

Environmental Justice Oregon State Priority

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OR Environmental Justice Taskforce

- ▶ The Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) encourages state agencies to give all people knowledge and access to improve decisions that affect environment and the health of all Oregonians.
- ▶ Senate Bill 420 directed natural resource agencies to appoint a state agency staff person to serve as a “citizen advocate” to encourage public participation, ensure the agency considers environmental justice issues, inform the agency of the effects of its decisions on traditionally underrepresented communities, and improve plans to further the progress of environmental justice in Oregon.
 - ▶ Agencies directed to engage: Agriculture, Education, Environmental Quality, Fire Marshall, Fish and Wildlife, Forestry, Geology and Mineral Industries, Health Authority, Land Conservation and Development, Marine Board, Public Utility Commission, State Lands, Transportation, and Water Resources

OR Environmental Justice Taskforce

- ▶ The Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) was created by the Legislature to help protect Oregonians from disproportionate environmental impacts on minority and low-income populations.
 - ▶ 12 members appointed by the Governor
 - ▶ Members are well-informed on the principles of environmental justice
 - ▶ Representative of people of color, low-income communities, environmental interests, industry groups and geographically diverse areas of the state
 - ▶ 4 members are from the Advocacy Commissions - Asian Affairs, Hispanic Affairs, Black Affairs and Indian Services
- ▶ Ways this manifests into action:
 - ▶ Development of Best Practices Handbook for agencies
 - ▶ Quarterly meetings with “citizen advocates”
 - ▶ Robust discussion of environmental justice issues that arise from the community

Executive Order 20-04

- ▶ Take the boldest actions available to lower GHG emissions under current state laws
- ▶ The executive order updates the existing state carbon emissions goals to reflect the current science, setting a standard of 45% reduction from 1990 levels by 2035, and an 80% reduction from 1990 levels by 2050. The order also outlines a variety of means to reach the new goals, including:
 - ▶ Sector-specific caps on climate pollution
 - ▶ More than double the Clean Fuels Program
 - ▶ Higher energy efficiency for buildings and appliances
 - ▶ Accelerate usability of electric vehicles
 - ▶ Emissions-conscious transportation spending
 - ▶ Accelerate transition to clean energy within utility sector
 - ▶ Makes climate action a top priority for agency decision-making

Executive Order 20-04: Climate Justice

- ▶ Participation in Interagency Workgroup on Climate Impacts to Impacted Communities
- ▶ Convene an interagency workgroup to develop strategies to guide state climate actions
 - ▶ Participants: DEQ, DLCDD, ODA, ODF, ODFW, ODOE, ODOT, OHA, OWEB, OWRD, PUC, Parks & Recreation, EJTF, Global Warming Commission, and Sustainability Board
 - ▶ Determine how state agencies can be accountable to frontline communities
 - ▶ What top priorities are for environmental justice communities
 - ▶ State collaboration across sectors to put equity at the center and develop climate policy that benefits environmental justice communities
- ▶ The goal is to develop a climate justice strategy by creating an inventory of programs, policies, planning and public participation processes, and enforcement practices, and provide potential improvements in research and data collection relating to the health and environmental exposure of vulnerable populations.
- ▶ Coordination with other agency initiatives - Climate Adaptation Framework and the Climate Equity Blueprint

Charter of Interagency Workgroup

- ▶ **Purpose:** The purpose of the interagency workgroup is to enhance and elevate climate justice into the state initiative to combat climate change through agency cross-collaboration. The workgroup will fulfill its mission by identifying, strengthening and developing programs, practices, and policies that address climate change on disproportionately impacted vulnerable populations in Oregon.
- ▶ This would be accomplished by putting equity at the center of the climate debate by prioritizing frontline communities and developing climate policy to protect and benefit environmental justice communities by reducing detrimental climate impacts.
- ▶ **Goals and Objectives:**
 1. Create an inventory of programs, policies, planning and public participation processes, and enforcement practices that effect impacted communities
 2. Review and incorporating environmental justice practices from the current guidance documents and resources
 3. Develop and codify key environmental justice definitions to include in a cohesive state vision of climate justice
 4. Recommend and start implementation of improvements in current programs and practices for each agency
 5. Collect data and scope of environmental justice issues using cumulative impact analysis (cultural competency, health and environmental disparities) Taking an inventory of existing databases that would assist an analysis; identify opportunities and resources to form a cumulative impact analysis
 6. Develop a research and data collection database relating to the health and environmental exposure of vulnerable populations Developing a methodology to collect data and information
 7. Identify opportunities and barriers to applying a cumulative environmental impact assessment to reduce adverse impacts to vulnerable communities (goal to form data and information collection needs that would enable the greatest benefit or value added to vulnerable communities and populations)

Governor Brown's Racial Justice Council (RJC)

The Racial Justice Council's charge is to:

- ▶ Direct the collection of data from across sectors of society to support smart, data-driven policy decisions
- ▶ Provide principles and recommendations that center racial justice to the Governor to inform the '21-23 Governor's Recommended Budget and Tax Expenditures Report
- ▶ Creating a Racial Justice Action Plan for five specific areas:
 - o Criminal Justice Reform and Police Accountability
 - o Housing and Homelessness
 - o Economic Opportunity
 - o Health Equity
 - o Environmental Justice
 - o Education

Environmental Equity Committee (EEC) - Subcommittee under RJC

The state can and should center racial equity in its work to ensure everyone receives the myriad of benefits from our natural environment.

Solutions: Working with BIPOC community input, agencies should propose updates to programs, policies, budgets and strategic plans that centers racial equity and removes unequal treatment of people of color with respect to the state's environment and natural resources.

1. **Environmental Justice Priority:** State natural resource agencies should take a fresh look at their programs, policies, and principles within an environmental justice framework.
2. **Access to the Outdoors Priority:** State agencies should realign and reorient existing programs to improve access to the outdoors for the benefit of underserved populations.

Other initiatives may also be prioritized

Potential Future Efforts

- ▶ Rural communities, people of color, tribal communities and low-income populations are and have been the most impacted by climate change and environmental degradation.
- ▶ The EJTF has been a valued state resource in this endeavor, but there is a need for investment and capacity growth.
- ▶ Policy development underway to revitalize environmental justice as a state value by enhancing agency accountability and environmental justice capacity:
 1. Give more authority to EJTF
 2. Investment into full-time staff capacity
 3. Gather, evaluate, and assess environmental justice issues statewide
 4. Mandate best practices for state agency action
 5. Develop a community engagement and outreach platform
 6. Build capacity to frontline communities

Thank you! Questions?

- ▶ Contact information: Amira Streeter, amira.streeter@oregon.gov
- ▶ EJTF Website:
https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policy/environment/environmental_justice/Pages/default.aspx
- ▶ Executive Order PDF:
https://www.oregon.gov/gov/Documents/executive_orders/eo_20-04.pdf
- ▶ Governor's Racial Justice Council:
<https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policy/racial-justice-council>

Other resources:

EJ For All Federal Initiative

<https://www.harris.senate.gov/news/press-releases/harris-booker-duckworth-introduce-comprehensive-legislation-to-help-achieve-environmental-justice-for-all>

Oregon EJ Best Practices Handbook

<https://www.harris.senate.gov/news/press-releases/harris-booker-duckworth-introduce-comprehensive-legislation-to-help-achieve-environmental-justice-for-all>