



NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COUNCIL

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December 18, 2018

Andrew Wheeler
Acting Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Acting Administrator Wheeler:

Thank you for the support for environmental justice and EPA's environmental justice program that you so clearly expressed in your video address to the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) as we convened in Boston on August 14-16, 2018. As noted in your remarks, EPA has been an invaluable leader across the federal government in furthering environmental justice for over twenty-five years. We, the members of the NEJAC, rely upon your continued leadership of and support for environmental justice. We have come a long way over those twenty-five years, but still have a long way to go to ensure that all people in our country enjoy the same level of protection from environmental and public health threats.

I am sorry that you were not able to attend in person as our meeting was truly rich in engagement, conversation, and expressions of environmental justice needs directly from community members. These needs were not limited to EPA's Region One. Citizens from as far away as Texas, Louisiana, Puerto Rico and Delaware joined their peers from across New England and our NEJAC members to give voice to the pressing realities and challenges facing environmental justice communities throughout the United States. Although you were not able to attend, we do want to thank and commend Regional Administrator Alexandra Dunn for so ably representing EPA at much of our meeting.

Due to the diversity and number of different issues placed before the NEJAC, we decided to pursue a mixture of pathways to gain further information and deliver advice and recommendations back to you. The NEJAC will thus prepare and deliver letters to you on several issues. The first of these letters, transmitted along with this message, is focused on the continuing delay in implementation and potential changes to the Worker Protection Standards.

In addition to our recommendations in this letter, we request that EPA senior leadership brief the NEJAC on the below enumerated issues at our next in person meeting, slated to take place in Washington DC in over the last week of February

2019. NEJAC typically convenes two in-person meetings per fiscal year. One of these meetings is typically in a regional setting, such as Boston, to provide communities around the country greater opportunity to engage with the NEJAC. The other of these two meetings typically convenes in Washington DC and focuses mostly on engaging with and receiving briefings from EPA headquarters senior leadership along with the Administrator from Region Three.

Below is a list of issues that were presented to the NEJAC at our Boston meeting. We would request that this list be used as a guide, when issues are relevant to individual programs, for senior leadership as they prepare for their engagement with NEJAC in February.

- Rollback of EPA regulations
- Changes to the NEPA process within EPA
- Building of detention centers on contaminated sites
- Use of the federal relocation act and community buyouts
- Revisions to the Worker Protection Standards
- Changes to CAFÉ standards
- Above-ground storage tank safety
- Improving EPA's disaster response program and the agency's relationship to FEMA
- Cumulative impacts and the use of Health Impact Assessments
- National research centers and the disparity in EPA research dollars given to certain academic institutions and HBCUs or MSIs
- Implementation of TSCA regulations
- Gentrification as a result of clean-ups and other infrastructure investments
- Efforts by each program to meaningfully engage EJ communities in their decisions and actions

NEJAC members also look forward to engaging with EPA leadership and staff as we work to complete a set of recommendations on the reuse and revitalization of Superfund and other contaminated sites. We understand that, as part of this charge, we will pursue issues related to your priority of improving EPA's communication of risk. We especially look forward to engaging with you and your leadership on this issue, as risk communication is of course critical to achieving environmental justice and there is a long and illuminating history of environmental justice communities and both the positive and negative perspectives of risk communication.

Again, we thank you for your continued support for and leadership of environmental justice. We formally request and look forward to engaging with you in person soon in Washington DC, and additionally hope that you will work with the Office of Environmental Justice to prioritize visiting environmental justice communities as you travel around the United States.

Sincerely,

National Environmental Justice Advisory Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Richard Moore, Chair

Attachment

cc: NEJAC Members
Henry Darwin, Acting Deputy Administrator
Brittany Bolen, Associate Administrator for the Office of Policy
Matthew Tejada, Director for the Office of Environmental Justice
Karen L. Martin, Designated Federal Officer and NEJAC Program Manager

