

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POLICY

California Resources Agency

Mission Statement of the California Resources Agency

To restore, protect and manage the state's natural, historical and cultural resources for current and future generations using creative approaches and solutions based on science, collaboration and respect for all the communities and interests involved.

Environmental Justice Definition

California law defines Environmental Justice as “the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures and income with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies” (Government Code Section 65040.12 and Public Resources Code Section 72000).

Background

The concept behind the term “environmental justice” is that all people – regardless of their race, color, nation or origin or income – are able to enjoy equally high levels of environmental protection. Environmental justice communities are commonly identified as those where residents are predominantly minorities or low-income; where residents have been excluded from the environmental policy setting or decision-making process; where they are subject to a disproportionate impact from one or more environmental hazards; and where residents experience disparate implementation of environmental regulations, requirements, practices and activities in their communities. Environmental justice efforts attempt to address the inequities of environmental protection in these communities.

Agency Actions

All Departments, Boards, Commissions, Conservancies and Special Programs of the Resources Agency must consider environmental justice in their decision-making process if their actions have an impact on the environment, environmental laws, or policies. Such actions that require environmental justice consideration may include:

- Adopting regulations
- Enforcing environmental laws or regulations
- Making discretionary decisions or taking actions that affect the environment
- Providing funding for activities affecting the environment
- Interacting with the public on environmental issues

Policy

It is the policy of the Resources Agency that the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures and income shall be fully considered during the planning, decision-making, development and implementation of all Resources Agency programs, policies and activities. The intent of this policy is to ensure that the public, including minority and low-income populations, are informed of opportunities to participate in the

development and implementation of all Resources Agency programs, policies and activities, and that they are not discriminated against, treated unfairly, or caused to experience disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects from environmental decisions.

Implementation

The Resources Agency is committed to incorporating environmental justice in its processes, decisions, and programs by making reasonable efforts toward:

1. Identifying relevant populations that might be adversely affected by programs or projects submitted by outside parties, as appropriate.
2. Seeking out and consulting with community groups and leaders to encourage communication and collaboration prior to taking actions that may have an impact on the environment, environmental laws or policies.
3. Broadly distributing public information, in multiple languages if appropriate, to encourage participation in public processes.
4. Ensuring that public documents and notices relating to environmental issues that may have an impact on human health are concise, understandable, and readily accessible to the public, printed in multiple languages if appropriate.
5. Holding required public meetings, hearings, and workshops at times and in locations that encourage meaningful public participation by members of affected communities.
6. Working in conjunction with other federal, state, regional, and local agencies to ensure consideration of disproportionate impacts on relevant populations.
7. Fostering broad access to existing and proposed data sets and technology to better identify, analyze, and respond to environmental justice issues.
8. Providing appropriate training to staff on environmental justice issues so that recognition and consideration of such issues are incorporated into daily program activities.

This policy is intended only to improve the internal management of the Resources Agency and does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the State of California, its agencies or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.