



ELEVATING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

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In this presentation...



- Brief history of environmental justice
- How the state defines environmental justice
- Overview about the Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF)
- Overview of SB 286 A

History of Environmental Justice

Championed primarily by people of color, the environmental justice movement addresses a statistical fact: People who live, work, and play in America's most polluted environments are commonly people of color and the poor.

- North Carolina – PCB contamination in Warren County
- California – pesticides on San Joaquin Valley farms
- New York – sewage treatment plant West Harlem

Environmental justice movement has expanded to address how communities are impacted by environmental decisions in places that historically had little power.

Oregon defining environmental justice...

- **“Environmental justice”** is equal protection from environmental and health hazards, and meaningful public participation in decisions that affect the environment in which people live, work, learn, practice spirituality and play.
- **“Environmental justice communities”** include communities of color and low-income communities, Tribal communities, and other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes.
- **“Vulnerable communities and highly impacted communities”** includes rural communities, coastal neighborhoods, the health compromised, the elderly and youth.

Oregon Environmental Justice Taskforce

- The EJTF encourages state agencies to give all people knowledge and access to improve decisions that affect environment and the health of all Oregonians.
- Created by Senate Bill 420 to direct natural resource agencies to be accountable to consider environmental justice impacts in their work
 - 12 members appointed by the Governor who are well-informed on the principles of environmental justice
 - Agency staff person to serve as a “citizen advocate”
- Accomplishments:
 - Development of Best Practices Handbook for agencies
 - Quarterly meetings with throughout the state
 - Robust discussions of environmental justice issues



SB 286: Uplifting Environmental Justice

- The bill seeks to elevate and enhance environmental justice in the state of Oregon.
- The bill would solidify the legacy of the EJTF by:
 - Renaming the EJTF to *Environmental Justice Council* and adds additional advisory authority
 - Embedding the Council into OR DEQ while providing explicit authority to engage with other state agencies on environmental justice issues
 - Requesting that the Council help develop and implement an environmental vulnerability assessment tool for state agencies to use for community engagement
 - Supported by the Office of Environmental Justice budget request of \$3 million

SB 286: Relating to Environmental Justice

01

Increases authority
and capacity of the
EJTF

02

Creating better
accountability
measures from state
agencies

03

Creates
environmental
vulnerability
assessment data
and information tool

Thank you ~

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https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policy/environment/environmental_justice/Pages/default.aspx