



NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COUNCIL

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July 31, 2017

Scott Pruitt
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt:

As Chair of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Committee, I am pleased to offer this cover letter as a means of introducing you to a committee which has provided tremendous service and insight to EPA administrators for the past twenty-plus years.

Communities and environmental justice leaders throughout the country are highly concerned about your commitment to and plans for furthering environmental justice at the EPA and across the federal government. EPA's leadership on issues of environmental justice for the past 25 years has been absolutely instrumental in advancing federal government appreciation and incorporation of the needs of America's low-income, minority and tribal populations. These advances have enabled the government to contend with some of our nation's most challenging problems in an effort to protect and improve our most underserved and vulnerable communities. This effort cannot and will not go away. Environmental Justice has always been driven by the passions, personal strength and voices of the people who demand that their government work with and for them. Much has been achieved in meeting this demand, but much more remains to be accomplished.

As NEJAC Chair, I request a personal meeting of the NEJAC leadership with you in Washington, DC, at your absolute earliest convenience to discuss our concerns and how, as your federal advisory committee on EJ, we can work to help you further the protection of underserved and vulnerable communities during your service as administrator of EPA.

NEJAC is one of the federal government's most vibrant, effective and high profile federal advisory committees. Its twenty-eight-member constituency is purposefully one of the most diverse amongst all federal advisory committees. One of your

privileges as EPA Administrator is to appoint NEJAC's members and leadership. By its charter, the NEJAC maintains representation from community organizations, non-governmental organizations, academia, indigenous peoples and tribal governments, state and local governments, and business and industry. When giving EPA administrators advice and recommendations on issues of environmental justice, the power of the NEJAC's voice emanates from this multi-stakeholder constituency rooted in the realities of communities facing environmental justice challenges from the Black Belt of Alabama to the native villages of Alaska, and from the hills of Appalachia to the deserts of the Southwest.

At present, the NEJAC is working on two charges, including creative options for water infrastructure financing in vulnerable communities. You as Administrator carry the authority for charging us with specific issues upon which to deliberate and return advice and recommendations for your consideration. Answering these charges constitutes the primary work of the NEJAC. The Council annually has at least four public meetings – two via teleconference, and two in-person meetings with one typically occurring in Washington, DC, and the other at a location of interest elsewhere. The NEJAC receives prepared presentations and open public testimony at these meetings, and at times will draft letters of recommendation to you based upon the information and input we receive at these meetings. You will find four such letters attached to this cover letter.

The NEJAC is, however, much more than a typical federal advisory committee. Low-income, minority and tribal communities throughout the United States see the NEJAC as an impactful forum where they can come together to speak directly to their government. Citizens see the NEJAC as one of the most powerful means for lifting up their voices in hopes that our government will hear and be responsive to those voices. There are very few if any such forums regularly available to vulnerable populations in our country, and the EPA has benefitted tremendously in both concrete and intangible ways from its commitment to supporting the NEJAC as a critical means of maintaining such a direct channel to what is happening throughout the United States. For greater evidence of this, I would recommend you peruse the recently published twenty-year retrospective of NEJAC's work prepared by the Office of Environmental Justice, also attached to this letter.

I have served on the NEJAC multiple times, including during its inception. I have seen its evolution over time as it has matured and sought new means of connecting to citizens and delivering critical advice. I believe that the work of the NEJAC and the space it provides for the Agency to interact with people who need EPA's help and protection the most is fundamental to your pursuit of protecting public health and environmental quality for all Americans, especially for those communities that need such protection the most. I along with all of my fellow council-members look forward to engaging with you during your time as administrator.

By working together, we can continue to advance the work of better protecting our country's most underserved and vulnerable communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Moore', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Richard Moore
Chair
National Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Attachments

cc: NEJAC Members
Lawrence Starfield, Acting Assistant Administrator for the Office
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
Louise Wise, Principle Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Office of
Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention
Barry Breen, Acting Assistant Administrator for the Office of Land and
Emergency Management
Robert Kavlock, Acting Assistant Administrator for the Office of Research
and Development
Michael Shapiro, Acting Assistant Administrator for the Office of Water
Matthew Tejada, Director for the Office of Environmental Justice
Lilian Sotolongo Dorka, Director for the External Civil Rights Compliance
Office
Karen L. Martin, Designated Federal Officer and NEJAC Program Manager

