


THE PATH FORWARD FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ): SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES

A National Overview to Better Support Vulnerable Populations

Briefing for NCDEQ Secretary's Environmental Justice and Equity Advisory Board

BRIAN HOLTZCLAW, CHIEF, EJ & CHILDREN'S HEALTH SECTION, U.S. EPA REGION 4

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**The
Path Forward
for
Environmental
Justice**

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON EJ

BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION QUOTE

*“... **But for too many, the American Dream remains out of reach.** Entrenched disparities in our laws and public policies, and in our public and private institutions, have often denied that equal opportunity to individuals and communities. Our country faces converging economic, health, and climate crises that have exposed and exacerbated inequities, while a historic movement for justice has highlighted the unbearable human costs of systemic racism... **the Federal Government should pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality...**” EO #13985*

EPA ADMINISTRATOR'S EJ MEMO (4/7/21)

Embed equity into programs to ensure systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals. Serve as a role model for the rest of the federal family. (Memo and [Press Release](#))

- Strengthen **enforcement of violations of environmental statutes** and civil rights laws.
- To benefit communities, take **immediate and affirmative steps to incorporate EJ considerations**, including assessing impacts ... and considering regulatory options.
- Take immediate steps to **improve early and more frequent engagement with communities** by EPA rulemakings, permitting and enforcement decisions, and policies. Strengthen relationship with Tribal Nations.
- Be **aligned with the Administration's Justice40 initiative**; consider and prioritize direct and indirect benefits to underserved communities, such as requests for grant applications/awards.



**EPA Administrator,
Michael S. Regan**

“Bottom line is, go forth and do; don’t wait.”

NEW EXECUTIVE ORDERS (EO) AND PLANNED UPDATES

- [EO # 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#)
- [EO # 13990: Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis](#)
- [EO # 14008: Tackling Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad](#) *
- [EO # 13563: Modernizing Regulatory Review](#)
- [EO # 12898: Environmental Justice \(1994\)](#) **

* = **Contains the Justice40 Initiative** (upcoming recommendations which will define “benefits” under the Justice40 Initiative, which calls for “delivering 40 percent of the overall benefits of relevant federal investments to disadvantaged communities and tracks performance toward that goal through the establishment of an Environmental Justice Scorecard.”)

** = **Planned Update**



**U.S. President and Vice President,
Joseph R. Biden, Jr. and Kamala D. Harris**

THE NEW EO'S AND ALIGNMENT TO EJ

REVISED DRAFT TEMPLATE - Crosswalk of Executive Orders and EJ

EJ Alignment	<u>EO on Advancing Racial Equity and Support</u>	<u>EO on Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis</u>	<u>EO on Tackling Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad</u>	<u>EO on Modernizing Regulatory Review</u>
Previous EJ Strategic Plans	Sec. 3			
EJ Tools	Sec. 3	Sec. 2		Sec. 2
EISCREEN	Sec. 3; Sec. 4; Secs. 6.a&b; Sec. 9		Sec. 222; Sec. 223	Sec. 2
Community-Driven Solutions	Sec. 3			
Engagement with NEJAC	Sec. 8	Sec. 2.e; Sec. 5	Sec. 221	
EJ IWG Forums	Sec. 8	Sec. 2.e;	Sec. 220	
Quarterly EJ Program Public Stakeholder Calls	Sec. 8			
Inclusion of EJ		Sec. 2; Sec. 5.b	Sec. 103.c; Sec 203; Sec. 215; Sec. 218; Sec. 220	
Collaboration OEJ/OP-NCEE		Sec. 5		Sec. 2
Inclusion of OECA			Sec. 222.b	
Inclusion of ORD			Sec. 222.b	
Collaboration OEJ/ORPM		Sec. 2		Sec. 2
Collaboration OEJ/OCR	Sec. 3		Sec. 218	

ADVISORY COUNCILS (WHEJAC, NEJAC) AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- **New -- WHEJAC** ([White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council](#)) was just created. ([26 members; 2 from Southeast](#))
 - Advises White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) on EJ recommendations for all agencies; meetings have public comment periods.
 - Projects include: Energy Interagency Working Group; Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool; Justice40 Initiative; Updating original E.O. 12898 on EJ.
- **Existing -- NEJAC** ([National Environmental Justice Advisory Committee](#)) will continue. ([29 members, 6 from Southeast](#))
 - Is the premier EPA advisory body for EJ recommendations/reports (55+) since 1995; meetings have public comment periods.
- **New -- National EJ Public Engagement Calls**
 - [These HQ OEJ sponsored calls](#) are held every quarter for nationwide citizens & groups to learn about EJ developments, as well as provide public comments.



THE WHITE HOUSE INTERAGENCY COUNCIL (IAC) ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



Brenda Mallory, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality (WHCEQ)



Dr. Cecilia Martinez,
Senior Director for EJ,
WHCEQ

- Per new EO # 14008, the Federal EJ Interagency Working Group (EJ IWG) is being replaced by the IAC. The IAC will become the new body to ensure the active involvement of all Federal agencies to implement the original concepts of the 1994 EO# 12898 on EJ. The IAC will be comprised of 17 Federal Agencies and the White House offices; the [new IAC members are listed here](#).
- [The new IAC will have a similar purpose and forum as the IWG](#), for Federal agencies to collectively advance EJ, increase local community capacity, and promote as well as implement innovative and comprehensive solutions.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (ARP)

- Special ARP allocations support the EPA to address health outcome disparities from pollution and the COVID-19 pandemic. A title-by-title ARP summary [is here](#), a U.S. Senate Committee press release [is here](#), and the [entire ARP bill is here](#).
- The EPA is still awaiting final White House clearance on a proposed plan for the ARP funding. The Office of Air & Radiation (OAR) along with Office of Policy's Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) are engaging American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO) leadership on elements of tribal consultation and broader public engagement.



MAPPING TOOLS & OPPORTUNITIES



EJSCREEN (Led by EPA HQ OEJ)

- In 2021, EPA released an update of [EJSCREEN](#), with new features (i.e., climate change indicators which users can now add flood and sea level rise data for the first time), as well as added the [Risk-Screening Environmental Indicators \(RSEI\)](#).

New Geospatial Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (Led by WH CEQ; EO # 14008)

- A base tool plans to be developed by July and will include interactive maps highlighting disadvantaged communities (internal and external facing). One related article [is here](#) (third-party website).

Opportunity Zone (OZ) Mapper (Led by EPA HQ Office of Community Revitalization, OCR)

- Newer geospatial tool designed with redevelopment in mind to inform others on prospectuses, and leverage OZ. More information [is here](#).

**REGIONAL
PERSPECTIVE ON EJ**



Mark Fite
Strategic Programs
Office Director



Brian Holtzclaw
EJCH Sec. Chief



Lashon Blakely
Children's Health
Coordinator



Sheryl Good
EJ Professional Expert



Tami Thomas-Burton
Regional
EJ Coordinator



Daphne Wilson
EJ Grants Coordinator



Karen Smith
Office Assistant

EPA HQs Office of Environmental Justice:

- **Situated within the Office of Administrator (Michael S. Regan)**
Office of Policy
[Office of Environmental Justice](#)
[Office of Community Revitalization](#)
[National Center for Environmental Economics](#)
[Office of Federal Activities](#)
[Office of Regulatory Policy and Management](#)
[Smart Sectors Program](#)

EPA Region 4's Environmental Justice and Childrens Health (EJCH) Program:

- **Situated within the Office of Regional Administrator**
- **Commitment: National EJ Program Tracking and Regional Coordination for EJ Integration**

*National
Tracking for
All Regions*



- Bucket # 1: EJ Integration at EPA *
- Bucket # 2: Engaging with External Stakeholders *
- Bucket #3: Support and Engage EJ Communities *
- Bucket #4: Tracking EJ Hotline Cases / Inquiries

Intake from National EJ Hotline Complaint

Intake from Regional EJ Hotline Complaints & Emails

HOW EJ STAFF SUPPORTS R4

(Consultation / Capacity Building / Training)



ADVISORY ROLE & SUPPORT TO DIVISIONS

- EJ Complaints - R4 Divisions & State Coordination
- “New” EJ & EJSCREEN Trainings - Internal/External
- EJ Grants Coordination - New grant cycle reviews; 11 to 29 grants \$0.85M to \$2.6M estimated
- R4’s Virtual EJ Workshop Series - “Growing Grassroots: Building Capacity for EJ work”
- EJ & Cross Media Coordination and Integration
- National EJ End-OF-Fiscal Year Report

Staff Liaison / State *

Sheryl: NC, KY, TN
Tami: AL, GA, MS
Daphne: SC, FL

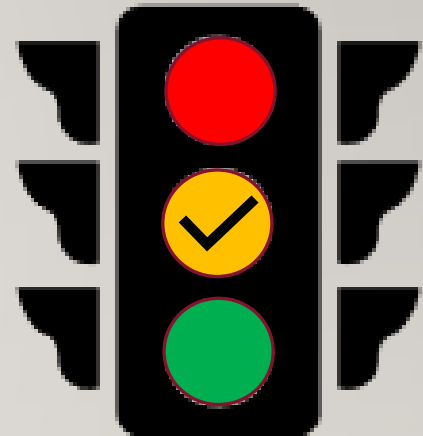
- *NCDEQ is active within EPA Region 4’s State-Tribal-Local Govt Workgroup on Environmental Justice (20-agencies)*

Staff Liaison / Division

Brian: LCRD, ORC, MSD Tami: ORA, ECAD
Sheryl: ARD, SEMD Daphne: WD, LSASD

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PROGRAM PLANNING

- An EJ Action Plan that will describe enhanced EJ integration within Divisions is being developed.



FOR MORE INFORMATION (EPA REGION 4)

Contacts

- Brian Holtzclaw: Section Chief, EJ and Children's Health Section, holtzclaw.brian@epa.gov; 404-821-0697
- Tami Thomas-Burton: EJ Coordinator, thomas-burton.tami@epa.gov; 404-562-8027
- Sheryl Good: NC State Liaison, good.sheryl@epa.gov; 404-562-9559
- Daphne Wilson: EJ Grants Manager, wilson.daphne@epa.gov; 404-562-9098

EJ Website and Resources

- www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice and [EJ Grants Website](#) and EPA's [Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Model](#)
- **Environmental Justice Hotline: Phone:** 800-962-6215 - Toll Free; **E-mail:** ejhotline@epa.gov; **Hours:** 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. ET
- **Reporting Spills and Environmental Violations Hotline:** Emergency events and spills or releases should be reported through the National Response Center. Also, one can report possible violations of environmental laws and regulations. **Phone:** 1-800-424-8802; **Webpage:** <https://echo.epa.gov/report-environmental-violations>; **Hours:** 24 hours a day