Dear USDA colleagues;

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into your admirable initiative to make our Federal regulatory process more democratically inclusive.  My recommendation is for you to explore--and give serious consideration to--the utility of Citizen's Assemblies. Citizens' Assemblies (CAs) are proving to be a useful tool for encouraging meaningful public engagement in matters of public policy and regulation. CAs (which have their origin in ancient Greece) started emerging anew in the 1980s and have been especially gaining momentum since 2010.  Hundreds of thousands of people around the world have now participated in over 500 citizens’ assemblies (and similar deliberative processes) to inform policy making on all manner of public policy: multi-billion dollar strategic plans, 30-year infrastructure investment strategies, online hate speech and harassment,  a woman's right to choose, how best to manage flood risks, policies for improving air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and more.

Here are just a few of the many articles that are available exploring the benefits of CAs and how they are playing out in the real world:

[Citizens’ Assembly: a Complementary Tool to Develop Legislative Guidelines and Raise Public Awareness on Data Privacy and Artificial Intelligence](https://medium.com/escapadasuk/citizens-assemblies-for-a-more-democratically-engaged-and-informed-society-on-ai-data-privacy-4d22e1c5b585) - good overview of how Citzens' Assemblies work and how they may be applied in two key public policy areas.

[A Movement That’s Quietly Reshaping Democracy For The Bette](https://www.noemamag.com/a-movement-thats-quietly-reshaping-democracy-for-the-better/)r - an argument in favor and some examples of different ways to utilize CAs

[Citizens' Assemblies Won't Save Us](%3ehttps:/www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/citizens-assemblies-wont-save-us/%3c) - explores both the benefits and limitations of Citizens' Assemblies.

Here is a [free online guide to Citizens' Assemblies](%3ehttps:/citizensassemblies.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Citizens-Assemblies_EN_web.pdf%3c).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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