


R.E.J.O.I.C.E.
Rural Environmental Justice
Opportunities Informed by
Community Expertise

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House Natural Resources Committee
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What is Environmental Justice?

“The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”

US Environmental Protection Agency

Vermont Context

Past Environmental Justice grants for mobile home parks and legacy mining

Mobile home park residents make up 8% of state population, but 40% of those affected in Hurricane Irene

24% of Vermonters identify as having low access to grocery stores, with a third identifying as low-income

High lead exposure among resettled refugees

PFAS in Bennington and North Bennington

One of eight states with no Environmental Justice policies or frameworks in statute

First Environmental Justice legislation introduced in Vermont House in 2007

DEC & EPA

2015 Performance Partnership Agreement

1. Avoiding disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations;
2. Ensuring the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the decision-making process; and
3. Preventing the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority populations and low-income populations.

Guiding Questions

1. What are the key environmental and health issues of concern to frontline communities? How do ethnoculturally diverse and low-income communities identify, prioritize, and integrate health and ecological concerns?
2. What are the challenges to access, inclusion, and participation in state environmental and land use policy? How do these challenges contribute to existing environmental health issues?
3. What factors contribute to structural racism in Vermont, and thus contribute to environmental justice issues?

Partners

Center for Whole Communities

CVOEO Mobile Home Program

Toxics Action Center

University of Vermont

Vermont Law School

Scope of Work

Community-Led Participatory Research & Panel Discussions

Community Surveys

Spatial & Data Analysis

Site Visits

State Interagency Forums

Policy Recommendations

Pilot Communities

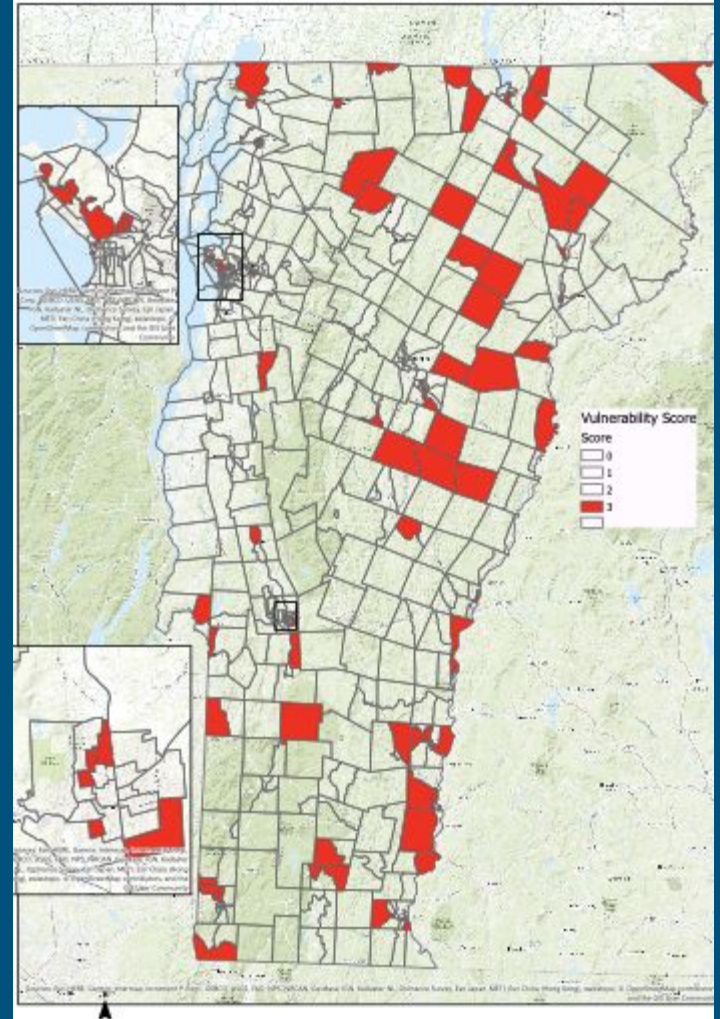
Bennington

Burlington's Old North End

Coventry

Southwest Rutland & Rutland County Mobile Home Parks

*Still determining sites in Southeast Vermont and Franklin & Addison County dairy communities



Timeline

May to August 2019

Data Collection & Relationship Building
Community Process Design

September to December 2019

Community Engagement & Surveying Round I
State Interagency Forums

January to May 2020

Community Engagement & Surveying Round II
Feedback on Draft Recommendations

June to December 2020

Finalize Policy Recommendations

January to May 2021

Present to State Agencies & Legislature

Looking Ahead...

Encouraging public involvement

Data collection & analysis available for public review

Creation of Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Questions?

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