and workforce opportunities for our most impacted communities. Román is based in San Diego CA. He grew up in National City (South of downtown San Diego), two blocks away from the freeway and across the street from a car body shop that regularly violated city codes by sanding, chroming and painting vehicles out in the open. His exposure to these toxic chemicals and pollution inspired him to work on addressing environmental injustices in his community. He is currently the Chair of the Disadvantaged

Communities Advisory Group that advises the CPUC and CEC on the development of equitable energy policy and programs. He is also on the board of Forth Mobility and Casa Familiar. Román is happy outdoors, at a park or coaching youth softball or baseball with his wife and three kids. He received his B.A. from the University of San Diego and J.D. from Thomas Jefferson School of Law.

Panel #4 – Data-Driven Policy Tools

Dr. Rashmi Joglekar, Associate Director of Science, Policy & Engagement, UC San Francisco

Dr. Rashmi Joglekar is the Associate Director of Science, Policy, and Engagement at the University of California, San Francisco Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment. She is a toxicologist with four years of experience working at the intersection of science, policy, and environmental justice, and holds a Ph.D. from Duke University in Integrated Toxicology and Environmental Health. Dr. Joglekar's research background is in neurodevelopmental toxicology, with a specific focus on examining the epigenetic and behavioral impacts of nicotine exposure during pregnancy. Her current work involves coordinating and synthesizing scientific material for use in advocacy aimed at strengthening federal and state agency action and risk assessment of toxic chemicals to improve the quantification of risk to communities experiencing environmental injustices. Dr. Joglekar previously served as a Staff Scientist at Earthjustice where she worked directly with community members to elevate issues of environmental injustice to the US EPA and build the strongest scientific case for the US EPA to protect these communities. This included collaborating with scientific experts to develop methodologies that adequately accounted for cumulative chemical exposures in communities near polluting industrial facilities and agricultural fields where pesticides are sprayed. In addition, Dr. Joglekar has coordinated and provided expert testimonies for legal cases pertaining toxic chemical exposures, led and drafted public comments on agency proposals, and advocated issues regarding toxic chemicals through peer-reviewed publications, blogposts, public databases, reports, and op-eds. She has also championed several research collaborations across multiple academic institutions aimed at characterizing toxic chemical exposures in children. Dr. Joglekar is currently a member of Project TENDR (Targeting Environmental Neuro-Developmental Risks) and has previously served as an expert panelist for the National Academy of Sciences, US EPA, and the Environmental Law Institute.

Eden Brukman, Chief Sustainability Officer, County of San Diego Office of Sustainability and Environmental Justice

Eden Brukman is the first Chief Sustainability Officer for the County of San Diego where she leads the Office of Sustainability and Environmental Justice. For more than 25 years, Eden has focused on establishing socially and environmentally responsible solutions for human habitat: she coauthored Living Building Challenge and directed its evolution and global adoption from 2007-2012; cocreated and acted as the first Technical Director of the Health Product Declaration Collaborative; and contributed to the early development of other programs such as Declare, the Pharos Project, and EcoDistricts. Prior to her role in San Diego, she served as the Senior Green

Building Coordinator for the San Francisco Environment Department. Eden was a named recipient of the Buckminster Fuller Challenge award, and was designated one of the Forty Under 40 in Portland, Oregon, as well as a Living Building Hero by the International Living Future Institute. She is a LEED Fellow and has received the Women in Sustainability Leadership Award. Also a licensed architect, Eden's advocacy efforts have led to policy reform, decentralized building and community developments, and the creation of a network of local action groups in cities all over the world.