



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

FEB 2 2007

ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR  
FOR ENFORCEMENT AND  
COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE

Mr. Richard Moore  
Chair  
National Environmental Justice Advisory Council  
c/o Southeast Network for Environmental and Economic Justice  
804 Park Avenue, SW  
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Dear Mr. Moore:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the recommendations in the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) report, *Future Mechanisms for Stakeholder Involvement and Engagement to Address Environmental Justice* (August 2006). EPA appreciates the timely, salient advice and recommendations provided by the NEJAC on broad public policy environmental justice issues.

The report contained valuable and insightful recommendations. Moreover, the body of work produced by the NEJAC during the past year has made a significant contribution to the Agency's efforts to integrate environmental justice considerations into EPA's policies, programs, and activities. Shortly after the NEJAC submitted this report, EPA began to respond to several of the Council's recommendations. These are some of the actions that EPA has undertaken in response to the report:

EPA Deputy Administrator Marcus Peacock renewed the NEJAC charter based on the NEJAC's recommendation that EPA utilize this federal advisory committee as its primary mechanism for continuing to obtain public policy advice on environmental justice issues. EPA renewed the NEJAC charter for a customary two years, in accordance with the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). EPA intends to streamline the operation of the NEJAC, in accordance with the NEJAC's recommendation, by relying on limited-term workgroups to examine specific issues and develop draft recommendations for deliberation and possible adoption by the NEJAC Executive Council.

EPA agrees with the NEJAC that there will likely be situations of an urgent nature when the Agency can benefit from immediate advice. EPA determined that, unless there is a need for consensus advice, the Agency will seek advice from individuals with the requisite knowledge regarding the issue of concern, which may include current or past NEJAC members.

According to the regulations governing FACA, EPA cannot construe this advice as being consensus in nature. For example, in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, EPA will develop a list of environmental justice contacts that can be accessed quickly during emergency situations in the future. Such a list would also assist the PA Regions to incorporate environmental justice considerations in its disaster response operations.


Lastly, EPA continues to build the capacity of its regulatory partners and environmental justice stakeholders to engage in constructive and collaborative problem-solving to address environmental justice issues. EPA is moving forward with a host of activities, such as providing financial assistance, training, educational materials, and incentives, including:

- Financial assistance programs for community-based collaborative projects, including Environmental Justice Small Grants, Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreements, Community Action for a Renewed Environment, and Collaborative Science and Technology Network for Sustainability;
- Continued training for community-based organization representatives on the use of environmental laws and alternative dispute resolution in every EPA region and Puerto Rico;
- Development and dissemination of training materials, such as the recently produced video, "Environmental Justice: The Power of Partnerships, The Collaborative Problem-Solving Model at Work in Spartanburg, South Carolina," and the publication of "EPA's Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Model;"
- Stakeholder involvement activities in partnership with appropriate state agencies, such as Regional Environmental Justice Listening Sessions; and
- Establishment of an "Achievement in Environmental Justice Award" for business and industry, to recognize organizations which have addressed environmental justice issues or achieved environmental justice goals in a manner resulting in positive community impacts.

EPA considers these activities as part of its ongoing commitment to work with other federal, state, tribal, and local government agencies, as well as all other stakeholders, to secure and sustain environmental and/or public health improvements in communities across the nation.

Again, thank you and the members of NEJAC for your hard work and dedication in producing this report and furthering the mission of the Agency to protect human health and the environment for all people.

Sincerely,



Granta Y. Nakayama

cc: NEJAC Executive Council Members

Lynn Buhl, Deputy Assistant Administrator

Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Barry Hill, Director, Office of Environmental Justice

Charles Lee, Associate Director, Office of Environmental Justice

Laurie Dubriel, Special Assistant for OECA, Office of the Administrator