

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ)?

- Environmental justice is 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 to ensure that each person enjoys:
 - The same degree of **protection from environmental and health hazards**,
 - **Equal access to environmental benefits**, and
 - **Equal access to the decision-making process** to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ) & TITLE VI

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is a cornerstone of EJ.
- Title VI requires recipients of federal funding to ensure that their programs do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency).
- EJ and Title VI are both rooted in the same basic principle that no person should bear an unfair share of harm on account of their race, color, or national origin.
- Going beyond Title VI, EJ specifically involves consideration of economic status, among other demographic/social determinant factors, and it is focused on **environmental and human health** burdens, benefits, and decision making.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ): WHAT IS THE COMMITMENT OF THE AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- ANR is committed to protecting the environmental health of all Vermont communities, ensuring meaningful access and equal opportunity to participate in its programs, services, and activities, and welcoming all on Vermont's public lands.
- Many of ANR's staff and programs already engage with communities in ways that promote environmental justice, such as providing infrastructure support to economically disadvantaged communities, testing for lead in drinking water in all schools and childcare centers, and communicating with public land visitors in appropriate non-English languages.
- Through the FY 2020 – 2023 Performance Partnership Agreement (PPA) with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), ANR Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) committed to ensuring that environmental justice is an integral consideration in the development and implementation of all programs.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ): WHAT IS THE COMMITMENT OF THE AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

In 2021, ANR DEC agreed to the following commitments with EPA:

- Develop a Community Engagement Plan with contract and recommendations – Complete by spring 2023
- Adopt Agency EJ policy with feedback from community engagement – Complete by fall 2024
- Develop an EJ mapping tool – Complete by 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ): WHAT IS THE COMMITMENT OF THE AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

ANR's EJ and Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator focus for 2022/2023:

- Establish Agency-wide investigation process and manual consistent with ANR Civil Rights & Nondiscrimination Grievance Procedure – complete by 2022
- Adopt a final Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEPP) with community engagement – complete by summer/fall 2022
- Develop and provide training for ANR staff for the above – ongoing
- Ongoing coordination with Department Civil Rights/EJ Liaisons, Department EJ Teams or Working Groups, and ANR Diversity & Equity Committee

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ): WHAT IS AVAILABLE AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

The following tools are available to ANR from the EPA:

- Support and training from EPA Region I staff in EJ and Civil Rights
- Development of the EJSCREEN 2.0 (mapping tool) and Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool
- EPA EJ toolkit for states to develop an Agency or State EJ Policy

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ): WHAT IS LACKING AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

More support needed in the following areas:

- A federal mapping tool is based on census data and geared toward a national perspective; it may not provide the necessary granularity for identifying and addressing disparities among Vermont communities and may not be as effective in depicting the issues affecting less populated, more rural states.
- There is yet to be a national model for how to define and apply cumulative impacts (including environmental burdens and other factors).
- States are awaiting further guidance on the application of the federal "Justice40 Initiative" to state federally funded programs.
- Appropriate levels of funding to match the magnitude of the work.



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