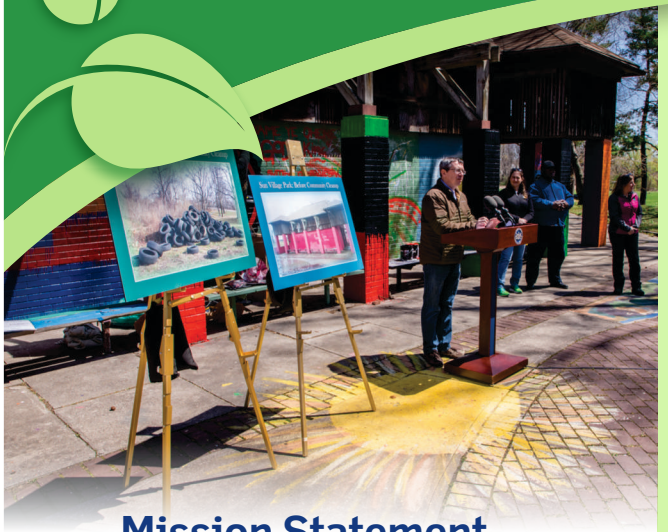

Mission Statement

The mission of the Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) is to help ensure the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people with the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental policies, regulations, and laws; as well as the identification of environmental issues that affect the commonwealth's most vulnerable communities.

Contact us

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For more information, please visit DEP's website at **www.dep.pa.gov**

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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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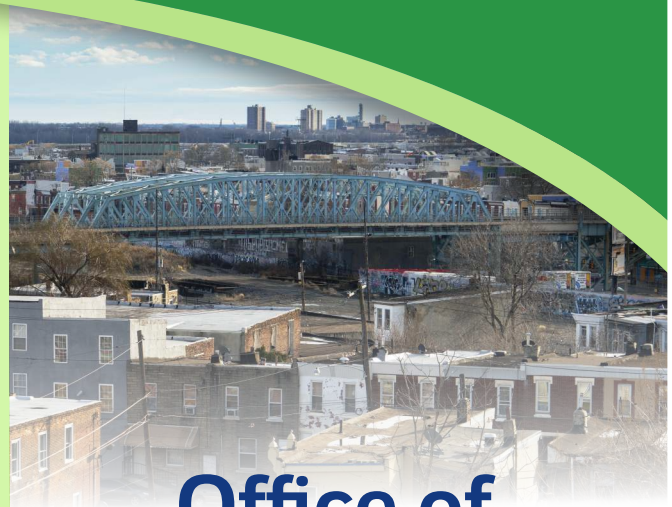

Office of Environmental Justice

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What is Environmental Justice?

Historically, minority and low-income populations have been forced to bear a disproportionate share of adverse environmental impacts. It is our duty to ensure that all Pennsylvanians, especially those that have typically been disenfranchised, are meaningfully involved in the decisions that affect their environment and that all communities are not unjustly and/or disproportionally burdened with adverse environmental impacts. Simply put, environmental justice ensures that everyone has an equal seat at the table.

How does DEP identify Environmental Justice areas?

An Environmental Justice area is any census block group where 20 percent or more individuals live at or below the federal poverty line, and/or 30 percent or more of the population identify as non-white minority, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the federal guidelines for poverty.

The Office of Environmental Justice has three main goals:

- **Minimize Adverse Environmental Impacts**
  Low income and minority populations are especially vulnerable to the negative impacts of pollution. The focus of the Office of Environmental Justice must be to ensure that all existing and potential pollution sources, both in and outside of EJ communities, are considering those most at risk regardless of where they are located.

- **Empower Communities**
  EJ communities typically have the least access to the political processes that can affect them the most, so it is critical that they have a seat at the table. In addition to the permit triggers, there must be an open dialogue between Pennsylvania industries and EJ communities.

- **Foster Economic Opportunities**
  The OEJ hopes to cultivate environmentally responsible, community-led economic development within economically depressed EJ communities. The OEJ will foster relationships with community members, local industry, partners in all levels of education, the trades, philanthropic foundations, and other stakeholders, to further economic pursuits.

Tools & Resources

OEJ Homepage –
dep.pa.gov/EnvironmentalJustice

EJAB Homepage – DEP's Environmental Justice Advisory Board (EJAB) charged with making recommendations on EJ initiatives.
dep.pa.gov/EJAB

EJ Areas Viewer – DEP's interactive mapping tool to visualize datasets and better understand Environmental Justice.
dep.pa.gov/EJViewer

eNOTICE – Automatically updates users via email as permit applications progress through the DEP's review process.
ahs.dep.pa.gov/enoticeweb

DEP Grants – Grants and rebates that can help support environmental improvement projects and education.
dep.pa.gov/grants

EPA EJ – The EPA website provides many resources for gaining an understanding of environmental justice issues nationwide.
epa.gov/environmentaljustice

PA Bulletin – Published weekly, the Bulletin includes all permit applications, actions, and special notices announced by the DEP.
pabulletin.com