

**From:** Message from the Administrator <[messagefromtheadadministrator@epa.gov](mailto:messagefromtheadadministrator@epa.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 7, 2021 10:05 AM  
**To:** Message from the Administrator <[messagefromtheadadministrator@epa.gov](mailto:messagefromtheadadministrator@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** Our Commitment to Environmental Justice



Dear Colleagues,

EPA's longstanding mission is to protect human health and the environment. As your new Administrator, I believe we must be explicit about the full meaning of this important mission, recognizing that our responsibilities are to protect the health and environment of **all** Americans, including those historically marginalized, overburdened, underserved, and living with the legacy of structural racism.

On his first day in office, President Biden [directed](#) all federal agencies to embed equity into their programs and services to ensure the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals. Given EPA's mission, our pursuit of equity must include environmental justice. EPA [has defined](#) environmental justice as "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 succeed, we must infuse equity and environmental justice principles and priorities into all EPA practices, policies, and programs.

While EPA has advanced environmental justice initiatives in the past, we have much more work to do. Too many communities whose residents are predominantly of color, Indigenous, or low-income continue to suffer from disproportionately high pollution levels and the resulting adverse health and environmental impacts. We must do better. This will be one of my top priorities as Administrator, and I expect it to be one of yours as well.

When it comes to advancing EPA's mission, we must consciously and affirmatively pursue justice as we jointly confront environmental and climate challenges with our federal, state, Tribal, and local partners. This is our collective task and every office, and every EPA region, shares this responsibility. We must examine, and appropriately use, the full array of policy and legal tools at our disposal to incorporate environmental and climate justice considerations in our analysis, rulemaking, permitting, enforcement, grantmaking, operations, disaster response and recovery, and other activities. And we must strive to serve as a role model for the rest of the federal family as they work to implement the President's vision.

To this end, I am directing my leadership team, including our Assistant Administrators, General Counsel, Associate Administrators, and Regional Administrators, to work with staff in their offices and the Office of Environmental Justice to identify ways to ensure that the country's environmental laws—and the policies implemented under them—deliver benefits to all individuals and communities. Specifically, I direct all EPA offices to do the following:

1. Strengthen enforcement of violations of cornerstone environmental statutes and civil rights laws in communities overburdened by pollution.
2. Take immediate and affirmative steps to incorporate environmental justice considerations into their work, including assessing impacts to pollution-burdened, underserved, and Tribal communities in regulatory development processes and considering regulatory options to maximize benefits to these communities.
3. Take immediate and affirmative steps to improve early and more frequent engagement with pollution-burdened and underserved communities affected by agency rulemakings, permitting and enforcement decisions, and policies. Following President Biden's [memorandum](#) on strengthening the Nation-to-Nation relationship with Tribal Nations, EPA staff should engage in regular, meaningful, and robust consultation with Tribal officials in the development of federal policies that have Tribal implications.
4. Consistent with the Administration's Justice 40 initiative, consider and prioritize direct and indirect benefits to underserved communities in the development of requests for grant applications and in making grant award decisions, to the extent allowed by law.

Achieving our equity and environmental justice goals will take all of us. In the coming months, I will be working with senior leadership across the agency to establish specific timelines, deliverables, and measures of accountability to ensure the agency makes significant and enduring progress on equity and environmental justice. I appreciate your partnership in this journey and look forward to working with you on next steps.

Michael S. Regan  
Administrator