



# Environmental Justice Strategy

Secretariat and agency strategies for proactively promoting environmental justice in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts



## Executive Summary

### I. Introduction

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) seeks to protect, preserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's environmental resources while ensuring a clean energy future for the state's residents. EEA is charged with developing broad energy and environmental policy. Its policies are implemented through energy and environmental agencies that fall within the purview of the EEA Secretary, Rebecca L. Tepper.

The EEA [Environmental Justice \(EJ\) Policy](#) directed all EEA agencies to develop their own EJ strategies. The EJ Strategy is comprised of the environmental justice and equity strategies of EEA and its agencies. It is designed to inform and assist EEA staff in the planning and implementation of programs and policies under EEA's purview and is a tool for public engagement. Since the release of the Draft EJ Strategy in October 2022, the Environmental Justice Task Force has conducted further outreach, revising the Strategy to reflect public comments and providing transparent responses to public comments.

### II. Purpose and Use

The EJ Strategy consists of initiatives and programs to advance environmental justice and equity across EEA and its agencies. Environmental justice strategies that pertain to EEA and each specific agency under the purview of EEA are presented separately in this document. As a public and *living document*, the intended audience of the EJ Strategy is EEA staff as well as the public. This document is designed to inform and assist EEA staff in the planning and implementation of programs and policies under EEA's purview. It is also a tool for public engagement.

### III. Key Components of Environmental Justice Strategies

Below are highlights of core environmental justice strategies in the EJ Strategy of EEA and its agencies. In addition to issue-specific strategies that each agency developed, the themes below are cross cutting and universal.

- a. **Meaningful Engagement.** EEA and its agencies will cultivate new and strengthen existing relationships with environmental justice communities in an effective approach, including with community-led processes designed with and for environmental justice communities.
- b. **Analyzing Project Impacts.** EEA and its agencies will work towards enhancing the analysis of project impacts on environmental justice populations, including an assessment of existing environmental burdens and public health consequences as well as an analysis of any potential additional impacts of projects using available state mapping and screening tools to identify environmental justice Neighborhoods.
- c. **Language Access Plans.** EEA and its agencies will develop and adopt Language Access Plans (LAP) consistent with and under the Executive Office for Administration & Finance (A&F) Bulletin #16 and Executive Order (EO) 615.

- d. **Staff Trainings.** EEA and its agencies will coordinate environmental justice training program series to educate and inspire EEA and its agencies to understand and value environmental justice and equity, as well as to ensure environmental justice and equity remain priorities.
- e. **Metrics and Tracking.** EEA and its agencies will focus on quantifying current baseline and future environmental justice metrics to measure progress. This includes developing environmental justice metrics that consider new data infrastructures and practices.

In addition to these cross-cutting strategies mentioned above, this EJ Strategy provides clear guidance on issue-specific initiatives that relate to environmental justice. For example, one of MDAR's strategies will be to work on deepening their relationship with Tribal partners and develop farming practices informed by Indigenous Technical Knowledge. Another strategy is DCR's work to expand the urban forestry initiative through Greening Gateway Cities, where thousands of trees are planted in environmental justice communities, providing a myriad of public health benefits including mitigating extreme heat and urban heat island. The EJ Strategy includes many issue-specific strategies in every agency and office that are bold, creative, and ambitious.

#### IV. Next Steps

The EJ Strategy will be the guiding document to embed environmental justice and equity into the work of EEA and its agencies, as well as an engagement tool to plan next steps. It is a starting point. The EJ Strategy is valued as a living document that will continually transform itself in response to informed and practical public input and discussion, specifically it will require continued engagement with the Commonwealth's environmental justice communities, their community-based organizations, municipalities and state agencies and offices, and others.

As part of the iterative process, the EJ Strategy will be updated and revisited every three years. Annual EJ Progress Reports will provide updates and next steps to serve as interim status reports between each of the three-years between each EJ Strategy. The first Annual Progress Report is scheduled for December 2024 and will continue to be issued annually.

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## Letter from Secretary Rebecca Tepper

On behalf of the Healey-Driscoll Administration, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) is proud to release our inaugural Environmental Justice Strategy (EJ Strategy). With its publication, we mark a new era of environmental and energy justice policy implementation designed to bolster the Commonwealth's efforts to address the needs of these impacted communities. This document is the result of a collaborative effort involving all EEA agencies and is informed by released listening sessions and extensive public comments.

For far too long, low-income, racial, and ethnic minorities; indigenous and tribal communities; and English-isolated populations have borne the brunt of adverse environmental impacts and industrial pollution. These communities, who have historically contributed the least to carbon emissions, are now facing disproportionate negative impacts from climate change. The Healey-Driscoll Administration is committed to addressing these systemic inequities and ensuring our most vulnerable residents are prioritized, protected, and no longer left behind.

Environmental injustice looks different across our Commonwealth. It can be reflected in the lack of tree canopy exacerbating urban heat islands and worsening upper respiratory illness, a single and significant source of pollution, rising asthma rates, contaminated soil, lack of access to green and blue spaces, devastation from floods, or neighborhoods struggling to recover after worsening storms.

The climate crisis is one of the biggest threats the Commonwealth faces today but it can present opportunities as well. This moment allows us to acknowledge and confront historic inequities and systems of oppression that have excluded environmental justice populations. Together, we must ensure that environmental justice communities no longer are disproportionately impacted by the effects of environmental pollution. As we transition to a green and clean energy economy the Healey-Driscoll administration will prioritize environmental justice communities.

We are embedding environmental justice and equity into the fabric of EEA. One of my first actions as Secretary was to dedicate a senior member of our leadership team specifically to Environmental Justice and Equity. We also significantly expanded the Office of Environmental Justice and Equity to produce meaningful and measurable impact by strategically planning and implementing policies with the vision and expertise required to drive the next steps of our EJ Strategy.

With this EJ Strategy as a guide, all EEA agencies will embed environmental justice and equity into their everyday work and decision-making to deliver on environmental justice through leadership and bold action.

Sincerely,  
Rebecca L. Tepper  
Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs

## Planning Context

In September 2020, EEA convened an Environmental Justice Task Force (EJ Task Force) comprised of EEA staff serving as environmental justice points of contact representing each EEA agency. In October 2022, the Baker-Polito Administration released the Draft Environmental Justice Strategy (Draft Strategy), which included a multi-year analysis and a public process that sought input and feedback through public meetings and written comments. The Draft Strategy sought to promote environmental, energy, and climate justice across the Commonwealth in ways tailored to each EEA agency's mission. Since the release of the Draft Strategy, the EJ Task Force has conducted further outreach, revising the Strategy to reflect public comments, and providing transparent responses to public comments.

### EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity

In March 2023, Governor Healey and EEA Secretary Rebecca L. Tepper announced a new position to elevate environmental justice and equity as a critical part of the Healey-Driscoll Administration's agenda. María Belén Power joined the Administration as the Undersecretary of Environmental Justice and Equity within the EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity to accelerate environmental justice and equity within EEA and across its agencies. Governor Healey further supported this commitment by allocating the largest investment to date to EEA and provided funding for a dedicated Environmental Justice liaison within each agency who will be the point-of-contact.

The Undersecretary has focused on building a strong and impactful team, as well as traveling the State to meet environmental justice communities in every corner of the Commonwealth. This understanding of the depth and breadth of the concerns, priorities, and lived experiences of residents will guide the work of the EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity. As of December 2023, the EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity has visited and/or hosted listening sessions across the State.

## Next Steps

The current EJ Strategy<sup>1</sup> and Response to Comments for each EEA agency will be the guiding document to embed environmental justice and equity into the work of EEA's agencies, as well as an engagement tool to plan next steps. This EJ Strategy is meant to be a living document, one that is updated regularly to reflect feedback and incorporate lessons learned. Next steps include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Coordinating a series of separate Environmental Justice and Equity meetings with each EEA agency and their Environmental Justice liaison to discuss the current state

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<sup>1</sup> The EEA Environmental Justice Strategy is subject to change without any required notice. These strategies are not intended to, may not be relied upon to, and do not create any right, benefit or duty, substantive, or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by any party in any matter, civil, criminal, or administrative. These strategies shall not be construed to create any right to judicial review involving the compliance or noncompliance of EEA, its agencies, its officers, or any other person with these strategies.



- of environmental justice and equity reflected in their agency's strategies and responses.
2. Recommending long-term solutions to environmental justice and equity program gaps. These solutions will be ambitious and sustainable.
  3. Planning and coordinating efforts to improve and embed environmental justice and equity further in each EEA agency.
  4. Working with EEA agencies to update their EJ Strategy every three years, with annual progress reports.

As part of the iterative process, the EJ Strategy will be updated and revisited every three years. Annual EEA Environmental Justice Progress Reports will provide updates and next steps to serve as interim status reports between each update. The first EEA Environmental Justice Progress Report is scheduled for December 2024.

## EEA Environmental Justice Task Force

Below is a list of current and former members of the EEA Environmental Justice Task Force that contributed to the development of the Environmental Justice Strategy:

- Rose Arruda, *Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR)*
- Jorge J. Ayub, *Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)*
- Vallery Cardoso, *formerly of Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)*
- Major Kevin Clayton, *Office of Law Enforcement (OLE)*
- Beverly Craig, *Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC)*
- Tomeka Cribb, *Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA)*
- Page Czepiga, *Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office (MEPA)*
- Rebecca Davidson, *Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR)*
- Tamika Jacques, *formerly of Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC)*
- Tori Kim, *Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office (MEPA)*
- Caroline Lemoine, *formerly of Department of Public Utilities (DPU)*
- Jade Lu, *Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC)*
- Cindy Montoya, *EEA Human Resources (EEA HR)*
- Danilo Morales, *Department of Energy Resources (DOER)*
- Dominique Pahlavan, *EEA Geographic Information Systems (EEA GIS)*
- Rishi Reddi, *formerly of Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)*
- Mark Reil, *formerly of Department of Fish and Game (DFG)*
- Francisco Rodriguez, *Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)*
- James Rossignol, *Department of Fish and Game (DFG)*
- Kari Sasportas, *Office of Technical Assistance (OTA)*
- Deneen Simpson, *Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)*
- Tiffany Skogstrom, *Office of Technical Assistance (OTA)*
- Tyler Soleau, *Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM)*
- Wayne Wang, *Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB)*

- Alexis Washburn, *formerly of Department of Energy Resources (DOER)*
- Scott Seigal, *Department of Public Utilities (DPU)*
- Noah McClanan, *Department of Fish and Game (DFG)*

## Purpose and Use

Massachusetts Governor Healey and Lieutenant Governor Driscoll recognize that the climate crisis is our biggest challenge and there is enormous opportunity in our response. We want to meet this moment with innovation and urgency to make Massachusetts a world leader in combating the climate crisis and driving an equitable clean energy transition.

EEA seeks to protect, preserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's environmental resources while ensuring a clean energy future for the state's residents. EEA is charged with developing broad energy and environmental policy. Its policies are implemented through several energy and environmental agencies that fall within the purview of the EEA Secretary, Rebecca L. Tepper.

Through the stewardship of open space, protection of environmental resources, and enhancement of clean energy, EEA works to make Massachusetts a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family.

The EEA Secretariat includes: the Department of Energy Resources (DOER), Department of Public Utilities (DPU), Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Department of Fish and Game (DFG), and Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR). EEA also has the following offices within the Secretariat, including the Office of Law Enforcement (OLE or Massachusetts Environmental Police), Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) office, Coastal Zone Management (CZM) office, Office of Technical Assistance and Technology (OTA), and Division of Conservation Services (DCS). Additionally, Secretary Rebecca L. Tepper chairs the Executive Boards of the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority. All Agencies and Offices promote energy or environmental related goals and initiatives of the Administration and the EEA Secretariat.

Governor Healey and Lieutenant Governor Driscoll support environmental justice and equity and have committed to deliver good-paying jobs, healthier communities, and more affordable energy, all while ensuring that we protect our most vulnerable residents and center the voices of those who have been historically excluded.

The EJ Strategy consists of initiatives and programs to advance environmental justice and equity across EEA and its agencies. Environmental justice strategies that pertain to each specific agency under the purview of EEA are presented separately in this document.

As a public and *living document*, the intended audience of the EJ Strategy is the staff at EEA and its agencies, as well as the public. This document is designed to inform and assist staff in the planning and implementation of programs and policies. It is also a tool for public engagement.



In addition, EEA values the voices of environmental justice communities and seeks to cultivate relationships with environmental justice communities across the Commonwealth. EEA strives for meaningful community engagement for the purpose of strengthening sustainable solutions that address systemic barriers of oppression. Given the EJ Strategy's iterative process, it is critical that environmental justice communities and/or their representatives provide input and comments to the EJ Strategy produced every three years and to the Annual EEA Environmental Justice Progress Reports, as well as reach out to the Office of Environmental Justice and Equity to suggest changes to each update and Progress Report.

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# Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

## Office of the Secretary



## Environmental Justice Strategy



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## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

### Massachusetts Environmental Justice Policy

The Environmental Justice Policy, first issued in 2002, was informed by an advisory committee of stakeholders known as the Massachusetts Environmental Justice Advisory Committee. In 2014, Governor Deval L. Patrick signed Executive Order No. 552 establishing the Governor's Environmental Justice Advisory Council and requiring updates to the Environmental Justice Policy. EEA's Environmental Justice Policy was most recently updated June 2021 and directs all EEA agencies to develop their own EJ strategies to "proactively promote environmental justice in all neighborhoods in ways that are tailored to the agencies' missions." In January of 2023, Governor Healey established the nation's first Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience within the Governor's Office, which is led by a cabinet-level Climate Chief. The Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience and the Office of Environmental Justice and Equity work hand-in-hand to address climate and environmental justice through a whole-of-government approach.

EEA's Environmental Justice Policy (EJ Policy) directs all EEA agencies to develop their own EJ strategies to "proactively promote environmental justice in all neighborhoods in ways that are tailored to the agencies' missions." The EJ Policy further provides that these separate strategies will be consolidated into one "Secretariat EJ Strategy" and will be finalized by a date established by the Secretary.

In order to meet this requirement, this comprehensive Secretariat EJ Strategy has been developed by EEA's EJ Program together with EEA's agencies, offices and programs. According to the EJ Policy, the agency strategies should "consider how to appropriately integrate environmental justice considerations into their departments through policies, programs, or other strategies...EEA agencies shall identify and promote agency-sponsored projects, funding decisions, rulemakings or other actions intended to further environmental justice throughout the Commonwealth to show how the fair distribution of benefits has been measured."

### Statement of Purpose

It is the policy of EEA that environmental justice and equity principles will be an integral consideration, to the extent applicable and allowable by law, in the implementation of all EEA programs, including but not limited to, the grant of financial resources or technical assistance, the promulgation, implementation and enforcement of laws, regulations, and policies, the provision of access to both active and passive open space, and the diversification of energy sources, including energy efficiency and renewable energy generation. Further, any agency, department, division, board, and office within EEA that is making any policy, determination, or taking any other action related to a project that is subject to review under the Massachusetts Environmental Policies Act ("MEPA"), must consider "environmental justice principles," as defined in M.G.L. c. 30 section 62.



Environmental justice is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment regardless of race, color, national origin, income, or English language proficiency. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens.

### Legal Authority

EEA and its Agencies are required to comply with several state legal authorities that ensure equity in the implementation of EEA's laws and programs. These authorities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- [Chapter 8 of the Acts of 2021: An Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy](#)
- MA Executive Order [\(EO\) 526](#)
- MA Executive Order [\(EO\) 552](#)
- [The Executive Office of Administration and Finance \(A&F\)'s Language Access Policy \(Bulletin #16\)](#).
- MA Executive Order [\(EO\) 615](#)

In addition, because of its status as a recipient of funding from the federal government, EEA must ensure that its programs accord with federal law that forbids discrimination based on race, color, or national origins. <sup>[4]</sup>

### Applicability

In accordance with the requirements of the EEA Environmental Justice Policy, this EEA Environmental Justice Strategy applies to the Office of the Secretary and the following initiatives and programs housed within it:

- Massachusetts Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC)
- Massachusetts Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) programs
- Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET)
- Massachusetts Bay Estuary Program
- Massachusetts Water Resources Commission
- Massachusetts Licensed Site Professional Board
- Massachusetts Hazardous Waste Site Cleanup Professionals Board
- Massachusetts Interagency Land Committee (ILC)
- Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services (DCS)
- Other programs under the Office of Decarbonization and Resilience, including but not limited to ResilientMass, the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program (MVP) and implementation of the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA)



Offices housed within EEA and chaired by Secretary Rebecca L. Tepper that have developed their own Environmental Justice Strategies include the following:

- Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)
- Coastal Zone Management (CZM)
- Office of Technical Assistance (OTA), and the Massachusetts Environmental Police (MEP) may refer to and adopt various provisions of this strategy into their own.
- Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA)
- Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (CEC)

### EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity

In March 2023, EEA Secretary Rebecca L. Tepper announced a newly created position to elevate environmental justice and equity as a critical part of the Healey-Driscoll Administration's agenda. María Belén Power joined the administration as the Undersecretary of Environmental Justice and Equity within the EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity to accelerate environmental justice and equity in the EEA and its agencies.

### EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity: Environmental Justice and Equity Strategies

While the EEA EJ Strategy compiles all the environmental justice strategies of the EEA's Agencies, this section of the document only pertains to the environmental justice and equity strategies to be executed by the EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity within the Office of the Secretary. It is a multi-faceted strategic program to be planned and implemented within a multi-year schedule. Many of the strategies will be developed in the short-term, while others require greater coordination and planning to effectively and measurably advance.

Below are the environmental justice and equity strategies to be advanced by the EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity. The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity has begun to develop and implement these strategies through meaningful engagement with state agencies across all government and community partners from across the Commonwealth. With a fully staffed Environmental Justice and Equity Office, the strategies will progress in an effective and timely manner.

## Key Strategies

1. **EEA Energy and Environmental Agencies.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity staff will work closely with and guide the EEA's energy and environmental agencies to further build environmental justice and equity into their programs, policies, and regulations in accordance with the Environmental Justice Policy. Specifically, the EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will implement the following efforts:



- a. Coordinate a series of separate Environmental Justice and Equity Meetings with each EEA agency's Environmental Justice liaison to discuss the current state of environmental justice and equity reflected in their strategies and responses.
  - b. Recommend long-term solutions to environmental justice and equity program gaps. These solutions will be both ambitious as well as sustainable.
  - c. Plan and coordinate efforts to improve and embed environmental justice and equity further in each EEA agency.
  - d. Work with EEA agencies to update their Environmental Justice Strategy every three years, with Annual Progress Reports.
2. **Environmental Justice liaison at EEA Energy and Environmental Agencies.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will coordinate with each EEA agency's Environmental Justice liaison to ensure all liaisons across the Secretariat are aligned and coordinated on implementation strategies.
3. **Federal Grant Funding and Justice40 Initiative.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work in close coordination with the newly created Office of Federal Funds and Infrastructure and the Advisory Council on Federal Funds and Infrastructure to ensure all grant opportunities across all agencies have meaningful input from the environmental justice communities and are distributed in an equitable manner in order to have the most impactful outcome while meeting the Justice40 Initiative threshold targets. In addition, the Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will support meaningful engagement with environmental justice communities for grant applications and serve as a liaison between EEA agencies, other Secretariats, and with community-based organizations across the Commonwealth. The Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work to ensure all relationships with environmental justice communities are based on mutuality, respect, and solidarity.
4. **Equitable Clean Energy Workforce Development.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will assist EEA agencies with any existing and/or proposed programs that include and/or should include clean energy workforce development to ensure that the scope and allocated budget is equitable and has measurably impact. In addition, the EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will coordinate with and track multi-sector clean energy workforce development programs to ensure that clean energy workforce development pipeline models are developed to effectively engage, attract, train, and retain diverse populations, including people from environmental justice communities. Furthermore, EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work with appropriate Agencies to develop and implement clean energy workforce development marketing campaigns in environmental justice communities and help to oversee clean energy workforce development pipeline models to ensure the State builds the workforce necessary to meet its climate goals.



5. **Environmental Justice Metrics.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will focus on quantifying current baseline and future environmental justice metrics to measure progress. This includes developing environmental justice metrics that consider new data infrastructures and practices.
6. **Cumulative Impacts and Benefit vs Burdens.** Cumulative Impacts: Incorporating lessons learned from MassDEP’s experience in developing cumulative impacts analysis regulations, the Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work with all EEA agencies to develop relevant frameworks by which cumulative impacts analyses can be incorporated into their program and policies.  
  
Benefits and Burdens: The Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work with all EEA agencies to develop relevant frameworks by which benefits and burdens can be quantitatively or qualitatively measured when considering projects and policies that affect or pertain to environmental justice communities.
7. **Climate and Energy Equity and Justice.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work with EEA agencies and others to ensure that environmental justice communities have access to, participate in, and benefit from climate and clean energy programs. The Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work hand in hand with the Department of Energy Resources to ensure programs and grants are developed and implemented in an equitable way. Furthermore, there will be close coordination between the Office of Environmental Justice and Equity, and the Department of Public Utilities and the Energy Facilities Siting Board, to ensure all processes are inclusive and consider environmental justice principles.
8. **Global Warming Solutions Act.** On June 30, 2022, EEA issued the *Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2025 and 2030*. All aspects of this plan have been drafted through an environmental justice, energy justice, and climate justice lens, and take note of the recommendations of the Climate Justice Working Group of the Implementation Advisory Committee. The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work with the climate team to influence all aspects of planning for a just transition to a clean energy economy, including efforts regarding weatherization and electrification, land use, transportation, and workforce development.
9. **Environmental Justice for Tribes and Indigenous Peoples.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work closely with Indigenous leaders and Indigenous-led organizations focused on environmental justice in their indigenous communities. We are committed to further understanding indigenous environmental justice experiences and needs and addressing these challenges while respecting sovereignty and self-determination.



## Engagement

10. **Outreach and Engagement.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will cultivate new and strengthen existing relationships with environmental justice communities in an effective approach, including with community-led processes designed with and for environmental justice communities.
11. **Public Engagement and Trainings.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will provide public training opportunities. For example, a training on grant writing as well as a training on the review process under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), and a training on the process for submitting comments to the Energy Facilities Siting Board. The Office of Environmental Justice and Equity is open to receiving feedback from the public on what trainings would be most helpful across agencies in the Secretariat.
12. **Massachusetts Environmental Justice Task Force.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will continue to lead and facilitate the Environmental Justice Task Force, through which many of the strategies named in this document will be discussed and addressed for proper implementation.
13. **Massachusetts Environmental Justice Interagency Working Group.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will continue to lead and facilitate the Environmental Justice Interagency Working Group, which convenes all Secretariats to foster collaboration and advance environmental justice through a whole-of-government approach.
14. **Massachusetts Environmental Justice Council.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will continue to convene the Massachusetts Environmental Justice Council. Beginning in 2024, the Council will publish locations and dates for hybrid meetings planned across the Commonwealth for the entire year, providing a space for residents from different cities and town to attend in person and address the Council directly. Public comments will now be allowed twice in every Environmental Justice Council meeting - both at the beginning of the meeting and at the end of the meeting. The Office of Environmental Justice and Equity is working diligently to remove any and all barriers for participation.
15. **EEA Environmental Justice Trainings.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will coordinate an environmental justice training program series to educate and inspire EEA agencies to understand and value environmental justice and equity, as well as to ensure environmental justice and equity remain priorities. Trainings will primarily focus on environmental justice mapping tools, cumulative impact analysis, best practices for community/stakeholder outreach and engagement, and provision of language access



services training for each of the EEA agencies and offices. Environmental justice training will prioritize EEA staff responsible for implementing policies and programs; approving permits and projects; disbursing grants for the provision of open space, river maintenance, or restoration; education; and technical assistance, education, and other.

16. **Environmental Justice Organization Contact List.** The Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will continue to manage a list of environmental justice and equity community and advocacy organizations and an "Environmental Justice Mailing List" consisting of environmental justice organizations, social justice organizations, interested members of environmental justice populations, community development corporations, grassroots and community organizations, schools, health clinics, and others who may be interested in environmental justice issues. This contact list will be used to disseminate information and will be distributed by EEA to its agencies and to other Secretariats upon request for use in sending newsletters and notice of grant/funding opportunities and other general outreach information. The contact list will also be used to assist the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office (MEPA) project proponents and other entities who request information in their outreach efforts.
17. **Public Involvement.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will develop a Stakeholder Outreach, Community Engagement, and Public Involvement Plan (PIP) to provide guidance to EEA staff on effective and meaningful public involvement and community engagement. The Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work with EEA agencies to ensure each has and implements a robust PIP.
18. **Language Access Plans.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will develop and adopt a Language Access Plan (LAP) consistent with Executive Office for Administration & Finance (A&F) Bulletin #16 and Executive Order (EO) 615. In addition, EEA has initiated a process by which LAPs will be adopted by each EEA agency and office and will continue to work with them to ensure Secretariat-wide compliance with A&F Bulletin #16 and EO 615, which requires LAPs for each Department. These LAPs are applicable when agency staff are working with neighborhoods in which 5% or more individuals have limited English proficiency (LEP). EEA has designated a Language Access Coordinator who is responsible for agency implementation and compliance with the EEA's Language Access Plan. EEA has institutionalized the use of statewide contract PRF75: Foreign Language Interpretation and Translation Services for the purpose of obtaining professional translators and interpreters. Funding has been allocated for the use of these services.
19. **Stakeholder Engagement and Community Outreach.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will continue to allocate funding needed for in-person, virtual and telephonic interpretation and translation of outreach emails, informational material, reports, and other documents. Also, EEA will seek methods for restructuring the format

of public outreach and community engagement, including responses to questions and concerns raised, in order to make these opportunities more interactive and accessible.

20. **Environmental Justice Maps.** To identify environmental justice populations, the EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will continue to prepare and revise detailed maps based on the most appropriate and up-to-date data collected by the United States Census Bureau. EEA will additionally work to map out watershed communities with an overlay of environmental justice populations, in order to fully understand the environmental impacts across cities and town.
21. **Environmental Justice Webpage.** EEA launched an updated environmental justice and equity website in June 2021. The updated webpage includes environmental justice populations and links to corresponding Geographic Information System (GIS) maps. The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will maintain and update the website as an online repository for information about the Commonwealth's environmental justice and equity activities, mapping tools and data, initiatives, resources, and pertinent public comments received. EEA will also include translations of the webpages and information in the top 10 languages spoken in MA. Terminology used on the webpage will be reviewed to ensure that it is accessible to those unfamiliar with the technical language used in environmental and government work.
22. **Local and Non-English Speaking Media Outlets.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity has further developed a list of non-traditional information outlets to be made available to EEA agencies seeking public comments and to project proponents who may be asked to publish public notices for projects that are in or may otherwise impact environmental justice populations. EEA is continually maintaining this list by adding new outlets, keeping contact information up to date, and deleting outlets that are no longer in business or relevant for this purpose.
23. **Fact Sheets.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work with appropriate agencies and offices to develop fact sheets on the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office (MEPA), the Massachusetts Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC), the Massachusetts Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) programs, the Massachusetts Environmental Trust, and other programs including programs related to climate change adaptation, to inform residents in neighborhoods where Environmental Justice populations reside that these programs exist and how they function. All fact sheets will be translated into the top 10 languages spoken across the Commonwealth. Fact sheets will be available in print and digital formats for distribution.
24. **Targeted Compliance, Enforcement, and Assistance.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will seek to support communities and EEA's agencies in neighborhoods where environmental populations reside and where local environmental and public





health conditions warrant increased attention. This effort will also guide EEA agencies to coordinate their compliance assistance efforts with federal agencies, local boards of health and other municipal offices, and community-based organizations in neighborhoods where environmental justice populations reside.

## Equitable EEA

25. **EEA Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ).** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work closely with the EEA Human Resources DEI Team to assess and develop strategies to improve EEA agencies' Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice program.
26. **EEA Equitable Recruitment.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity commits to working with the EEA Human Resources DEI Team to assess and implement an equitable recruitment process, including providing training for hiring managers in order to promote equitable decision-making to avoid bias and discrimination in hiring decisions.
27. **EEA Equitable Procurement.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will assess and strengthen EEA Agencies' procurement and contracting practices to improve the EEA performance in diverse supplier spend for 2024 and beyond, to the extent permissible under rules set by the Operational Services Division.

## Environment

28. **Open Spaces.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work to promote open spaces located in neighborhoods where environmental justice populations reside, including, but not limited to, implementing the Urban Forestry and Greening the Gateway Cities programs to increase urban forest canopy in environmental justice neighborhoods.
29. **Brownfields Revitalization.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work closely with EEA agencies to continue to prioritize environmental justice populations in its collaborative work with state, local, and federal partners to maximize Brownfields remediation and redevelopment programs, including work with the Department of Housing and Economic Development, MassDevelopment, the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, the Department of Revenue, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, the Department of Energy Resources, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and other municipal, regional, non-profit, and private sector stakeholders. Examples of state programming that were designed to support vulnerable communities and would thereby benefit EJ populations are the Gateway City Parks Program, the Lt. Governor's Community Compact Cabinet, the State Revolving Fund (SRF), the Environmental Information Public Access



System (EIPAS), the Governor's Urban Agenda, MassDevelopment's Transformative Development Initiative (TDI), and Massachusetts Department of Public Health's (MDPH) Mass in Motion.

- 30. Environmental Justice and Public Health:** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) will continue to meet regularly to coordinate on environmental justice issues potentially affecting public health. This includes matters related to exposures from multiple and cumulative sources of pollution, and efforts focused on environmental justice neighborhoods including project-specific concerns or questions from environmental justice populations. Additionally, the Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will support in the creation of tools that intersect with the jurisdiction of all three agencies and contribute to increased knowledge regarding cumulative impacts of multiple pollutions sources and socio-economic factors in environmental justice neighborhoods.

## Grants

- 31. Grants.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work with EEA agencies to continue to consider environmental justice as a criterion for awarding grants and prioritizing program funding to applicable recipients. Furthermore, EEA and its agencies will continue to prioritize environmental justice populations through attentive planning practices and thoughtful consideration when permitting and developing.
- 32. Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program:** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will continue to develop and implement grant criteria to incentivize projects that assist vulnerable populations and neighborhoods and will continue to actively encourage municipal leaders and stakeholders to engage proactively with environmental justice populations. Furthermore, as the MVP program revises its required municipal-level climate resilience planning process, it will work to elevate the voices of vulnerable environmental justice communities and their representatives in the planning process and build stronger project-based partnerships between municipalities and environmental justice populations.
- 33. Economic Partnerships / Job Opportunities.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work with the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) and the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) on promoting economic partnerships and increasing job opportunities as we address our Commonwealth's housing crisis. Specifically, EEA will work with EOED to promote economic development projects that incorporate cleaner production practices and toxics-use reduction and create jobs in neighborhoods where environmental justice populations reside. This will include, but not be limited to, collaboration with the following key groups:



- i. **The Economic Assistance Coordinating Council (EACC).** With the assistance of Executive Office of Economic Development, the EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will formally request that the EACC adopt a proposal that would encourage new and existing manufacturing operations that are seeking incentives through the Economic Development Incentive Program to consult with the Office of Technical Assistance and Technology (OTA) on cleaner production manufacturing practices.
- ii. **Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD).** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will coordinate with MOBD to more effectively link the issues of economic and environmental justice at the neighborhood level.
- iii. **Executive Office of Economic Development and Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, and the Executive Office of Housing and Community Development.** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work closely with both Secretariats to maximize the benefit of its resources on issues of growth and community development as well as housing and environmental justice. This will include, but not be limited to, discussions around the growth and development of affordable housing in neighborhoods where environmental justice populations reside.
- iv. **Riverways and the Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET).** The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work with the Department of Fish and Game's Division of Ecological Restoration and MET to develop systems for incorporating environmental justice as a criterion for awarding grants with the goal of having these systems in place by the next funding cycle for these grant programs.

## Next Steps

This EEA Environmental Justice Strategy is a starting point. With its new staff, the Office of Environmental Justice and Equity is now focused on commencing with planning and coordinating environmental justice and equity initiatives.

The EEA Environmental Justice Strategy is valued as a living document that will continually transform itself in response to informed and practical public input and discussion, specifically it will require continued engagement with the Commonwealth's environmental justice communities, their community-based organizations, municipalities and state Agencies and offices, and others. The Office of Environmental Justice and Equity will work with the Department of Conservation Services and the Office of Climate Science at EEA to develop their Environmental Justice Strategy. Annual EEA Environmental Justice Progress Reports will provide updates and next steps to serve as interim status reports for each of the three-years

between each EEA Environmental Justice Strategy. The first Annual Progress Report is scheduled for December 2024 and will continue to be issued annually.

### Enforcement of the EEA Environmental Justice Strategy

EEA's agencies are committed to environmental justice and equity and strive to further improve environmental justice strategies, criteria, metrics, and methodologies. EEA responds to public inquiries and complaints with investigations, implementation of necessary corrective actions, and feedback and communication with the complainant.

For any environmental justice concerns, complaints, compliments, or ideas, please send an email to: [EJinquiries@mass.gov](mailto:EJinquiries@mass.gov). For additional assistance, please contact the EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity at the following contact information below:

María Belén Power  
Undersecretary of Environmental Justice and Equity  
EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity  
100 Cambridge Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
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Crystal A. Johnson  
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## Environmental Justice and Equity Definitions

Key terms and definitions pertaining to environmental justice and equity relevant to the EEA Environmental Justice Strategy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- [Cleaner Production](#) means a manufacturing process or approach to manufacturing production that is based on toxics use reduction and pollution prevention and that strives to incorporate the following components: waste reduction, non-polluting production, energy efficiency, safe and healthy work environments, and environmentally sound products and packaging.
- [Distributional Equity](#) is when policies and programs result in fair distribution of the benefits and burdens across all segments of communities, prioritizing those with the greatest need.
- [Energy Benefits](#) means access to funding, training, renewable or alternative energy, energy efficiency, or other beneficial resources disbursed by EEA, its agencies, and its offices.
- [Environmental Benefits](#) means the access to clean natural resources, including air, water resources, open space, constructed playgrounds and other outdoor recreational facilities and venues, clean renewable energy course, environmental enforcement, training, and funding disbursed or administered by EEA.
- [Environmental Burdens](#) means any destruction, damage, or impairment of natural resources that is not insignificant, resulting from intentional or reasonably foreseeable causes, including but not limited to climate change, air pollution, water pollution, improper sewage disposal, dumping of solid wastes and other noxious substances, excessive noise, activities that limit access to natural resources and constructed outdoor recreational facilities and venues, inadequate remediation of pollution, reduction of ground water levels, impairment of water quality, increased flooding or storm water flows, and damage to inland waterways and waterbodies, wetlands, marine shores and waters, forests, open spaces, and playgrounds from private industrial, commercial or government operations or other activity that contaminates or alters the quality of the environment and poses a risk to public health.
- [Environmental Justice Principles](#) support people's protection from environmental pollution and the ability to live in and enjoy a clean and healthy environment, regardless of race, color, income, class, handicap, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity or ancestry, religious belief or English language proficiency, which includes: (i) the meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies,

including climate change policies; and (ii) the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and environmental burdens.

- [Environmental Justice Population](#) refers to a neighborhood that meets one or more of the following criteria:
  1. The annual median household income is not more than 65 percent of the statewide annual median household income.
  2. Minorities comprise 40 percent or more of the population.
  3. 25 per cent or more of households lack English language proficiency;
  4. Minorities comprise 25 per cent or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150 per cent of the statewide annual median household income; or
  5. A geographic portion of a neighborhood designated by the Secretary as an environmental justice population in accordance with law.
- [English Isolation](#) refers to households that are English Language Isolated according to federal census forms, or do not have an adult over the age of 14 that speaks only English or English very well.
- [Equal Protection](#) means protection of all groups of people, including all federal and state protected classes under Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. Section 2000d et seq. and M.G.L. Chapter 15 1B, regardless of income, ethnicity, class, handicap, race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, genetic information, or ancestry from an unfair burden of environmental hazard from industrial, commercial, state and municipal operations or limited access to natural resources, including green space (open space) and water resources, and energy resources, including energy efficiency and renewable energy generation.
- [Low Income](#) means annual median household income at or below 65 percent of the statewide median income for Massachusetts, according to federal census data
- [Meaningful Involvement](#) means that all neighborhoods have the right and opportunity to participate in energy, climate change, and environmental decision-making including needs assessment, planning, implementation, compliance and enforcement, and evaluation, and neighborhoods are enabled and administratively assisted to participate fully through education and training, and are given transparency/accountability by government with regard to community input, and encouraged to develop environmental, energy, and climate change stewardship.
- [MEPA](#) is the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, M.G.L. Ch.30, Sections 61-62L. Under the MEPA statute, EEA reviews the potential environmental impacts of state





agency actions that exceed certain regulatory thresholds. MEPA involves public review and comment and is subject to strict statutory deadlines on the length of reviews.

- [Neighborhood](#) means a census block group as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau excluding people who live in college dormitories and people who are under formally authorized, supervised care or custody, including federal, state, or county prisons.
- [Procedural Equity](#) is when decision makers create inclusive, accessible, and authentic engagement and representation in process to develop or implement programs and policies.
- [Structural Equity](#) is when decision makers recognize and address the historical, cultural, and institutional dynamics that have led to inequities and decision-makers reform programs that perpetuate disparities and build programs that are equitable for all residents.
- [Supplemental Environmental Project](#) means an environmentally beneficial project in the settlement of environmental enforcement cases as set forth in "Policy on Supplemental Environmental Projects," Department of Environmental Protection Policy ENF-07.001.
- [Transgenerational Equity](#) is when decisions consider generational impacts and do not result in unfair burdens on future generations.
- [Vulnerable Health Environmental Justice Populations](#) means segments of the population that have evidence of higher-than-average rates of environmentally related health outcomes, including but not limited to childhood asthma, low birth weight, childhood lead poisoning, and/or heart disease morbidity.

# Office of Coastal Zone Management



**Massachusetts Office of  
Coastal Zone Management**

## Environmental Justice Strategy

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# Office of Coastal Zone Management

## CZM's Mission Statement

The mission of the Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) is to balance the impact of human activities with the protection of coastal and marine resources through planning, public involvement, education, research, and sound resource management.

## Secretariat EJ Strategy Requirements from EEA EJ Policy

The Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EEA) Environmental Justice (EJ) Policy has directed all EEA agencies to develop their own EJ Strategies. EEA agencies shall consider how to appropriately integrate environmental justice considerations into their departments through policies, programs, or other strategies. EEA agencies shall identify and promote agency-sponsored projects, funding decisions, rulemakings or other actions intended to further environmental justice throughout the Commonwealth in order to show how the fair distribution of benefits has been measured.

## EJ Strategy

CZM's strategy outlines actions for promoting and integrating EJ considerations across CZM's programs, policies, and activities, as well as meeting EEA's EJ goals to ensure that all people residing in the Commonwealth enjoy a clean and healthful environment, protection from climate change, and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens. CZM will regularly review this strategy and no less than every 3 years, review and update the strategy accordingly.

CZM's EJ Strategy identifies the actions and efforts that CZM will take to implement the EEA EJ Policy. The EJ Strategy consists of components designed to:

- enhance communication activities to expand information access for EJ populations,
- better integrate EJ populations into outreach, environmental monitoring, and citizen volunteering activities,
- strengthen technical assistance to proactively address EJ issues and support EJ populations,
- support meaningful engagement with EJ populations and input during planning, public comment, hearings, and information sessions for program activities,
- strengthen existing EJ criteria used in grant selection,
- engage directly with EJ populations to strengthen access to and use of CZM tools, products, and grants, and
- support a diverse and inclusive CZM team.

Additional details on CZM actions in these areas are described below.

## Communication

In addition to using EEA's Public Involvement and Community Engagement Plan in its outreach efforts, CZM will incorporate EJ considerations into CZM's Communication Program in the following ways:

**CZM Website.** CZM regularly updates the website to communicate with the public and stakeholders about CZM programs, projects, activities, and opportunities for the public to participate. CZM will develop a dedicated web page to highlight environmental justice activities. The page will include contact information along with details and updates on how the EJ strategy is being implemented. Information will include:

- CZM's EJ Point of Contact
- CZM Regional Offices (locations and contacts)
- Links to other CZM contact information, including how to receive the CZ-Mail e-newsletter and follow CZM on Twitter
- Links to relevant Federal & State laws and regulations
- CZM Public Notices
- Grant notices with highlights of EJ opportunities
- Information on CZM program efforts with an EJ focus

CZM will continue to update this page and the rest of the CZM website with relevant information to maintain the website as a mechanism for communication and engagement with EJ populations. For example, other CZM EJ website content includes:

- links to Coastal [Books](#) and [Podcasts that emphasize EJ and climate justice issues.](#)

**CZM social media.** CZM will evaluate ways of sharing information with EJ populations using various social media platforms, including Twitter, and alternative media outlets (focused on EJ populations) will be among the new methods considered to convey important and impactful information.

**CZ-Mail.** CZM's monthly newsletter provides useful information for EJ populations such as:

- Notices & News
- Activities & Achievements
- Program & Project Updates
- CZM Events and Stakeholder Events
- Grant & Funding Opportunities

**Virtual Outreach/Engagement.** CZM will continue using virtual communication platforms and resources (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and other services) as valuable components of engaging the public and collaborating with stakeholders, including using virtual public meetings and webinars. CZM also encourages public comments and questions through both email and standard mail as options for participating in key activities.

- CZM will continue to utilize its virtual outreach/community engagement resources to support EJ populations.

#### Environmental Monitoring & Citizen Volunteering

CZM's Marine Invader Monitoring and Information Collaborative (MIMIC) brings together volunteers and scientific experts from state, federal, and nonprofit organizations to monitor for marine invasive species along the New England coast. CZM also sponsors COASTSWEEP, an annual statewide beach cleanup involving thousands of volunteers throughout Massachusetts. Volunteers collect marine debris and record what they find. This information is then analyzed and used to identify sources of marine debris and develop education and policy initiatives to help reduce it.

- Engage with Community Based Organizations and individuals in EJ populations, with language services, if necessary, to welcome and enhance monitoring and volunteer activities.
- Engage MIMIC leads to support increased access to MIMIC activities for EJ populations in their respective regions.
- Translate monitoring materials and resources (e.g., monitoring protocols, marine invasive species identification cards, and MIMIC iNaturalist information) as needs are identified or when requested by the EJ population.
- Translate tweets and other COASTSWEEP materials to support participation of EJ populations in the annual statewide beach cleanup.
- Engage with interested EJ populations to participate in COASTSWEEP and prioritize support for beach cleanups in EJ communities.
- Build on successful efforts to engage EJ populations and transfer that success to future cleanups.

#### Technical Assistance

CZM focuses on providing technical assistance to local decision-makers and interested citizens. CZM's dedicated team of technical specialists in policy, planning, regulatory review, coastal and ocean science, monitoring, mapping, and communications, along with regional coordinators who serve as liaisons to communities and local organizations, provide a range of technical assistance, including one-on-one consultations with local officials, coastal business representatives, coastal homeowners, and others.

- Engage with EJ populations in their community to learn about and better understand environmental concerns, local priorities, and technical assistance needs.
- Incorporate EJ issues and considerations in technical assistance to local officials and other partners.
- Translate technical resources for residents (e.g., MyCoast app and StormSmart Properties fact sheets) as needs are identified or when requested by the EJ population.



### Port and Harbor Planning

CZM supports coastal communities to balance economic development and environmental protection in port and harbor areas. CZM's Port and Harbor Planning Program involves working with coastal communities to ensure that waterfront areas grow in a safe, environmentally sound, and economically prosperous manner and balance potentially competing uses within a port or harbor.

- Commit to engagement with EJ stakeholders to ensure meaningful involvement and input from affected EJ populations during harbor planning processes.
- Recommend EJ populations have representation on their harbor planning committees.
- Translate public notices submitted to the *Environmental Monitor* for public comment, hearing, or information sessions for harbor planning activities when limited English proficiency (LEP) populations are identified or when requested by the EJ population.
- Publish notice in relevant alternative newspaper or media source specifically intending to reach LEP populations for harbor planning activities within an EJ population.
- Provide interpreters and translation services for public hearing and information sessions, when LEP populations are identified or when requested by the EJ population.
- Seek to schedule public comment, hearing, and information sessions at times and locations accommodating EJ populations, when EJ populations are identified or when EJ populations are affected by proposed harbor planning processes and incorporate outreach provisions in accordance with EEA's Public Involvement and Community Engagement Plan.

### Ocean Planning

CZM serves as the lead state agency for the Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan, which protects critical marine habitat and important water-dependent uses and sets standards for new ocean-based projects in state coastal waters. Through the implementation, review, and update of the ocean plan, CZM works with other state Agencies, and regional, federal, and tribal partners to balance demand of current and emerging uses of ocean waters while protecting ocean habitats and promoting sustainable economic development.

As applicable, depending on the audience and affected geographical area:

- Translate public notices submitted to the *Environmental Monitor* for public comment on ocean plan activities.
- Publish notice in relevant alternative newspapers or media sources specifically intending to reach LEP populations for public comment on ocean plan activities.
- Provide interpretation and translation services for public comment and information sessions on ocean plan activities.
- Seek to schedule public comment and information sessions at convenient times and locations for EJ populations and incorporate outreach provisions in accordance with EEA's Public Involvement and Community Engagement Plan.

## Grant Programs

CZM manages and implements two grant programs: Coastal Resilience grant program and Coastal Habitat and Water Quality grant program. In addition, CZM manages grant programs of the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program. These programs support local efforts to address coastal flooding, erosion, and sea level rise as well as identify and address nonpoint source pollution. CZM shall review and strengthen existing environmental justice criteria for evaluating proposals and prioritize grant funding to applicable recipients.

- Annually review grant program priorities and identify opportunities to strengthen, encourage, and support participation from and benefit for EJ populations in the project development stage.
- Continue to encourage identification of linkages between proposed projects and EJ populations in requests for proposals.
- Incentivize projects which benefit EJ communities and populations, partner with community-based organizations and/or community liaisons, and detail meaningful engagement strategies in proposal review and scoring.
- Identify grant writing, grant management, or other technical assistance services available to support grant applications by EJ communities to CZM managed grant programs.
- Establish required reporting by grant awardees of success metrics related to project public engagement actions.
- Identify other state and federal grant opportunities for EJ populations that could support EJ initiatives (e.g., National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, and Seaport Economic Council).
- Provide support for comprehensive restoration planning and assessment, to ensure that projects are prioritized for maximum public benefit.
- For grant projects that implement actions within a Massachusetts Coastal Watershed, incentivize applicants to describe potential benefits and impacts to EJ populations that exist upstream or downstream of the project area.
- Identify and share outcome-based measures of success in grant reporting and case study development that quantify direct environmental, ecological, and/or educational benefits to EJ populations.

## Products & Tools

CZM develops and manages a wide range of coastal and ocean data products and tools available to the public. These products cover: coastal zone maps, geology, coastal erosion, current and future coastal flooding, habitat, ocean planning, port and harbor planning, public access to the coast, seafloor and seafloor habitat mapping, water quality, and other coastal and ocean issues.

- Examine ways to make existing products and tools more accessible for EJ populations (e.g., MORIS is configured to translate text into a number of different languages).
- Engage with EJ populations about developing tools and products that are accessible and beneficial to EJ populations.

## Hiring

CZM acknowledges the importance of having an agency workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity of the residents of Massachusetts, including the key role that such a workforce plays in advancing equitable decisions regarding environmental permitting, siting, regulatory development, and grant disbursement. With EEA, CZM commits to incorporating diversity hiring practices and to provide training for hiring managers to promote this equitable decision-making, including using criteria in job-postings that require successful applicants to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the needs of vulnerable populations, environmental justice neighborhoods, and under-served areas of the Commonwealth. CZM will consider interview questions that evaluate job candidates' knowledge of and experience with EJ topics.

## Enforcement of this EEA EJ Strategy

For any environmental justice concerns, complaints, compliments or ideas, or to find out more about our agency environmental, energy and climate justice efforts, please contact EEA's Office of Environmental Justice and equity or the contact below.

### CZM EJ Point of Contact:

Tyler Soleau  
Assistant Director  
[Tyler.Soleau@mass.gov](mailto:Tyler.Soleau@mass.gov)  
(617) 626-1243

# MA Office of Law Enforcement and MA Environmental Police



## Environmental Justice Strategy



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# MA Office of Law Enforcement and MA Environmental Police

*The Massachusetts Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) is the official name of the agency which is also known as the Massachusetts Environmental Police (MEP) and its Registration Services. Within this document we will use “MEP” to represent all services provided.*

## Massachusetts Environmental Police (MEP) Mission Statement

The mission of the Massachusetts Environmental Police is to protect the environment and natural resources of the Commonwealth through enforcement, education, and public outreach.

## Secretariat EJ Strategy Requirements from EEA EJ Policy

The Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EEA) [Environmental Justice \(EJ\) Policy](#) has directed all EEA agencies to develop their own EJ Strategies.<sup>10</sup> EEA departments shall consider how to appropriately integrate environmental justice considerations through policies, programs, or other strategies. EEA agencies shall identify and promote agency-sponsored projects, funding decisions, rulemakings or other actions intended to further environmental justice throughout the Commonwealth in order to show how the fair distribution of benefits has been measured. EEA will provide guidance to its agencies to fulfill the EJ Strategy requirement.

## EJ Strategy

This strategy outlines intentional and deliberate actions for promoting and integrating environmental justice (EJ) principles and considerations across MEP’s programs, policies, activities. This strategy refers to the following terms.

### Definitions

“[Environmental Justice \(EJ\)](#)” is defined as the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies, and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens. Environmental justice is based on the principle that all people have the right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment regardless of race, color, national origin, income, or English language proficiency.

“[Environmental Justice principles](#)”, are principles that support protection from environmental pollution and the ability to live in and enjoy a clean and healthy environment, regardless of race, color, income, class, handicap, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity or ancestry, religious belief or English language proficiency, which includes: (i) the meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies, including climate change policies; and (ii) the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and environmental burdens.



An “[Environmental Justice Population](#)”<sup>11</sup> is defined as neighborhoods where one or more of the following criteria are met:

- the annual median household income is not more than 65 per cent of the statewide annual median household income.
- minorities comprise 40 per cent or more of the population.
- 25 per cent or more of households lack English language proficiency.
- minorities comprise 25 per cent or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150 per cent of the statewide annual median household income.
- the neighborhood is designated to be an EJ Population by the Secretary of EEA in accordance with the procedure outline in Chapter 8 of the Acts of 2021 and the EEA EJ Policy

### Strategy

This MEP EJ Strategy identifies key actions which may assist with implementation of the EEA EJ Policy. This Strategy consists of components designed to address the following topics:

- Communication and Outreach: Enhance communications related to environmental justice, including language access and outreach and engagement.
- Training: Promote agency (staff) awareness and application of EJ principles in MEP’s work.
- Recruitment and Hiring: Facilitate diverse, inclusive and representative sworn and support personnel.
- Rights of Indigenous Peoples, i.e., tribes, tribal organizations and their members: Explore issues and pursue solutions related to association and enforcement of conservation law enforcement activities and public administration.
- Grant Opportunities: Seek and include EJ language in relevant grant applications.
- Metrics: Determine appropriate objective criteria to measure program effectiveness from the perspective of environmental justice interests.

### Community Outreach

Under [EEA’s EJ Policy](#), “Meaningful involvement means that all neighborhoods have the right and opportunity to participate in energy, climate change, and environmental decision-making including needs assessment, planning, implementation, compliance and enforcement, and evaluation and neighborhoods are enabled and administratively assisted to participate fully through education and training, and are given transparency/accountability by government with regard to community input, and encouraged to develop environmental, energy, and climate change stewardship.”<sup>12</sup>

[MA Environmental Police Webpage](#)<sup>13</sup>. MEP will update its webpage to include EJ oriented information. Additionally, MEP will consider and evaluate ways of sharing information through EEA’s EJ Webpage. MEP’s current EJ webpage provides useful information such as:



- MEP EJ Coordinator contact information.
- MEP Agency Director's contact information
- Links to the following:
  - EEA EJ Coordinator contact information
  - EEA EJ Policy
  - EEA's EJ Webpage
- Statistics of EJ Populations in the Commonwealth
- Key information available in top 10 non-English languages spoken in the Commonwealth.

**Public Safety / Health.** Engage in outreach to EJ neighborhoods and low English proficiency neighborhoods, particularly when addressing health protections and safety threats within the purview of MEP.

**Education.** MEP will promote equality in accessing its services. These services include:

- Educational outreach on boating and off highway vehicle safety
- Registration and Titling for boats and recreational vehicles, such as dirt bikes, motorized vessels, etc.
- Use of social media platform.

Additionally, MEP commits to an internal review to determine which booklets, forms, and literature should be translated into appropriate languages in accordance with [Administration and Finance \(A&F\) Bulletin #16 \(Language Access Policy "LAP"\)](#)<sup>14</sup>. This policy endeavors to make information and services accessible to Limited English Proficiency persons. MEP will coordinate with the Division of Fish and Game within the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and other state agencies to provide these services in an equitable manner.

#### **Stakeholder Relationships.**

- Develop a list of community groups/advocacy groups by region place on shared drive accessible to all staff and utilize EEA's list as needed.
- Continue to build relationships in the community and maintain regular communication with community/advocacy groups and municipal officials by sharing information pertaining to projects, activities in EJ populations and by posting information on the MEP webpage,
- Consider opportunities for utilizing community meetings to build relationships, using language services as needed, in order to promote conservation law enforcement-related matters. Develop and implement a method to explore if barriers exist in EJ Communities to contacting MEP,
- Develop an agency plan and policy as well as procedures to handle EJ related complaints or calls for enforcement.

#### **Virtual and Remote Outreach.**





- MEP will initiate use of video platforms (Zoom, Go To Meeting, Skype for Business, Microsoft Teams) and other services that allow trainings and meetings to take place without all participants being in the same location, and will utilize remote language services (interpreters) as needed.

#### **Limited English Proficiency.**

- In accordance with A&F Bulletin #16: *Language Access Policy*, MEP commits to an internal review to determine key documents that should be translated for dissemination to persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
- MEP will work to align its languages services with the requirements of A&F Bulletin #16
- MEP will use the state contract, [Foreign Language Interpretation and Translation Services \(PRF 75\)](#)<sup>15</sup>, to acquire translation and interpretation services as required under A&F Bulletin #16
- MEP will set aside a budget for translations and interpreters under state contract PRF 75
- MEP will translate relevant bureau-identified critical outreach materials
- As applicable, depending on the audience and affected geographical area, MEP will make interpreters available for trainings related to public safety, health, and other programs as needed, in appropriate languages, as required by A&F Bulletin #16 or the EEA EJ Policy

#### **Trainings**

MEP is committed to promoting environmental justice by designing decision-making processes that can prevent disproportionate health, environmental, social, and economic effects on persons in the Commonwealth. In order to achieve this, we strive to offer staff trainings that provide meaningful opportunity for public involvement and community engagement. MEP will allocate funding for EJ focused trainings and will ensure that appropriate agency staff is introduced to EJ issues, requirements, responsibilities, and opportunities through these trainings.

**EJ Training for MEP Personnel.** MEP will allocate funding for EJ trainings. Topics may include:

- Trainings on integrating EJ into MEP's work.
- Trainings on effective community engagement and facilitation best practices.

**MEP Personnel to attend EEA Trainings.** MEP is committed to sending staff to EJ trainings offered by EEA's EJ Team. These include trainings on:

- the use of EJ Mapping Tools, such as [EEA's GIS \(Geographic Information Systems\) EJ Viewer](#)<sup>16</sup>,



- language interpretation and translation services and requirements,
- public outreach and engagement best practices, to include social media outlets.

### Recruitment, Hiring, and Promotion

MEP acknowledges the importance of having a workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity of the residents of Massachusetts, including the key role that such a workforce plays in advancing equitable decisions regarding law enforcement and protection of public health and safety-related services.

MEP commits itself to incorporating diversity hiring practices and to provide training for hiring managers in order to promote equitable decision-making, including using criteria in job-postings that require successful applicants to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the needs of vulnerable populations, environmental justice neighborhoods, and under-served areas of the Commonwealth.

- MEP will consider and implement diverse recruitment, conversations and processes in order to:
  - attend job/career fairs and cultural centers in order to promote, educate and encourage and solicit applicants to join MEP as sworn personnel from EJ neighborhoods or with knowledge of and sensitivity to EJ issues.
  - speak with students at all levels of education so as to inform them of employment opportunities in conservation law enforcement,
  - incorporate employees' understanding of EJ populations issues and work in EJ communities in performance review criteria.

### Tribal Matters

- MEP commits to review of its internal written protocols pertaining to the interests of indigenous people in the current conservation law enforcement environment.
- MEP captures in real time certain information which may include Certain other information including types of vessels and recreational vehicles owned across the Commonwealth information or data may also reside within the public domain. MEP captures in real time, certain information as a function of its law enforcement division. Inclusive in this data may be but is not limited to the following: enforcement activities by location, including details of and reason for said enforcement, reports regarding the number of personnel deployed to manage or monitor resources location, time, location, (e.g., street, municipality, latitude and longitude), the responding/investigating officer, call reason(s), time and other relevant data necessary to court reporting, evidence processing, etc.
- The Massachusetts Environmental Police is committed to ongoing and robust outreach with indigenous People. Consideration of resources and collaboration bring groups together to focus upon resolution of problems of mutual interest. These may occasionally require professional work with Tribal liaisons at the state and federal levels.



### Grant Funding Opportunities

- Actively seek to obtain grant funding for initiatives that will benefit EJ populations in the commonwealth.

### Metrics

The EJ Policy requires agencies to measure and track progress with the EJ goals, which is then recorded in a year-end document issued by EEA. Metrics that MEP will track are:

- Budget spent on language services
- How many documents translated
- Social media postings
- How many instances of interpreters used
- Trainings hosted internally
- Trainings hosted by MEP on MEP topics in EJ communities
- MEP Staff attendance at EJ Trainings
- Hiring demographic numbers<sup>17</sup>

### Strategy Update

MEP will review and update its strategy no less than every three years.

### Enforcement of this EEA EJ Strategy

For any environmental justice concerns, complaints, compliments or ideas, or to find out more about our agency environmental, energy and climate justice efforts, please contact EEA's Office of Environmental Justice and equity or the contact below.

#### OLE EJ Point of Contact:

Major Kevin L. Clayton, M.P.A.

Chief of Enforcement

[Kevin.Clayton@mass.gov](mailto:Kevin.Clayton@mass.gov)

617-626-1650



# Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office

## Environmental Justice Strategy

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# Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office

## Environmental Justice Strategy

### Introduction

The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office is part of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), an agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The MEPA Office conducts reviews of environmental impacts of development projects and other activities that require action, such as permitting, siting, or funding, by state Agencies and certain municipal authorities (collectively, “Agency” or “Agencies”). The intent of the MEPA review process is to provide meaningful opportunities for public review of potential environmental impacts before Agency Action is taken on the project, to ensure that all feasible means will be taken to avoid, minimize, and mitigate environmental impacts.

The MEPA Office is committed to incorporating environmental justice (EJ) principles into its programs, policies, and activities. To that end, this MEPA EJ Strategy outlines a framework to implement Sections 56-60 of Chapter 8 of the Acts of 2021: *An Act Creating a Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy* (the “Climate Roadmap Act” or “the Act”), which were incorporated into the MEPA statute at M.G.L. c. 30, s. 62 to 62L.

Specifically, MEPA seeks to enhance opportunities for EJ populations to provide meaningful input on MEPA reviews and to improve methods for analyzing project impacts affecting EJ populations. MEPA also intends to take steps to incorporate EJ principles into the internal functions of the MEPA Office through improvements to public education, language access, and staff training and hiring practices.

The MEPA EJ Strategy includes the following elements, which are described in further detail in the sections below:

- Enhance public involvement requirements for projects undergoing MEPA review and located near EJ populations
- Enhance analysis of project impacts on EJ populations, including an assessment of existing environmental burdens and public health consequences and analysis of the additional impacts of projects
- Improve language access and translation/interpretation services related to key actions taken by the MEPA Office
- Improve the MEPA Office’s own public involvement and education efforts outside of individual project reviews
- Conduct staff training and update hiring practices to reflect commitment to EJ principles
- Establish metrics to track progress on successful implementation of this strategy

- Revise MEPA regulations, guidance and other procedures as needed to achieve the above goals
- Revise EJ Strategy as needed but no less than every three years

## Background

As defined in EEA’s EJ Policy (updated 2021), “Environmental Justice” refers to the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens.

The Climate Roadmap Act includes more protections for EJ populations. The legislation explicitly calls for MEPA to implement enhanced public participation protocols and establish a more comprehensive environmental impact review process for projects located near EJ populations. It calls for these reviews to identify existing unfair or inequitable environmental burdens and related public health consequences borne by EJ populations, and address how additional project impacts may cause disproportionate adverse effects or increase the risks of climate change on the EJ population.

Executive Order 552 directed EEA to update the 2002 EJ Policy and directed all Secretariats to appoint an EJ Director and implement an EJ strategy. The Executive Order also required that an Interagency Environmental Justice Working Group be formed to coordinate EJ implementation efforts across Secretariats.

The EEA EJ Policy (updated 2021) similarly directs all EEA agencies to establish their own EJ strategies to incorporate EJ principles into their programs, policies, and activities. The EEA EJ Policy requires that projects triggering certain “review thresholds” in MEPA regulations provide opportunities for “enhanced public participation” by surrounding EJ populations and to conduct an “enhanced analysis of impacts and mitigation.” These requirements will now be implemented through MEPA regulations and guidance to be issued pursuant to the Climate Roadmap Act.

## MEPA EJ Strategy

As required by the Climate Roadmap Act, the MEPA Office promulgated amended regulations to implement the provisions of the Act related to MEPA and have issued associated guidance documents. The new requirements relative to environmental justice for new project filings were put in effect on January 1, 2022. The MEPA Office completed a second round of regulatory changes effective January 6, 2023, and is considering a further phase of regulatory development in 2024-25, based on the results of a stakeholder effort led by the MEPA Office in 2021-22 and

by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) under Section 102C of the Climate Roadmap Act related to the development of a “cumulative impact analysis” framework for air permitting.

Key components of the MEPA EJ Strategy are as follows:

### **Enhanced Public Involvement Requirements for Projects Located Near EJ Populations**

The MEPA Office is committed to ensuring meaningful opportunities for public input into the MEPA review process through the MEPA Public Involvement Protocol for Environmental Justice Populations (effective date of January 1, 2022) (the “MEPA EJ Public Involvement Protocol”).<sup>2</sup> The MEPA office has aligned this protocol to be consistent with the requirements of the Climate Roadmap Act.

Upon promulgation of regulations required by the Climate Roadmap Act, the MEPA Office has required all projects required to undertake MEPA review (with limited exceptions) to engage in outreach and community engagement efforts prior to filing with the MEPA Office. All projects will be expected to provide advance notification of the project to community-based organizations (CBOs) and tribes/indigenous organizations included in a reference list maintained by the MEPA Office in consultation with the EEA EJ team.

MEPA’s enhanced public involvement protocol calls for proponents to implement best practices in community engagement, including but not limited to the following measures:

- Holding a community meeting upon request by anyone contacted through advance notification provided, or upon further dissemination of a written project summary as referenced below
- Wide dissemination of a written project summary (with translation into relevant languages) with basic project details
- Hosting a project website or making project information available through other similar electronic means
- Ensure outreach to the public is communicated in clear, understandable language and in a user-friendly format
- Engage in creative outreach by making use of pre-existing groups – such as grassroots organizations and high school groups – and natural areas of congregation – like places of worship, libraries, and farmer’s markets – to disseminate information about new projects, as well as traditional locations such as libraries and government offices
- Use of alternative and/or community-specific media outlets to publicize the project, including local public broadcasting stations, specialized newspapers, social media and community newspapers, and alternative language media

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/eea-policies-and-guidance>



- Organizing town hall meetings or other focused community meetings organized by topic, neighborhood, or interest group
- Holding community meetings during weekend or evening hours, at accessible locations near public transportation, and/or through zoom or other similar web-based service if requested or determined to be more effective for reaching EJ populations. In addition, a “hybrid format” could be considered which allows members of the public to join in-person, on Zoom, or by phone, and makes the content of the meeting available afterwards for those who cannot attend.
- Organizing public education efforts for technical aspects of the project, such as fact sheets with visuals that include a summary of the project and associated technologies and processes, using lay-person language and terms in an effort to ensure the community understands the potential impacts of the project and can provide meaningful input, and holding “science fair” type presentations or teach-ins broken by topics
- Considering door-to-door education efforts through the use of flyers or other canvassing methods
- Identifying specific neighborhoods, residents or other communities surrounding the project site that may be affected and considering targeted outreach and engagement strategies directed at such areas
- Establishing a local information repository that is convenient and accessible for the EJ Population where information related to the project can be obtained

The MEPA Office is continuing to consider ways to improve the MEPA EJ Public Involvement Protocol, including by providing individual consultations with project proponents and potentially adding minimum requirements for outreach. Community engagement activities must be documented in MEPA filings, which may be deemed inadequate if MEPA EJ protocols are not followed.

### Enhanced Analysis of Impacts on EJ Populations

As required by the Climate Roadmap Act, the MEPA Office has also expanded review of projects within or near EJ populations through the MEPA Interim Protocol for Analysis of Project Impacts on Environmental Justice Populations (effective date of January 1, 2022) (“MEPA EJ Analysis Protocol”). For projects subject to MEPA jurisdiction that meet or exceed any MEPA review threshold, the Climate Roadmap Act requires the preparation of an environmental impact report (EIR), if the project is located within 1 mile of any EJ population or 5 miles if the project will impact air quality. Under new regulations, a project is presumed to impact air quality if it meets or exceeds MEPA review thresholds under 301 CMR 11.03(8)(a)-(b), or generates 150 or more new average daily trips (adt) of diesel vehicle traffic over a duration of 1 year or more (excluding public transit trips).

Consistent with the Climate Roadmap Act, an EIR that is filed for a project located within 1- or 5-miles of an EJ population must include an assessment of existing “unfair or inequitable environmental burdens and public health consequences” borne by the EJ population. The EIR must then analyze the project’s environmental and public health impacts to determine whether it will have a “disproportionate adverse effect” on EJ populations or increase or decrease the risks of climate change.

The MEPA Office has defined in guidance the methodology for conducting the assessments described above. In coordination with the EEA EJ Director, the MEPA Office has consulted key Agencies and offices with relevant expertise relating to analysis of EJ and public health impacts, including the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), Office of Technical Assistance (OTA), Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Office (CZM), and the EEA climate team. The MEPA Office has also sought, and continues to seek, input from a wide variety of external stakeholders through a 20+ member advisory committee formed in September 2021. The MEPA Office is continuing to consider additional regulatory and policy changes to improve and strengthen environmental justice reviews. For instance, the MEPA Office intends to improve the MEPA EJ Analysis Protocol to include assessment of urban heat island effects from projects. The standards for fail-safe review under 301 CMR 11.04 are under review. The MEPA Office will also consider additional ways to incorporate public health data into the MEPA review process.

### Language Access

The MEPA Office is committed to expanding language access and translation/interpretation services for key actions taken by the Office. As noted above, the MEPA Office has issued an EJ public involvement protocol, which will include information on how to identify relevant languages for purposes of providing translation and interpretation services. These language services will apply to notices, documents and community meetings that pertain to the proposed project. The MEPA Office also intends to explore IT solutions to facilitate language access, such as the potential procurement of a Zoom account that allows for interpretation channels and exploring the use of web-based translation services. The MEPA Office is committed to securing “on call” translation services for day-to-day work, either independently or with other EEA Agencies or divisions.

The following written documents generated by the MEPA Office offer opportunities for translation services to enable those with limited English proficiency to fully engage in the MEPA process:

	Document	Responsible Entity
1	Materials used for prefiling outreach and community engagement (including written project summaries)	Proponent
2	Environmental Notification Form (ENF, or project filing) submitted to MEPA Office	Proponent
3	Notice of project published in <a href="#">Environmental Monitor</a> (web-based publication managed by MEPA Office)	MEPA
4	Post date/time/location of <a href="#">site visit</a> in Environmental Monitor	MEPA
5a	Supplemental information submitted to MEPA Office ( <i>if applicable</i> )	Proponent
5b	Email notice of comment period extensions and supplemental information to Agencies/towns/community-based organizations/individuals who attended site visit ( <i>if applicable</i> )	MEPA
6	Issue MEPA Certificate and publish in Environmental Monitor	MEPA
7	Issue MEPA advisory ruling	MEPA
8	Issue MEPA fail safe determination	MEPA

### Public Involvement Efforts by MEPA Office

In addition to requiring enhanced public involvement efforts by project proponents, the MEPA Office is committed to improve its own engagement with EJ populations in the course of conducting agency activities outside of individual project reviews. Additional efforts to be considered or already underway by the MEPA Office include the following:

- In consultation with the EEA EJ team, continue to maintain an updated list of CBOs and tribes/indigenous organizations to provide as a resource for project proponents
- Conduct periodic trainings and/or presentations to the public (with recorded videos that can be accessed by those who cannot attend), with robust outreach to EJ populations, regarding MEPA's purpose and ways to meaningfully participate in and influence the MEPA process. Such trainings will be organized in consultation with EEA EJ team.
- Explore enhancements to MEPA public comment portal to allow submission of requests to receive ongoing notification of project developments
- Revise environmental notification form (ENF) to include requirements related to EJ

- Update MEPA webpage and make it more accessible to communities across the Commonwealth

The MEPA Office is committed to improving transparency and accessibility of the MEPA review process to the general public, including to EJ populations. Recent enhancements include making full project filings available through the Environmental Monitor<sup>3</sup> and posting a monthly tracker of “advance notifications” of MEPA projects submitted under 301 CMR 11.05(4)(b).<sup>4</sup> The MEPA Office is also planning to provide public trainings about the MEPA process and will consider other ways to improve transparency.

### Staff Training and Hiring

The MEPA Office is committed to providing staff training to ensure that analysts and staff understand the MEPA EJ Strategy and associated regulations and guidance, so that they can independently implement EJ requirements during the MEPA review process. Such trainings will be mandatory, include both written and in-person instruction, and be reflected in staff evaluations so as to ensure completion.

In addition, the MEPA Office will work with the EEA HR office to promote diversity in hiring and promotional practices. MEPA acknowledges the importance of having an agency workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity of the residents of Massachusetts, including the key role that such a workforce plays in advancing equitable decisions regarding environmental and energy permitting, siting, and regulatory development. MEPA commits to incorporating diversity hiring practices, including using criteria in job-postings that require successful applicants to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the needs of vulnerable populations, environmental justice neighborhoods, and underserved areas.

### Metrics

As required under the EEA EJ Policy (updated 2021), MEPA will develop metrics to track progress of the EJ strategies described in this document. In the first year, these metrics will focus on progress in successfully implementing the requirements of the Climate Roadmap Act, and will include, as feasible:

- Number of MEPA projects located within 1 mile and 5 miles of EJ populations, together with breakdown of “ENF” and “mandatory EIR” projects
- Number of MEPA projects utilizing best practices for community engagement
- Number of MEPA projects providing mitigation for EJ impacts
- Number of MEPA projects providing language services

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<sup>3</sup> <https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/EEA/MEPA-eMonitor/home>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/guides/environmental-justice-protocols-and-resources>

The MEPA Office will consider additional metrics to track its own progress in implementing this strategy, including:

- Number and types of documents generated by the MEPA Office for which language translation is provided
- Number of EJ trainings held for staff
- Number of public trainings or recorded seminars held or produced regarding MEPA review procedures and ways to participate in MEPA reviews

## Enforcement of this EEA EJ Strategy

For any environmental justice concerns, complaints, compliments or ideas, or to find out more about our agency environmental, energy and climate justice efforts, please contact EEA's Office of Environmental Justice as outlined on Page 19 of this EEA EJ Strategy.

### MEPA EJ Points of Contact:

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# Massachusetts Office of Technical Assistance



OFFICE OF TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE & TECHNOLOGY

Environmental Justice Strategy

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# Massachusetts Office of Technical Assistance (OTA)

## OTA Mission Statement & Background

The [Massachusetts Office of Technical Assistance \(OTA\)](#) is an office within the Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EEA) that was created by, and is one of the three agencies that administers, the [Toxics Use Reduction Act \(TURA\)](#). OTA's role is to provide free and confidential pollution prevention and toxics use reduction assistance to Massachusetts businesses. The [Toxics Use Reduction Institute \(TURI\)](#) at UMass Lowell, which was also created by TURA, provides toxics users and communities with research, laboratory services, and industry / small business / community grants for toxics use reduction efforts. MassDEP is the regulatory and enforcement arm of TURA. Together, these agencies work in partnership to implement the TURA program and reduce the use of toxic chemicals in the Commonwealth. Many TURA filers and other toxics users are located in environmental justice neighborhoods, therefore, the work of the TURA program has a direct impact on reducing and preventing exposure to toxic chemicals in environmental justice populations.

## Secretariat Environmental Justice (EJ) Strategy Requirements from EEA EJ Policy

The Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EEA) [Environmental Justice \(EJ\) Policy \(updated in 2021\)](#) has directed all EEA Agencies to develop their own EJ Strategies. EEA Agencies shall consider how to appropriately integrate environmental justice considerations into their departments through policies, programs, or other strategies. EEA Agencies shall identify and promote agency-sponsored projects, funding decisions, rulemakings or other actions intended to further environmental justice throughout the Commonwealth in order to show how the fair distribution of benefits has been measured.

## EJ Strategy

OTA offers free and confidential pollution prevention and toxics use reduction assistance to Massachusetts businesses by identifying opportunities to reduce toxics use and waste, by identifying ways to conserve energy and other resources, and by assisting companies with regulatory compliance and building climate resilience. Reducing the presence of toxic chemicals in manufacturing benefits the communities in which these facilities reside. In 2021, approximately 81% of the manufacturers and businesses to which OTA provided technical assistance were located in or within a mile of an EJ neighborhood. In order to more effectively serve EJ populations, OTA will integrate EJ principles across its programs, outreach, and strategic initiatives. OTA's work will continue to include and expand company site visits to provide existing companies within EJ neighborhoods with technical assistance to conserve energy and resources,



reduce toxics use and waste, and build climate resiliency, as well as guide new or expanding businesses seeking new permits or start-up of new manufacturing operations to consider pollution prevention and resource conservation while projects are still in the planning stage. OTA's services are beneficial to EJ populations by improving public health and increasing environmental safety for toxics users through the following activities:

- Identifying opportunities to reduce risks associated with the use, manufacturing, and processing of hazardous chemicals.
- Identifying and evaluating inherently safer processes and chemistries.
- Identifying and accessing utility, state, and federal incentives and resources.
- Addressing potential safety issues and enhance compliance with regulations.
- Reducing employee exposure to hazardous chemicals and providing safer workplaces.
- Increasing the efficiency of process energy use.
- Implementing operations and maintenance best practices to conserve water and other materials.
- Applying toxics use reduction to lessen the risk of severe weather-related industrial accidents in climate change vulnerable areas, which often overlap with environmental justice populations.

#### Key Agency Actions

OTA has an ongoing commitment to advance EJ in our work and focuses on the following priority areas:

#### Statewide Toxics Use Reduction

OTA currently works in EJ neighborhoods because these areas are disproportionately burdened with toxics and chemical exposures. OTA will continue to prioritize outreach to toxics users in and near EJ neighborhoods and offer resources. OTA will note toxics use reduction successes in EJ neighborhoods and will pursue opportunities to develop case studies and other resources related to these successes that could serve as a model for facilities in other EJ neighborhoods. OTA will also continue to conduct outreach to facilities located in EJ neighborhoods or near EJ populations in order to further provide technical assistance, particularly in settings where there are clear opportunities to do so or where there is an expressed community interest in, or need for, toxics use reduction.

#### Technical Assistance Activities

Before OTA conducts a site visit at a company, the OTA staff member assisting the company sends a pre-visit questionnaire to the company contact to gather basic information about the facility. OTA amended this questionnaire in 2022, adding an EJ statement to open a dialogue with the company on their awareness of environmental justice, and the extent to which existing

company priorities include EJ (for instance, whether the company has an existing environmental justice, community engagement, corporate social responsibility, or environmental stewardship statement). If environmental justice is (explicitly or implicitly) an existing priority for the company, this will provide an opportunity for OTA staff to frame its recommendations in the context of the company's existing priorities related to environmental justice. If EJ is not already a company priority, then during OTA's engagement with the company, OTA staff are able to provide additional information on the relationship between toxics use reduction and environmental justice. In both cases, OTA considers and integrates EJ principles into its assistance and its recommendations.

Each company OTA visits receives an individualized written report outlining toxics use reduction, pollution prevention and resource conservation recommendations along with a timeline of check-ins to assist with implementation. Reports include the following language to call attention to the fact that the business resides within an environmental justice community along with the importance of protecting public health in these neighborhoods:

*Your facility is located in or within one mile of an environmental justice neighborhood.*

*If your company has questions about EJ or related questions about community engagement and meaningful community involvement, please let OTA staff know. We would be happy to offer/brainstorm resources to increase community engagement. Please contact [lead staff name] to discuss further.*

### General Outreach

OTA seeks to be a resource for environmental justice advocates and will raise awareness by:

- Identifying allies and attempting to be added to the agendas of environmental and social justice, economic development, and nonprofit organizations who value toxics use reduction and promotion of green businesses in order to get referrals and amplify OTA's services.
  - OTA will continue collecting and recording interactions through a database maintained on HubSpot. OTA has coordinated HubSpot access and has shared resources with EEA's Environmental Justice Office. Additionally, OTA has added a keyword feature to the HubSpot database to make searches for relevant content areas more efficient. OTA would be pleased to migrate to a more robust and feature-rich online project management and customer relations platform and/or an EEA-wide shared platform should the opportunity and resources become available.

- Identifying, collecting, and sharing community media resources that are published or broadcast in languages other than English with EEA and TURI through database maintained on HubSpot.
  - OTA is exploring other ways of making this data more accessible to EEA Agencies and TURI such as migrating from HubSpot to a cloud-based project management software (e.g., Monday.com).
- Creating outreach and educational materials catered to the needs of EJ populations and workers.
  - OTA will share [TURA Section 18: Citizen Involvement \(MGL c.21I Section 18\)](#) with stakeholders and help stakeholders interpret technical summaries and implications, in particular sections A and B as follows:

*Section 18. Massachusetts residents may participate in monitoring and enforcement procedures as follows:*

*(A) The department shall make available for resident review reports which are required under section ten and plan summaries which are required under section eleven; provided, however, that such availability shall be subject to the provisions of section twenty.*

*(B) Any ten residents living within ten miles of a facility required to prepare a toxics use reduction plan may petition the department for the department to examine the plan, the plan summary and any required back up data and determine their adequacy. The department shall determine whether the plan, plan summary and any required backup data meet the standards established pursuant to this chapter. The department shall report its determination to the petitioners and the toxics user in writing within a reasonable time.*

- Budgeting for materials available in languages other than English and providing appropriate oral interpretation and written translation based upon the demographics of the workforce or community engagement.
  - OTA will follow the Massachusetts language access policy and implementation guidelines [\(A&F 16\)](#) as set out by the Massachusetts Executive Office for Administration and Finance.
- Institutionalizing EJ into TURA Program by:
  - Incorporating EJ outreach and pollution prevention into OTA staff performance reviews
    - In FY 22 EJ outreach was added as a metric in staff performance evaluations. OTA has updated staff performance reviews to include metrics on EJ outreach, site visits, and technical assistance activities conducted at facilities that are in or within one mile of EJ neighborhoods.

- Reserving EJ seats on advisory committees and ensuring diverse representation in all appointments.
  - In FY 23 an EJ seat proposal was drafted for the Advisory Committee and in early FY 24 the Administrative Council voted to approve the addition of this EJ stakeholder seat on the Advisory Committee.
- Providing mandatory EJ trainings for OTA staff delivered by EEA / OTA / TURA Program and/or outside consultants with appropriate expertise as well as trainings offered by outside agency webinars and resources.
  - OTA has developed a training on historical redlining and its relation to the patterns of disproportionate siting of toxics use facilities in EJ neighborhoods that we see today. OTA has delivered this training to industry and professional organizations, including the New England Chapter of the National Association of Surface Finishing (NENASF) and the Interstate Chemicals Clearinghouse (IC2). OTA will continue to expand its training opportunities on EJ.
- Developing and piloting an OTA specific EJ outreach strategy based on a spatial density analysis of TURA filers and EJ neighborhoods. The outreach will target municipalities with multiple EJ census block groups with greater densities of TURA filers located in close proximity to raise awareness of OTA's services and generate referrals for OTA to work with these companies.
- Utilizing the EEA Community Outreach Plan/Public Involvement Plan.

#### Chemical Safety & Climate Change Resiliency:

- Developing an outreach plan/strategy that targets toxic users in climate vulnerable communities, as aligned with OTA's Chemical Safety and Climate Change Resiliency Program.
- Continuing to expand OTA's outreach and training efforts, raising awareness of the overlap of climate vulnerable areas with EJ populations and increasing referrals to OTA to work with companies that are located in these areas.
  - i. Since FY 22, OTA staff have delivered 7 trainings that have demonstrated mapping tools that can be used by manufacturers, businesses, and other stakeholders to better understand climate hazards, future climate risks, chemical safety, and EJ concerns to expand outreach and referrals.
  - ii. In FY 23, OTA hosted an EJ intern who developed additional GIS data layers, and initiated the development an interactive Story Map to illustrate the nexus of toxics use reduction, EJ, and climate resiliency.

- Working with other EEA Agencies to market OTA as a resource to help industries within Designated Port Areas (DPAs) or flood risk zones to reduce their use of toxic chemicals.
- Updated staff performance review criteria to emphasize outreach to facilities located in environmental justice areas, including with respect to OTA's chemical safety and climate change resiliency offerings.
  - i. OTA technical assistance providers maintain a company status tracking spreadsheet to keep track of site visits and follow-up recommendations and reports. This spreadsheet has been recently revised to track technical assistance activities with businesses and manufacturers located directly in or within one mile of census block groups that meet the Massachusetts statutory criteria for EJ designation. Also, as mentioned above, staff performance review criteria have been revised to include EJ metrics.
- Collaborating with DPH to ensure consistent data layers between OTA's Chemical Safety and Climate Resilience map and DPH's [Environmental Justice Mapping tool](#).
- Coordinating data layers and sources in OTA's interactive mapping tool on toxics users and climate vulnerability factors with other EEA and state Agencies to ensure consistency and incorporate updates.

#### TURI Grant / Lab / Research Referrals

- Referring businesses to TURA program services, including the following activities:
- Grant submission and review:
  - Share grant submission information through newly identified organizations in EJ communities.
  - Offer trainings to support TURI grantees.
  - Incorporate EJ scoring into TURI grants.
  - Identify other grant resources to help build sustainable programs and partnerships.
- Incorporating EJ into Toxics Use Reduction Planning Continuing Educations Conferences.
- Identifying environmental justice groups, economic development corporations, community groups, non-profit Agencies and other partners in a database shared with EEA and TURI.
- Holding recurring TURA Program-wide trainings related to the burden of toxic chemicals in EJ communities.
- Grants provided to municipalities and organizations by TURI in the past have resulted in materials and resources translated into multiple languages available on the web. These products include fact sheets on safe cleaning and disinfection developed through a Clean Water Fund health cleaning grant, translated into Spanish, and 3 fact sheets on PFAS

developed from a Community Actions Works grant, translated into Spanish as well as additional translated materials in Haitian Creole and Portuguese. One grant provided to a Spanish speaking auto center owner in Jamaica Plain to purchase lead-free wheel weights resulted in a [collaborative bilingual site visit between OTA, TURI, and the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Center](#).

- TURI is working on its own EJ strategy and hired a consultant to advance their own EJ goals and support partner Agencies in EJ work. OTA and TURI are coordinating efforts to share resources, data, and reports.

#### OTA Accomplishments in the Past Three Years

- Hired a paid EJ intern in FY 21 to assist OTA in marketing and delivering our toxics use reduction services and resources to the environmental justice community by identifying potential partners and businesses and developing outreach and educational materials. The Environmental Justice intern assisted OTA in creating an approach to engage with the environmental justice community and minority owned businesses through the following activities:
  - Creating a database of minority owned businesses that would benefit from OTA assistance and an outreach plan to target these businesses.
  - Creating a database of environmental justice groups, economic development corporations, community groups, nonprofits, and other organizations to partner with and requesting to be added to meeting agendas and webinars to market OTA's services.
  - Identifying two EJ representatives to fill existing vacancies on the [TURA Advisory Committee](#).
  - Developing an outreach plan to target toxics users in communities vulnerable to climate change and severe weather events in alignment with [OTA's Chemical Safety and Climate Change Resiliency Program](#). Future activities will use resources such as [OTA's climate change map](#), which includes an EJ layer, to identify priority focus areas and consider how OTA's resources may benefit activities in designated port areas such as East Boston.
  - The EJ intern surveyed OTA staff on EJ perceptions, ideas, and needs in order to develop a training for staff which included the history of redlining and the siting of facilities using toxic chemicals in poor and minority neighborhoods. The training was adapted to create a TURA program wide training.
- The Toxics Use Reduction Planners (TURP) Spring 2021 Continuing Education (CE) Conference featured an EJ keynote speaker, Ana Mascarenas, the Environmental Equity Director of the California's Environmental Protection Agency's Department of Toxic

Substances Control, to discuss the intersection of environmental justice and toxic chemical use reduction. A link to the recording of the presentation may be found [here](#).

- A training was provided to Lawrence auto body shop owners and employees as part of a TURI grant awarded to [Lawrence Fire Department](#). Spanish interpretation was available at this event and the [Massachusetts Clean Auto Repair \(MassCAR\)](#) curriculum has been translated into [Spanish](#).
- In FY 22 and FY 23, EJ metrics were added to staff performance reviews, and pre-site visit questionnaires and report templates were updated to include statements regarding OTA's commitment to EJ and availability to provide tailored recommendations and engage in dialogue regarding EJ for manufacturers operating in or within a mile of EJ neighborhoods.
- OTA hosted an EJ intern in FY 23 who was fulfilling a graduate practicum requirement in Environmental Health. The intern analyzed TURA program data to create static GIS maps and conducted a spatial density analysis of TURA filers and EJ populations statewide to create a strategic outreach plan to generate referrals for OTA to provide technical assistance to manufacturers in areas targeted for the greatest impact from reduction of toxic chemicals. This intern also initiated the development of content and an outline for a TURA program wide website to serve as a landing page for EJ resources. In addition, the intern designed an interactive Story Map for EJ stakeholders that will be featured on the website once it is launched.
- In the beginning of FY 24, the TURA Administrative Council voted to add an EJ stakeholder seat to the Advisory Committee to ensure EJ representation among the Committee membership.

#### Future Planning for Additional Activities

- Establish baseline and develop metrics to track EJ activities, including the following statistics in the year-end Governor's report:
  - Percent of site visits conducted in or within one mile of EJ neighborhoods.
  - Funding decisions, such as TURI grants awarded to businesses and organizations serving EJ populations and/or located in or within one mile of an EJ neighborhood, and to municipalities with one or more EJ neighborhoods.
  - Number of referrals OTA has received from other Agencies such as DEP, Local Boards of Health, or Fire Departments in or within one mile of EJ neighborhoods.
  - Number of trainings delivered to stakeholders and/or businesses and manufacturers regarding EJ.
  - Any cumulative impact analysis tools, outreach, education, or guidance developed that pertain to reducing the use of toxic chemicals impacting EJ populations.

- Should sufficient data make it feasible, OTA will attempt to also track the pounds of chemicals, including VOCs and toxics, reduced in or within one mile of EJ neighborhoods, and water and energy conservation achievements in or within one mile of EJ neighborhoods.
- Aim for plain language, accessible outreach materials to lay out regulatory processes and timelines for community input and comment to enhance participation from EJ communities. Accessible outreach may include not only translated materials but also explain concepts at a reading level that can be understood by a broader audience, reduce use of acronyms, include more graphical elements, and encourage questions and interaction with a clear point of contact.
- Explore the feasibility of moving public meetings to more accessible locations and times to expand participation and expand public outreach to non-traditional venues where the public already gathers, such as neighborhood events, public transportation hubs, and community activity centers.
- Pilot EJ strategic outreach plan targeting manufacturers in municipalities with high density of TURA filers and EJ neighborhoods based on the spatial density analysis conducted by a recent OTA EJ intern.

### Communications

OTA provides free and confidential technical assistance to Massachusetts manufacturers as part of the Toxics Use Reduction Act (TURA). While we conduct outreach to EJ communities, we also want to emphasize the importance of EJ in our communications to companies.

**OTA social media and Newsletter.** We will continue to use LinkedIn and our quarterly newsletter to promote environmental justice issues and make companies aware of opportunities to further environmental justice in the communities in which they are located. Recent newsletters and LinkedIn posts have promoted EJ initiatives, such as open comment periods for public releases of draft EJ documents and OTA trainings regarding EJ, including chemical safety and climate resiliency trainings demonstrating mapping tools that participants can use to visualize EJ populations in relation to TURA filers and other toxics use facilities.

**TURA Webpage.** OTA is working with the TURA program to establish an EJ webpage on mass.gov. OTA hosted an EJ intern in FY23 who created and developed content to be featured, including static and interactive maps. This webpage will be structured to direct different audiences, such as manufacturers, TUR planners, and EJ stakeholders to relevant content about the TURA program and include the following elements:



- Describe how to use and interpret the [TURA Data Dashboard](#), including how to find information about specific facilities, and offer guidance for interpreting the data in the context of environmental justice.
- How OTA, TURI, and DEP can engage with and provide resources to EJ populations.
- Link out to the [TURA Data Dashboard](#) and [OTA's chemical safety and climate change map](#).
- Feature static and interactive maps, including a story map.
- Include information on [TURI grants](#), and information on all available the TURA Program and EEA resources.

**OTA Webpage.** OTA will also update its webpage to highlight how OTA can benefit EJ communities and the facilities within them, highlight OTA's current EJ activities, and include available translated materials. OTA is working on finalizing a story map that will allow all audiences to explore historical redlining practices, its relation to the geography of and impacts on modern EJ populations, and locations of facilities that manufacture or use toxic chemicals. Throughout the development of the story map, OTA has consulted with multiple partner agencies including within the TURA program and across EEA. Once the story map is made public it will be shared with EEA's Environmental Justice Task Force and referenced on related webpages and mapping tools, such as the ResilientMA tool.

#### [OTA's Commitment on New Staff Hires](#)

OTA acknowledges the importance of having an agency workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity of the residents of Massachusetts, including the key role that such a workforce plays in advancing equitable decisions regarding environmental and energy permitting, siting, regulatory development, grant disbursement and law enforcement. OTA commits to incorporating diversity in recruiting and hiring practices, such as advertising job openings in Professional Diversity Network and other recruitment networks centering diverse candidates and promoting job openings through EJ contacts and stakeholders. OTA will also provide training for hiring managers in order to promote this equitable decision-making, including using criteria in job-postings that require successful applicants to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the needs of vulnerable populations, environmental justice neighborhoods, and under-served areas of the Commonwealth.

#### [Enforcement of this EEA EJ Strategy and Regular Updates](#)

For any environmental justice concerns, complaints, compliments or ideas, or to find out more about our agency environmental, energy and climate justice efforts, please contact EEA's Office of Environmental Justice as outlined on Page 19 of this EEA EJ Strategy. OTA will meet regularly

to review EJ-related practices and will, no less than every three years, review and update this EJ strategy.

Office of Technical Assistance (OTA) EJ Point of Contact:

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# Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources



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## Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources Environmental Justice Strategy

### Purpose and Acknowledgment

Article 97 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts guarantees that people shall have the right to clean air and water, freedom from excessive and unnecessary noise, and the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic qualities of their environment; and the protection of the people in their right to the conservation, development, and utilization of the agricultural, mineral, forest, water, air and other natural resources is hereby declared to be a public purpose.

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resource's ("MDAR") Environmental Justice Strategy ("EJ Strategy") reflects the policies, actions, and programs that our agency will adopt to recognize that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. Environmental Justice ("EJ") is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits.

### MDAR Mission Statement

MDAR's mission is to cultivate a robust and equitable agricultural economy, promote a safe and resilient food system, and preserve a healthy environment for Massachusetts farmers, animals, and consumers.

MDAR ensures the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its five divisions – Agricultural Conservation and Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health, Crop and Pest Services, and Produce Safety – MDAR strives to support, regulate, and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth’s agricultural community to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture’s role in energy conservation and production. Through the development of policies and the promulgation of regulations for areas of oversight, including but not limited to, animal health, food safety, land preservation, and pesticides, and by disbursing needed resources through grant programs, and oversight of standards pertaining to farms and food markets in urban and rural spaces, the Department’s divisions are working to fulfill this mission via the more than 60 programs and services it offers.

## Centering Equity

Striving for equity in agriculture and the food system is an integral part of achieving environmental justice. The following strategy references policies, practices and programs that seek to enhance equity. As such, a differentiation between equality and equity is helpful to demonstrate how MDAR, with stakeholder input, will strive for equity in all facets of its work.

While equality calls for all persons to be treated in the same way or having the same access to resources, rights and services, regardless of differences in their lived experiences, equity takes into account the intersectionality that make up a person, adopting a more multifaceted approach towards ensuring the end goal of equality and fairness. Equity recognizes the uniqueness of a person and dismantles the notion of a one-size-fits-all solution to address injustices often propagated by equality. In doing so, it enables people who have been historically marginalized, and continue to be marginalized as a result of structural, institutional and systemic biases, to have the necessary access to resources, rights and services in order to achieve success, which in turn helps ensure fairness and the end goal of equality.

## Historical Acknowledgement

In addition, MDAR holds this space to acknowledge the historic and current systemic practices that have prevented many farmers from participating in the agricultural sector. MDAR commits to reflecting on the history of the agricultural sector and formally states its commitment to ensuring equitable access to land, programs, and services. The contents of this strategy are a “living document” and will require stakeholder input and be updated as such. We welcome feedback, which can be submitted via [this link](#).

MDAR also recognizes that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (“Commonwealth”) exists on lands that Indigenous Nations inhabited for thousands of years prior to European colonization. Specifically, land belonging to the Mohican, Nipmuc, Pocumtuc, Nonotuck, Wabanaki, Agawam, Wôpanâak (Wampanoag), Pokanoket, Massa-adchu-es-et (Massachusetts), Pawtucket, Naumkeag, and Nauset tribes.

The Commonwealth is still home to many Indigenous Peoples as they continue to be stewards of this land. MDAR commits to recognizing the truths of this history, learning from Indigenous values and knowledge, collaborating with Indigenous Peoples and organizations, and working to empower Indigenous stakeholders, farmers, and producers. We plan to craft a formal land acknowledgment after consulting and engaging with Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Nations.

The following pages within this Environmental Justice Strategy outline how MDAR will act to mitigate and help to repair the displacement, systemic racism, and oppression experienced by Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Among the actions outlined in the strategy, MDAR is committed to:

- Developing a working relationship with Tribes Aboriginal to Turtle Island, respecting Indian Country Protocol and upholding Indigenous Sovereignty and the right to self-determination. Centering those relationships on respect, honor, and recognition of their current and historical ties to ancestral land;
- Partnering with, and appropriately compensating, Indigenous Nations and the organizations that represent them to develop a Land Acknowledgement;
- Developing and reviewing a strategic plan to ensure access to MDAR's programs and services for historically underserved farmers, producers, and all members of the public;
- Reducing barriers to participation by providing translation services;
- Reflecting on all feedback received in regard to this statement and other Environmental Justice issues and revising this statement as needed;
- Advancing land access for BIPOC farmers, and historically underserved farmers, and commit to land repatriation and rematriation, returning cleaned-up agricultural lands to Aboriginal tribes and communities; and
- Explore Indigenous and other culturally relevant regenerative farm practices to mitigate climate change, increase climate resilience, and protect ecosystems.

For more information on MDAR's commitment to Environmental Justice principles, please visit [MDAR's Environmental Justice website](#).

If you have any comments, questions, or concerns about MDAR's History Acknowledgement or Environmental Justice Initiatives, please contact MDAR's Director of Food and Climate Equity, Rebecca Davidson:

Rebecca Davidson

[Rebecca.Davidson@mass.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Davidson@mass.gov)

857-202-7699



## Secretariat EJ Strategy Requirements from EEA EJ Policy

The Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EEA) Environmental (EJ) Justice Policy has directed all EEA Agencies to develop their own EJ Strategies. In developing these strategies, EEA Agencies must consider how to appropriately integrate environmental justice considerations into their departments through policies, programs, or other strategies. EEA Agencies are also required to identify and promote agency-sponsored projects, funding decisions, rulemakings or other actions intended to further environmental justice throughout the Commonwealth to show how the fair distribution of benefits has been measured.

### EJ Strategy

MDAR's EJ Strategy outlines actions for promoting and integrating EJ considerations across MDAR's programs, policies, and activities to ensure the equal access and meaningful involvement of all people residing in the Commonwealth with respect to agricultural economic and environmental sustainability and the equitable development, implementation, and accessibility to information and resources. MDAR's EJ Strategy identifies the actions that will implement EEA's EJ Policy. The strategy consists of lists of components designed to address the following:

- Enhance communication related to resources and information, targeting non-English media outlets, as well as local community organizations to disseminate information;
- Increase language access with greater availability to public documents with translation as well as interpretation services for public meetings (in person or electronic).
- Evaluate boards, committees, and advisory panels to ensure equal opportunities for participation from EJ communities by working with partners to ensure awareness of opportunities and provide language assistance when needed;
- Create an EJ workgroup within MDAR, with staff from each division, to develop, discuss and ensure that policies are implemented, as well as internal EJ trainings for all staff;
- Increase ongoing efforts to incorporate diversity hiring practices and to provide training for hiring managers to promote this equitable decision-making;
- Increase support for BIPOC farmers access to farmland with MDAR's Land Licensing Program;
- Provide EJ communities with support and education of resources for spaying and neutering dogs and cats;
- Engage and provide support for socially disadvantaged farmers and producers with technical assistance, inspections, grower education, and provide any additional support through MDAR's Produce Safety Inspection Program;
- Work to ensure the Culinary (retail and vendor opportunities) Tourism Initiative, which includes education and promotion of culinary projects, is marketed to EJ communities to promote culturally appropriate foods;



- Increase promotion for Economic Retail Sales opportunities at the Mass Building, for the “Big E”, focusing on EJ communities for participating vendors;
- Develop recommendations and best practices for enhancing public involvement and accessibility opportunities in EJ communities;
- Ensure that our work in different areas of Massachusetts is specific to the needs of that community. MDAR plans to hold engagement sessions where specific communication with designated communities will allow us to share and plan for future EJ initiatives. As well, MDAR plans to leverage Buy Locals and Community-Based Organizations as a source of regional information to inform our future work; and
- Expand our network of Indigenous Peoples, Tribes, and Organizations, and engage with these contacts in our programs and EJ initiatives.

## MDAR EJ Policy

The following section outlines the policy goals MDAR commits to in order to support EJ goals in the delivery of agency programs, services, and functions:

### *Internal Policy Actions:*

- Promote agency-wide awareness of EJ principles for MDAR’s programs;
- Integrate environmental justice awareness as a component of the onboarding process;
- MDAR boards, committees, and advisory panels commit to equal opportunities for participation from EJ communities;
- Pledge to leverage environmental justice data provided by the US Census bureau, internal records of grant locations, and other ancillary data to help identify those communities and guide the department;
- Support Best Management Practices (“BMPs”) for public outreach with partners for MDAR initiatives in EJ communities; and
- Review data related to land access and food insecurity in EJ Communities and work to assess and mitigate environmental hazards.

### *Support for EJ Communities and Historically Underserved Farmers:*

- Examine opportunities to strengthen MDAR’s commitment to support EJ communities;
- Considerations for EJ criteria to be used for prioritizing grant opportunities for agricultural and food ventures;
- Ensure meaningful involvement for all people residing in EJ communities;
- Commit to work with Historically Underserved Farmers for land access and to help them be successful in their goals, whether that be transitioning from urban to larger scale farms, growing alternative crops, ensuring the future sustainability of their farm, and more. MDAR has a commitment to supporting farmers in their economic development

and environmental resiliency across the board. Consider access to wells, clean water and irrigation systems;

- Explore prioritizing funding and resources for local cooperative-led needs, barriers, challenges, and goals in our programs;
- Provide free technical assistance through MDAR's Produce Safety Program and Audit Program;
- MDAR will adhere to reviewing applications for its programs through an EJ lens to ensure equity and access to resources are strongly considered within the grant review process;
- Commit to focusing on opportunities to partner with farm-based organizations to provide additional assistance to Immigrant and BIPOC farmers to develop knowledge base (ex.: business planning, grant writing, land purchasing); and
- MDAR will continue to expand outreach/community engagement resources to environmental justice populations as a commitment to provide full access to MDAR's programs and activities.
- Enhance support for farmworkers, including farmworkers within the H-2A visa program

#### Enhanced Communication Related to Environmental Justice

MDAR is committed to broadening our reach through a more diverse network of media outlets and community-based partners in EJ neighborhoods. Our increased reach includes language translation, interpretation and will increase access to all resources and information.

**MDAR Website.** MDAR will update its environmental justice page with a translation component.

MDAR's current [Environmental Justice](#) webpage provides useful information such as:

- MDAR EJ Point Person's contact
- EEA EJ Director's contact
- Current, 2017 & 2002 EEA EJ Policy
- Links to Federal Laws & Executive Orders
- EJ maps and EEA's EJ Viewer
- Information about MDAR language interpreter/translation assistance

MDAR will continue to update its [EJ webpage](#) as a tool for the public to communicate with MDAR staff and have access to documents in multiple languages. MDAR's webpage contains many resources including EJ-related definitions, a translation request form, information on programs and services, and our EJ complaint process. Through this website, MDAR strives to support EJ communities and advocacy groups, as well as provide pertinent information regarding programs, projects, and activities within the Agricultural sector.

Located on MDAR's website as well, is information related to our Environmental Justice Newsletter. Released quarterly, with more frequent e-blasts, this newsletter shares new EJ

initiatives, information on upcoming grant opportunities, community resources, articles, and more. You can sign up to join MDAR's list of Environmental Justice stakeholders using [this form](#).

**Strengthen Community Outreach/Public Outreach.** MDAR is committed to promote environmental justice by ensuring the dissemination of information to EJ communities to improve human and animal health, as well as addressing social and economic effects on persons in the Commonwealth. To do so, MDAR will work to provide training to its staff about meaningful opportunity for public involvement and community engagement.

Under the Commonwealth's EJ Policy, "Meaningful involvement means that all neighborhoods have the right and opportunity to participate in energy, climate change, and environmental decision-making including needs assessment, planning, implementation, compliance and enforcement, and evaluation, and neighborhoods are enabled and administratively assisted to participate fully through education and training, and are given transparency/accountability by government with regard to community input, and encouraged to develop environmental, energy, and climate change stewardship."<sup>3</sup>

MDAR will work with the community, partner organizations, fellow Agencies, and local officials to strengthen community engagement and involvement. The bullets are recommendations/suggestions but are not limited to the methods MDAR will use to provide meaningful community engagement and public involvement.

- Develop and consistently update a list of community groups and partner organizations by region and place on shared drive accessible to all MDAR staff to disseminate all public information;
- Identify non-English media outlets to expand MDAR's reach to provide equal access to information for all residents;
- Ensure that all grant programs are promoted through partners and media to EJ communities;
- Continue to strengthen relationships and maintain regular communication with community organizations, industry groups and municipal officials by sharing information pertaining to activities and grant opportunities in EJ populations and by posting information on MDAR's EJ's webpage, as well as English and non-English media outlets;
- Virtual Outreach/Engagement, but not limited to video platforms like (Zoom, Go to Meeting, Skype for Business, Microsoft Teams and other services that allow meetings to take place without all participants being in the same location);
- MDAR will continue to utilize phone access for those without internet access for all activities.

**Utilize Social Media / Information Technology.**

- MDAR will also evaluate ways of implementing new technologies and media organizations to share EJ information on an ongoing basis (i.e. social media and expanding outreach with diverse and inclusive media outlets) by Summer 2022
- Continue to update and improve the environmental justice webpage.

### Limited English Proficiency.

- Use state contract - Language Interpretation and Translation Services;
- Commitment to set aside financial resources needed for Language Services;
- Continue translation of agency identified critical documents in multiple languages;
- Implement and distribute the “I Speak” language translation poster to all MDAR offices and front desk locations, and ensure all staff are aware of EJ requirements;
- Make interpreters and translation services available when limited English proficiency (LEP) population is identified or when requested by the EJ population;
- MDAR commits to complying with A&F Bulletin #16 Language Access Policy in improving access to state services, programs, and activities to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons.

### Trainings

MDAR will ensure that agency staff understand EJ issues, requirements, responsibilities, and opportunities through EJ related trainings. Specific training events will include:

- Continuing to provide GIS maps & EJ Viewer agency wide training on how program should utilize EJ map overlays;
- Routinizing regional trainings on EJ initially provided to MDAR staff;
- Training how to integrate environmental justice into MDAR’s work, (Stakeholder engagement and definition of EJ community);
- Training on language service procurement and access processes.

### Grant Opportunities

- Incorporate EEA’s EJ Policy into all MDAR grants to increase opportunities in EJ communities to create greater opportunities for commercial food production, land access and market opportunities;
  - Ensure all existing MDAR grants are distributed to EJ populations, including community members, municipal staff, media outlets, etc., who may be interested in these grant opportunities to enhance EJ goals.
  - Provide language access to all RFRs in multiple languages and provide translation services upon request.

### Future Planning for Additional Projects/Activities

- Explore the opportunities to invest in EJ areas through collaboration with relevant regional programs;

- Continue to support BIPOC and Immigrant farmers with additional resources for infrastructure support and where applicable; to increase production and marketing of cultural crops;
- Renewable Energy in EJ communities – MDAR may explore this work and discuss collaboration with DPU, DOER and other EEA Agencies;
- Explore the ability to increase open space and food production sites in EJ populations

### Metrics

MDAR will design, and make available on its EJ page, a map to show the impact of its grant awards, demonstrating the reach of its programs in EJ communities.

As required under EEA’s EJ Policy, MDAR will develop measures to track progress of the environmental justice strategies it has put into place.

Measurements will include:

- a. Tracking of translation requests and fulfillment;
- b. Number of new applicants for grant programs from EJ Communities and BIPOC Farmers;
- c. Number of documents translated;
- d. Trainings hosted internally for staff by EEA or NGO;
- e. Number of new, non-English media outlets to disseminate information in EJ Communities;
- f. Tracking of community-based partnerships made for the expansion of communication of available resources and information;
- g. Quarterly tracking through Human Resources of diversity hiring numbers.

MDAR will track and compile the information as to comply with the State’s required year-end report.

### Hiring & Performance Review

MDAR acknowledges the importance of having an agency workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity of the residents of Massachusetts, including the key role that such a workforce plays in advancing equitable decisions regarding agricultural economic and environmental programming, regulatory development, and grant disbursement. MDAR commits to increase its ongoing efforts to incorporate diversity hiring practices and to provide training for hiring managers in order to promote this equitable decision-making, including using criteria in job-postings that require successful applicants to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the needs of vulnerable populations, environmental justice neighborhoods, and under-served areas of the Commonwealth.

- Host Job Fairs at certain schools within EJ populations;

- Add to agency standard interview questions what environmental justice means to candidates in the function of this agency;
- MDAR will work to develop Employee Performance Review Criteria that will incorporate employees' sensitivity to EJ populations issues, work in EJ communities, etc.

### Enforcement of EEA EJ Policy

MDAR through the EEA EJ Policy ensures equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distributions of energy and environmental benefits and burdens. For any environmental justice concerns, complaints, compliments or ideas, or to find out more about our agency environmental, energy and climate justice efforts, please contact EEA's Office of Environmental Justice and equity or the contact below.

#### MDAR EJ Point of Contact

Rebecca Davidson  
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857-202-7699

## Department of Conservation and Recreation



## Environmental Justice Strategy

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## Department of Conservation and Recreation Environmental Justice Strategy

### DCR Mission Statement

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) seeks to protect, promote, and enhance our commonwealth of natural, cultural and recreational resources for the well-being of all.

In meeting today's responsibilities and planning for tomorrow, DCR's focus is on:

- Improving outdoor recreational opportunities and natural resource conservation
- Restoring and improving our facilities
- Expanding public involvement in carrying out DCR's mission, and
- Establishing first-rate management systems and practices.

The health and happiness of people across Massachusetts depend on the accessibility and quality of our green infrastructure - our natural resources, recreational facilities, and great historic landscapes. The DCR continues to improve the vital connection between people and the environment.

### Background

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) established an Environmental Justice (EJ) Policy to help address the disproportionate share of environmental burdens experienced by lower-income people and communities of color who, at the same time, often lack environmental assets in their neighborhoods. The policy is designed to help ensure protection from environmental pollution as well as promote community involvement in planning and environmental decision-making to maintain and/or enhance the environmental quality of these neighborhoods.

The June 2021 EJ Policy includes the following definition, "Environmental justice is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment regardless of race, color, national origin, income, or English language proficiency. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens."

## EEA Directive for Agency EJ Strategy Development

The Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs Environmental Justice Policy directs all EEA agencies to develop individual EJ Strategies. In doing so, EEA agencies shall consider how to appropriately integrate environmental justice considerations into their departments through policies, programs, or other strategies. EEA agencies shall identify and promote agency-sponsored projects, funding decisions, rulemakings or other actions intended to further environmental justice throughout the Commonwealth to show how the fair distribution of benefits has been measured. These strategies will be consolidated into one final Secretariat EJ Strategy.

## DCR Environmental Justice Strategy

DCR manages and oversees more than 450,000 acres throughout Massachusetts and provides the public with a diversity of recreational opportunities. This includes but is not limited to, parks, forests, beaches, watersheds, ball fields and courts, playgrounds, campsites, swimming pools, spray decks, downhill ski areas, trails, and ice-skating rinks. As one of the largest land holding agencies in the Commonwealth, with facilities and parks in communities across the state, the DCR can play a prominent role in ensuring equitable access to natural, cultural, and recreational resources, and meaningful involvement of all people and communities in their stewardship.

A more detailed snapshot from DCR's asset management database shows that DCR owns or manage over 3,996 buildings and improvements throughout the Commonwealth. Close to 25% (981) of these facilities are in block groups that fit EEA's classification of an Environmental Justice Block Group. Out of this group of facilities, 15% are in block groups that fit the minority criteria (minorities comprise 40% or more of the population), 4% of these facilities are in block groups that fall within the minority and income threshold (<65% statewide annual median household income).

With facilities and park lands in many Environmental Justice communities across the Commonwealth, DCR has important resources to offer and can be an integral part of EEA's Environmental Justice Strategy.

<b>EJ Criteria</b>	<b># of DCR Buildings/Improvements(B/I) in EJ Block Groups by EJ Criteria</b>
Minority	592 (15%)
Minority, Income	162 (4%)
Income	152 (3%)
Minority, Income, and English Isolation	51 (1%)
Minority, English Isolation	13 (0.3%)
English Isolation	11 (0.2%)
Total Buildings in EJ Block Groups	981 (25%)
Total B/I in owned and managed by DCR	3,996

DCR's EJ Strategy identifies the areas of focus and action the agency will undertake to advance the 2017 EEA EJ Policy. The Strategy consists of components designed to:

- Expand accessibility of agency resources and EJ community engagement.
- Promote transparency and information sharing relative to EJ initiatives and goals.
- Prioritize and evaluate investments and allocation of resources to serve EJ populations.
- Provide training to staff on Environmental Justice principles and elements of DCR's EJ Strategy.

DCR will periodically review and update the Strategy no less than every three years.

#### **Accessibility and Engagement**

DCR is committed to increasing engagement with environmental justice populations and enhancing the agency's accessibility. In order to ensure inclusive public engagement practices and processes, DCR commits to developing an EJ Public Participation Plan. The plan will supplement the agency's existing public outreach program. Key actions of the plan will include:

- Develop a centralized inventory of community and advocacy groups by region accessible to all DCR staff.

- Continue to build relationships in EJ communities and maintain ongoing communication with community/advocacy groups and municipal officials. This includes sharing information and seeking input pertaining to projects, programs, activities, and grant opportunities.
- Provide staff with guidance and best practices for community outreach. Continue using the EEA data portal to provide community specific information to the public.
- Virtual meeting formats have helped facilitate reaching wider audiences and addressed some barriers to participation (e.g., transportation, child care). DCR will continue to offer virtual and hybrid public meetings, webinars, and engagement opportunities, as well as seeking comments and suggestions through email and web form submittal as an option for participation.
- DCR has allocated funding and is establishing a protocol for language translation services, meeting ADA requirements and following best practices. This will include availability of language translation services at community engagement meetings, on demand translation service, and translation of critical outreach information. The agency will develop a consistent approach for translation of materials and documents.
- DCR is developing a multi-lingual approach to signage and will continue to evaluate the inclusion of languages other than English in order to improve communication of warnings and advisories to limited English proficiency communities. Examples: DCR's Shorebird Recovery Program is developing interpretive signage about threatened and endangered shorebirds found on DCR beaches that will be available in multiple languages through a QR code. Similarly, DCR developed signs for areas closed to the public [note - for the Asset Mitigation Initiative] with universal symbols and a QR code to access the sign in multiple languages.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is fully committed to enhancing access for Environmental Justice communities to our facilities. In the future, DCR will be implementing a comprehensive language accessibility program to ensure that our parks are welcoming and accessible to all. This will include the expansion of the DCR Park Alert system to feature multiple languages, allowing families to receive real-time updates and plan their visits without the concern of unexpected closures. Additionally, once visitors arrive at our parks, they will find increased multilingual signage designed to eliminate communication barriers and provide a more inclusive experience.

### Transparency and Communication

DCR is committed to enhancing communications related to interactions with environmental justice populations and to implementing related programs. The agency will create an EJ webpage as part of the agency's web presence to provide useful information and resources such as:

- DCR's EJ Point Person's contact information

- EEA EJ Director's contact information
- 2017 & 2002 EEA EJ Policy
- Links to related Federal Laws & Executive Orders
- Embedded EJ Map Viewer integrating DCR Properties
- Embedded EJ Map Viewer with Language Considerations relative to our properties and assets
- Information about language translation assistance
- Centralized information about grants and engagement opportunities

DCR will use the webpage communicate with residents, and EJ population members and advocacy groups about the types of EJ programs, projects, grants, and activities that are available. The agency will also share metrics and reports to transparently evaluate progress in advancing environmental justice (see below).

#### Investments and Allocation of Resources

Many DCR properties and facilities, such as many pools, spray decks, campgrounds, and skating rinks, are located in communities with significant EJ populations. DCR seeks to consider environmental justice when directing resources and investments and will develop ways to evaluate and measure the resulting positive impact. DCR is developing an online project map that will display capital projects underway throughout the state, with an overlay of the EJ data layer to show the distribution among EJ communities. This tool will both guide the agency's planning and resource allocation and serve as helpful information for the public.

DCR is also focused on capturing investments it makes in its properties that are not within an EJ community but that serve significant EJ populations. Horseneck Beach State Reservation and Blue Hills Reservation are good examples for day use visitation. Neither property is located within an EJ community, but many visitors come from EJ communities. Similarly, DCR's camping program has access to zip codes for campers at particular properties and will identify EJ communities represented. DCR will explore other methods to build its understanding of who uses DCR properties and what types of activities are most popular with the goal of increasing service to EJ populations.

DCR will develop an enhancement to Green Docket (DCR's internal environmental permit review process) that will identify EJ communities and whether a particular project is within the EJ threshold for environmental review established by the EEA Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office.

DCR has initiated an effort to identify its vacant historic buildings in EJ communities as a first phase to explore for potential activation by DCR or partners to provide community benefit such as walking paths, canoe/bike rentals, interpretive programming. DCR's partnership with Mass Audubon at the historic Powder House at Magazine Beach in Cambridge is an example of a reactivated historic building that provides public benefit (albeit not in an EJ community).

DCR offers a number of programs that specifically serve environmental justice populations, and where possible, seeks to recruit and employ local residents to carry out these programs. Some examples are described below.

- **Greening the Gateway Cities Urban Canopy Program:** This program increases tree canopy in gateway cities and uses environmental justice as a key criterion when selecting specific geographical areas to increase the urban canopy. Increasing tree coverage contributes to reducing energy costs, mitigating heat island effects, improving the health and well-being of residents, and contributes to neighborhood aesthetics, all of which enhance communities. Since its inception, this popular program, established in 2014, has resulted in over 30,000 trees planted in 14 cities and, in 2022, DCR is planning on expanding to more cities.
- The GGC model relies on local recruitment in the gateway cities to stand up planting teams in each community. This opportunity, that spans the spring and fall seasons, provides seasonal jobs for local people to learn new skills that are marketable, and to enhance communities. GGC Tree Team staff have gone on to hold jobs in local DPWs, landscaping businesses and public safety positions.
- **DCR Bureau of Forestry's Wood Utilization Program** established wood banks in three communities, two of which are environmental justice communities (Athol and Montague). The wood bank provides free wood to residents to use as a fuel source. Wood comes from trees that have fallen or been cut by the town. As part of the wood bank program, DCR helps recruit volunteers from the community to keep the wood bank operational by cutting and piling wood for participants.
- As part of its **Waterfront Safety Program**, every year, DCR hires approximately 550 lifeguards to work at its 32 deep water pools, 2 wading pools, and 30 coastal and inland beaches across the Commonwealth. The agency undertakes a broad and active outreach to recruit lifeguards, seeking to employ young people from the many environmental justice communities in which DCR pools and beaches are located. DCR reaches out via social media; contacting swim coaches at area high schools; reaching out to placement offices at area colleges and area swim teams and clubs via a network of YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs and other indoor pool facilities. Along with competitive compensation, the agency also provides free lifeguard certification for qualified candidates who commit to work for DCR the summer season.

- DCR sponsors the SWIM initiative - **Safe Water Initiative Mass** to support waterfront safety. To date, the agency has awarded eight grants totaling over \$320,000 to municipal and community organizations to offer free Learn to Swim lessons for children and adults. As part of recruitment for instructors for the Learn to Swim program at DCR pools, outreach is focused on residents of EJ communities where pools are located.
- **DCR's Urban Challenge Grants** provide funding for communities to improve and protect their urban forests. These 50/50 matching grants help develop, grow, and sustain programs that plant, protect, and maintain a community's public tree resources and develop partnerships with residents and community institutions. The Urban Challenge grants prioritize EJ communities by only requiring a 25% match from EJ communities, rather than the 50% required for non-EJ communities.
- DCR's partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources launched the **Growing Wild Movement** in 2021. The program enters its second phase in 2022 and has selected an EJ community, Lowell, to design, plant and enhance pollinator gardens at Lowell Public Schools. The initiative will create 2 pollinator gardens and enhance 12 existing gardens and be integrated into the curriculum and existing community garden efforts so students can learn about the importance of pollinators to grow fruits and vegetables.
- DCR's Office of Cultural Resources launched a **First People, First Stewards – Partnership for Change** initiative to best integrate indigenous voices and influence in the interpretation of properties and how the agency approaches indigenous interests. The initiative will first reimagine how we tell stories to be inclusive and would look to recruit indigenous people to shape and deliver the stories.

### Staff Training

DCR will offer training for staff in environmental justice principles and elements of DCR's EJ Strategy. The goals of the training are to promote awareness of environmental justice and ultimately, to provide agency staff with the best background and tools to advance environmental justice both in carrying out their individual roles and in actively supporting the agency's EJ strategy. By deepening the organization's collective knowledge and understanding of the needs of vulnerable populations, environmental justice neighborhoods, and under-served areas of the Commonwealth, we will better serve the public and realize our mission to the fullest.

### Enforcement of this EEA EJ Strategy

For any environmental justice concerns, complaints, compliments or ideas, or to find out more about our agency environmental, energy and climate justice efforts, please contact EEA's Office of Environmental Justice and equity or the contact below.

DCR EJ Point of Contact:

Francisco Rodriguez

Spatial Data Solutions Manager

Asset Management and Modernization Program

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## Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection



# MassDEP

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Department of Environmental Protection

## Environmental Justice Strategy

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The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) commits to review and update its EJ Strategy as needed or at minimum biennially or as directed by the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

The Strategy will be a living document that will be reviewed and updated as needed but no less than every three years and placed on MassDEP’s website.

## MassDEP's Updated Mission Statement (2021)

*To protect and enhance the Commonwealth's natural resources - air, water, and land – to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of all people and a clean and safe environment for future generations.*

*In carrying out this mission MassDEP commits to address and advance environmental justice and equity for all people of the Commonwealth; provide meaningful, inclusive opportunities for people to participate in agency decisions that affect their lives; and ensure a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve.*

## Secretariat EJ Strategy Requirements from EEA EJ Policy<sup>[1]</sup>

Massachusetts Executive Order 552 requires the Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EEA) to “post online its own strategy to promote environmental justice in ways that are tailored to the specific authority, mission and programs within the Secretariat” including identifying permitting and regulatory authority over brownfields, industrial operations, and commercial facilities, and environmental benefits.<sup>[2]</sup> EEA released an updated Environmental Justice Policy in 2017 (EJ) and in June 2021 the EJ Policy was again updated to include environmental justice components of the climate bill, An Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy (Climate Roadmap Act).<sup>[3]</sup> The amendments to the EEA EJ Policy in 2021 maintained the requirement for all EEA agencies to develop their own EJ strategies, as directed in the 2017 EEA EJ Policy. “EEA Agencies shall consider how to appropriately integrate environmental justice considerations into their departments through policies, programs, or other strategies. EEA Agencies shall identify and promote agency-sponsored projects, funding decisions, rulemakings or other actions intended to further environmental justice throughout the Commonwealth to show the fair distribution of benefits has been measured.”<sup>[4]</sup>

## EJ Strategy

MassDEP's Strategy outlines actions for promoting and integrating EJ considerations across MassDEP's programs, policies, activities, and other strategies as well as meeting MassDEP's EJ goals to ensure the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people residing in the Commonwealth with respect to environmental protection and the equitable development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. This strategy aligns with and complements the agency's non-discrimination and civil rights program.<sup>[5]</sup>

The MassDEP EJ Strategy identifies the actions that MassDEP will conduct to implement the EEA EJ Policy and the Climate Roadmap Act, including the following components.

1. Enhancing communications and community engagement related to the agency's work and environmental justice, provide effective public outreach including appropriate language access, social media, and project-related public involvement.,
2. Undertaking activities to strengthen and revitalize EJ populations and their residents, including but not limited to MassDEP's deliberate promotion and support to EJ populations to:
  - o increase participation in grant programs and other opportunities to remediate environmental and public health burdens,
  - o design policies and grant opportunities to increase benefits, such as access to open space, and
  - o promote development that does not further burden or displace EJ populations.
3. Identifying permitting or other applicable regulatory authority over development projects, brownfield remediation, industrial operations, and commercial facilities, which may impact EJ populations and mechanisms to ensure that EJ populations are protected,
4. Offering grants, technical assistance, grant application training and other financing options through accessible mechanisms for delivering and developing environmental benefits as appropriate,
5. Continuing to develop EJ criteria to be used for prioritizing grant opportunities to benefit EJ populations across the agency as appropriate,
6. Developing an agency policy and plan to explore cumulative impact analysis and implement that analysis in certain air permitting proceedings.
7. Promoting agency staff awareness and application of EJ principles<sup>[6]</sup> in MassDEP's regulatory oversight, assistance, outreach, and enforcement including staff training,
8. Recruiting, hiring and retaining a diverse workforce that reflects the communities the agency serves,
9. Targeting inspections and other compliance assurance activities at facilities that could impact one or more EJ populations, and
10. Evaluating and measuring our progress.

Additional details on MassDEP actions in these areas are in the sections below.

### Hiring & Recruitment

Under the guidance of EEA's Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, MassDEP is committed to recruiting and hiring a diverse workforce that reflects the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MassDEP utilizes best hiring practices to achieve this goal consistent with the Commonwealth's protected groups: professionals of color, including Indigenous people, women, persons with disabilities, veterans, and others as defined in Executive Order 592. MassDEP's approach aligns with the Secretariat's Diversity Plans and the Commonwealth's Executive Order 592 for both employees and interns<sup>[7]</sup>. The above commitment also enhances the agency's environmental justice goals and objectives for those interested in pursuing a career in the environmental field.

As part of MassDEP's hiring, the agency will ask prospective employees about their understanding of environmental justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Responses to this question are integrated in concrete ways into the rubric used to determine the top candidate to receive an employment offer.

MassDEP will continue to offer paid internships with the agency as resources allow. This is an important aspect of providing access to experience in environmental fields for those who might not be able to accept unpaid internships.

MassDEP will also work with EEA and environmental justice representatives to recruit and expand diversity on advisory committees, boards, and commissions. All internal and external advisory committees should strive to include (self-identified) representatives from EJ populations and encourage participation by EJ stakeholders.

### Communication

MassDEP's current EJ webpage provides useful information such as:

1. Contact information for agency's Office of EJ and Director of EJ at MassDEP,
2. Contact information for Undersecretary of Equity & EJ and Director of EJ at EEA,
3. Current EEA EJ Policy (updated 2021) and historic versions (2017 and 2002 policies),
4. Climate Law (S.9;) An Act Creating a Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy (Acts of 2021 Chapter 8),
5. Links to Federal Laws & Executive Orders,
6. MassDEP regional offices,
7. EJ maps and EEA's EJ Viewer,
8. Demographic information underlying 2020 EJ populations in the Commonwealth, and
9. Information about MassDEP language interpreter/translation assistance.

MassDEP will continue to update and use the EJ webpage to communicate with MassDEP staff, residents of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, EJ population members and advocacy groups about MassDEP's EJ program, including its projects, activities, and opportunities for residents to participate in key decision-making proceedings. MassDEP will make the website information accessible in multiple languages.

### Strengthen Community Engagement and Public Outreach

MassDEP is committed to promoting environmental justice by designing decision-making processes within its authority that should prevent disproportionate adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects on persons in the Commonwealth. In order to do so, MassDEP has provided training and guidance to its staff about how to provide meaningful opportunities for public involvement and community engagement and will continue

to regularly provide training and materials. Such training will be offered by MassDEP and/or EEA on a routine basis, at least annually, and attendance will be required for all staff that conduct key agency actions and activities<sup>[8]</sup> in or near areas that will impact an EJ population.

Under the EEA EJ Policy, “Meaningful involvement means that all neighborhoods have the right and opportunity to participate in energy, climate change, and environmental decision-making including needs assessment, planning, implementation, compliance and enforcement, and evaluation, and neighborhoods are enabled and administratively assisted to participate fully through education and training, and are given transparency/accountability by government with regard to community input, and encouraged to develop environmental, energy, and climate change stewardship.”<sup>[9]</sup>

MassDEP will collaborate with the community including rural and urban residents, environmental justice/grassroots organizations, community-based organizations, regional planning organizations, and local officials to strengthen community engagement and public involvement and to build capacity utilizing traditional and non-traditional methods.

The following bullets list some of the ways MassDEP staff will provide opportunities for optimizing meaningful community engagement and public involvement in key agency activities.

1. Maintaining and updating a list of community groups/advocacy groups by region that will be placed on a shared drive accessible to all MassDEP staff and managed by the Director of Environmental Justice.
2. Continuing to build relationships in environmental justice populations including those in rural areas and maintaining regular communication with community/advocacy groups and municipal officials by sharing information pertaining to projects, activities and grant opportunities that may affect EJ populations and by posting information on MassDEP’s EJ webpage. This relationship building will include multilingual communication strategies.
3. Engaging with project proponents and EJ populations and community leaders beyond the minimum statutory and regulatory requirements to ensure meaningful involvement for all people, i.e., Site Assignment Permits, C.91 licenses for designated port areas, etc.
4. Effectively implementing MassDEP’s EJ Public Involvement Plan and Community Engagement Guidance (Guidance). Trainings have been conducted virtually agency-wide for staff in all bureau and regional offices. Training materials are accessible to all staff via MassDEP’s EJ Resources intranet page as recordings or PowerPoint slide decks.
  - o Evaluate and develop recommendations/best practices for enhancing public involvement accessibility and opportunities for EJ populations, including the use of plain or non-technical language that helps to inform the public about community impacts.

- o MassDEP will respond as appropriate to stakeholder comments and explain how its decisions incorporate public input. MassDEP will strive to make this information publicly available in all languages spoken by the community or communities in question. The agency will develop and implement appropriate best practices/methods and consistent format to share with MassDEP staff and the public to demonstrate how and where public comments were received and considered.

5. Sharing information with the public via the EJ Webpage, translation, non-English media outlets, using social media, posting flyers/documents in local places (city hall, town hall, community and cultural centers) and implementing additional best practices for communicating with the public, including but not limited to physical mailers. Developing Guidance / Best Management Practices (BMPs) for community outreach/engagement, including both in person and virtual gatherings, and offering flexible times and convenient locations to ensure participation.

6. Continuing to use MassGIS, DPH's Environmental Health Tracker & EEA resources (such as EJ Viewer, Data Portal and MassMapper) to provide and identify community specific information.

7. Arranging virtual Outreach/Engagement through video platforms like Zoom, Go To Meeting, Skype for Business, Microsoft Teams, and other services that allow meetings to take place without all participants being in the same location. These resources are valuable components of an effective public participation plan, as well as public meetings and webinars presented on-line, recordings of presentations for later viewing, and providing for submission of comments and suggestions through email and web forms to facilitate participation in key agency activities. MassDEP will use virtual platforms that can allow for subtitles / captions and simultaneous language interpretation in multiple languages.

8. Continuing to expand virtual outreach/community engagement resources to environmental justice populations post COVID restrictions as a commitment to provide full access to MassDEP's programs and activities. MassDEP (Director of EJ) is working with EEA's Undersecretary for Equity and EJ and Director of EJ for assistance with hybrid meetings to ensure accessibility for all residents of the Commonwealth. This is a Secretariat-wide effort to assist all EEA Agencies.

9. Coordinating, as appropriate, with the EJ Council and Global Warming Solutions Act Implementation Advisory Committee through MassDEP's Director of EJ and/or members of MassDEP's Advisory Committee on Equity and Diversity (ACED). ACED is comprised of 13 members from a variety of positions across MassDEP offices. This group meets regularly to provide the Commissioner and senior staff with recommendations for action to improve our

internal and external processes and structures on an ongoing basis and identify areas where we should focus our attention.

10. Continuing to implement an Internal Electronic Suggestion Form for MassDEP staff to submit ideas and share solutions to advance equity and inclusion internally and externally – to enhance outreach/engagement and to promote diversity and inclusion with stakeholders. Ideas and suggestions are shared with the Advisory Committee on Equity and Diversity (ACED) and senior managers for discussion and potential implementation.

11. Developing and implementing training opportunities to provide technical assistance for EJ populations, community-based organizations, and others in applying for grants, how to provide public comments, etc., and offering office hours to meet MassDEP staff as appropriate.

### Social Media/ Information Technology

MassDEP has a social media/information technology protocol for posting information about agency activities and news on social media. The social media effort is led by MassDEP's Chief of Staff, Press Director, and Deputy Press Director. Staff are strongly encouraged to contact the "social media" staff leads to showcase projects, stories, or activities specific to EJ to be shared via Twitter, Instagram, and other alternative media outlets. MassDEP meets regularly to discuss and evaluate ways to communicate new and improved technologies to effectively share EJ information in alternative media outlets. MassDEP will:

1. Use media outlets that reach EJ populations using resources from the Office of EJ,
2. Continue to update and improve the environmental justice web page, and
3. Work with MassGIS to use mapping software to analyze demographics that could be impacted by MassDEP decisions. Analysis and maps should be made publicly available on the EJ webpage and should include explanations in plain terms of the possible impacts, burdens and benefits.

### Limited English Proficiency

MassDEP is committed to serving populations with limited English proficiency to ensure the Department's activities and actions are inclusive and accessible to all. MassDEP's EJ Office now has a full-time language access coordinator whose primary job duty is to ensure access and inclusivity to LEP residents in the Commonwealth. The Department will:

Continue to maintain strict compliance with its language access plan to ensure compliance with A&F Bulletin #16, Title VI, EEA EJ Policy, and the agency's mission.

1. Maintain MassDEP's Volunteer Language Bank, as required by A&F Bulletin #16, and ensure MassDEP Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) staff are compensated for their



time and expertise within their regular hours/ duties as volunteer translators/interpreters with the Volunteer Language Bank.

4. Translate critical documents, identified by MassDEP programs and stakeholders, through the existing state contract - Foreign Language Interpretation and Translation Services.
5. Continue using the “I Speak” language translation poster at all MassDEP offices and front desk locations, and redistribute as needed,
6. Ensure interpreters and translation services are available when a limited English proficiency (LEP) population is identified, engaging with a possible LEP individual(s) or when requested by the EJ population.
7. Identify language needs for each type of permitting proceeding on a case-by-case basis recognizing that not all LEP individuals require or need the same service.
8. Continue translating critical documents prioritized by the Bureaus as resources allow.
9. Coordinate the simultaneous release of project documents in English and any necessary languages to ensure equal comment opportunities to LEP residents.
10. Schedule and advertise a minimum number of public meetings and/or hearings in English and any necessary languages for projects.
11. Provide guidance to agency staff about how to conduct public meetings, hearings, and other agency events that incorporate simultaneous interpretation during online and in-person events.

## Training

MassDEP will ensure that appropriate agency staff understand EJ issues, requirements, responsibilities, and opportunities through EJ related trainings. Previous training events have included: annual trainings on EJ for MassDEP staff since 2018, US EPA Region 1 Environmental Justice Training for Lawyers (2019) supported and hosted by MassDEP, US EPA Region 1 Civil Rights, Equity and Environmental Justice Leadership Training (2019), Public Involvement Plan (PIP) Guidance Training (2022-3), and Regional and Bureau trainings on EJ public involvement, community engagement in 2020, 2022, and 2023.

MassDEP will continue to support training and instructions, and make efforts to record trainings related to using EJ materials for staff, including:

1. Provide training on GIS maps & EJ Viewer agency wide to demonstrate how programs should utilize EJ map overlays,
2. Provide trainings led by the Director of EJ with assistance from OGC, EJ team members and permitting staff working in EJ areas,
3. Develop and conduct trainings on how to integrate environmental justice into MassDEP’s work,
4. Facilitate training on DPH’s Environmental Health Tracking tools, including its GIS EJ mapping tool,

5. Provide training on EPA's EJSCREEN training, and
6. Additional training as needed.

### Grants and Funding Opportunities

MassDEP bureau and program staff have drafted a Grant and Financial Assistance Program Guidance for Public Involvement (Attachment B to the internal Environmental Justice Public Involvement Plan and Community Engagement Guidance, referred to as Grant Guidance that is under development). The Guidance directs MassDEP staff to:

1. Use EJ criteria and incorporate language into grants where appropriate to increase grant opportunities and awards in areas with EJ populations,
  - o Set standards for decisions related to financial and technical resources provided to residents and businesses to ensure, to the extent applicable and allowable by law, that resources go to residents and small businesses that are BIPOC/women/Immigrant owned businesses representing, serving and /or engaging EJ populations.
  - o Set criteria for grant opportunities that prioritize allocating resources within EJ populations, if possible, under specific grant authority.
2. Increase efforts to identify external grant opportunities to support EJ initiatives (e.g., amplify or build on grants from US EPA, DCR, DAR, DPH) and work with external Agencies and departments to influence decisions that result in high levels of investment in EJ populations.
3. Identify existing MassDEP grants with potential connection to EJ populations/potential to enhance EJ goals, and provide technical support to municipalities, community-based organizations, and BIPOC/women/immigrant-owned businesses that serve EJ populations applying for these grants.
4. Identify grant opportunities to benefit EJ populations funded through the proposed Climate Protection and Mitigation Trust.

MassDEP also supports, manages or directs others to the following programs supporting the agency's EJ efforts.

GRANTS & INCENTIVES	DESCRIPTION	LINKS
Department of Energy Resources (DOER) SMART Program <sup>[10]</sup>	Support possible grant opportunities for EJ populations through the SMART program (expanding solar opportunities in low- and moderate-income communities).	<a href="#">Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART)   Mass.gov</a>
The State Revolving Fund loan program managed by the Clean Water Trust and MassDEP	Provide grants and low interest loans to assist EJ populations with water and wastewater infrastructure projects	<a href="#">State Revolving Fund (SRF) Loan Program   Mass.gov</a>

The Clean Energy Results Program	Fill in the funding gap with Gap Energy Grants for renewable and energy efficiency projects proposed by municipalities, small businesses and eligible nonprofits within or serving large EJ populations.	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/clean-energy-results-program">https://www.mass.gov/clean-energy-results-program</a>
The Opportunity Zones Program	Provides incentives for investments in designated zones to benefit low-income urban and rural communities.	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/opportunity-zone-program">https://www.mass.gov/opportunity-zone-program</a>
US EPA Environmental Justice Grant Opportunities	As available and appropriate, apply for, or partner with, EJ Populations for available US EPA Environmental Justice Grant Opportunities	<a href="#">EPA Grants   US EPA</a>

## Enforcement

MassDEP is applying its internal Policy on Penalty Assessment for Violations Occurring in Environmental Justice (“EJ”) Populations (ENF-20-001) that provides guidance to staff to consider and assess civil administrative penalties for violations occurring in an EJ population and for violations occurring outside an EJ population that affect an EJ population. The Department will:

- Target inspections and other compliance assurance activities at facilities that could impact one or more EJ populations, to be included in the EEA EJ Annual Report as required on page 12 of the 2021 EEA EJ Policy.
- Encourage EJ populations to identify supplemental environmental projects (SEPs) that implement community needs for environmental benefits and propose such projects to the SEP bank list maintained by EEA per the 2021 EEA Environmental Justice Policy for use in enforcement settlements.
- Seek to ensure that sufficient funding is available to fully implement MassDEP’s compliance and enforcement activities.
- Develop and report to EEA metrics related to enforcement activities in EJ vs non-EJ populations.

Resources to implement the enforcement work include:

- MassDEP Enforcement Laws, Rules & Guidance  
<https://www.mass.gov/lists/massdep-enforcement-laws-rules>
- EEA EJ Policy  
<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/environmental-justice-policy>
- MassGIS EJ Viewer  
[Environmental Justice Populations in Massachusetts \(arcgis.com\)](https://environmental-justice-populations-in-massachusetts.arcgis.com)
- MassGIS MassMapper Tool (The Oliver Replacement)  
<https://maps.massgis.digital.mass.gov/MassMapper/MassMapper.html>

- EEA 2020 Environmental Justice Criteria for all Block groups  
[EJ 2020 state with inset.pdf | Mass.gov](#)

### **Incorporating EJ Considerations in Permit Proceedings**

MassDEP has permitting and regulatory authority over a wide variety of activities, including brownfields, industrial operations, and commercial facilities. MassDEP has established its internal Guidance for developing Public Involvement Plans (PIPs) for air, solid waste and hazardous waste permits, certain wetlands, 401 water quality certification, chapter 91, drinking water, and wastewater permits that are located in or may potentially impact an EJ population. The Guidance requires advance outreach to EJ populations to ensure that the needs and concerns of the potentially affected EJ population(s) are heard and considered in the final agency action. A PIP is developed for a specific permit to ensure effective engagement with the public, to solicit and receive input and comments from the public and to identify community concerns. For projects that MassDEP has determined would benefit, due to the nature of potential impacts, potential benefits to EJ populations, or heightened public awareness, the Department will offer to convene an informational meeting between the project proponent and potentially impacted communities to allow the proponent and stakeholders to discuss ideas, concerns, and address ways to mitigate any potential adverse impacts.

To the extent that EJ population residents express concerns or ideas about a project, the agency shall consider required project changes and mitigation opportunities to the extent applicable and allowable by law. Permits should include, when appropriate, specific mitigation requirements that are tailored to the potentially impacted EJ population needs and requests. These mitigation measures should reflect community needs and ideas and place emphasis on safer alternatives to the proposed facility. MassDEP commits to developing and implementing a process that will inform the public how and where their comments were considered in the permitting and public process. MassDEP will respond as appropriate to stakeholder comments and explain how its decisions incorporate public input. MassDEP will make this information publicly available in all languages spoken by the community or communities in question.

### **Cumulative Impact Analysis<sup>[11]</sup>**

Governor Baker in March 2021 signed Chapter 8 of the Acts of 2021, [An Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy](#). The Climate Roadmap Act directed the MassDEP to develop a Cumulative Impact Analysis methodology for certain air permits. Since then, MassDEP has:

- Evaluated and sought public comment on incorporating Cumulative Impact Analysis (CIA) into its review of applications for certain categories of air permits and approvals via robust stakeholder meetings;

- Proposed regulations for accomplishing this and held public hearings during the comment period;
- Completed these tasks within 18 months of the signed legislation's June 2021 effective date (or by late December 2022);
- Reviewed public comments received on the proposed regulations.

The agency expects to promulgate final regulations in 2023 and initiate additional stakeholder conversations about refining its considerations.

MassDEP will continue to seek out partnerships /collaboration with other state and federal Agencies as well as non-governmental organizations in researching the successful application of cumulative impact analyses, determining the appropriate categories of permits included and the legal steps necessary for using protocols developed as part of this effort. When conducting these analyses in air permitting, the goal will be to identify whether a proposed activity will create one or more cumulative impacts in an EJ population. The agency anticipates continuing to work with at a minimum, the following entities:

1. Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office (MEPA)
2. Attorney General's Office (AGO)
3. Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)
4. Massachusetts Department of Public Health
5. Academic Institutions (i.e., UMass Donahue Institute, Boston University School of Public Health)
6. US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA R1 & HQ)
7. Community Based Organizations (CBOs)
8. Other individuals and organizations which have familiarity in conducting cumulative impact analyses, including the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Energy Facilities Siting Board, and Department of Public Utilities.

## Metrics

MassDEP collects data on its activities and have identified metrics to measure our progress in its EJ efforts or EJ projects. MassDEP will submit its progress assessment and metrics to EEA for the EEA Annual Report required by EOEEA's Environmental Justice Policy.<sup>[121](#)</sup> The agency will continue to evaluate the use of additional metrics as appropriate.

Category	Metric	Data Source(s)
Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total amount (dollars) of grants awarded.</li> <li>• Total amount (dollars) awarded to municipalities with EJ populations.</li> </ul>	Fiscal office, grant programs, Office of EJ

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of total grant funding directed to entities in municipalities with EJ populations.</li> <li>Total number of awards and amount (dollars) awarded to community-based organizations.</li> </ul>	
Hiring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MassDEP's hiring metrics are reported for purposes of compliance with Executive Order #592</li> <li>Number of paid internships offered annually.</li> </ul>	EEA / HR
Public engagement / Participation / Response to Comments	<p>Develop and use survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Were your concerns heard?</li> <li>Were you listened to?</li> <li>Did MassDEP explain how concerns were considered in its decision?</li> <li>How can MassDEP do better?</li> </ul>	Participants / survey respondents in MassDEP stakeholder engagement proceedings
Enforcement	<p>Analysis of distribution of higher-level enforcement (HLE); Create a GIS map showing HLE actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HLE issued for violations within EJ populations / municipalities.</li> <li>HLE issued for violations in municipalities without EJ populations.</li> <li>Number of administrative penalties and total dollar amounts assessed in municipalities with EJ populations.</li> </ul>	Compliance, Assistance and Enforcement tracking data, GIS, Office of EJ
Permitting	Number of public involvement plans developed for permit proceedings.	Office of EJ, Regional offices and Bureaus

### Ongoing & Future Planning for Additional Projects/Activities

1. Continue exploring use of RGGI funding with public input and DOER. Explore opportunities to invest in EJ areas through collaboration with DOER for available RGGI funds other funding sources. Where the funding stream is regressive (i.e., RGGI, seek input from residents and community-based organizations representing EJ populations prior to making decisions about how funds should be allocated to advance environmental justice principles and meet the needs of EJ populations.
2. Collaborate with EEA Agencies on siting renewable energy projects in EJ areas. MassDEP will explore opportunities to collaborate with DPU, DOER, and other EEA Agencies about renewable energy projects/initiatives in EJ populations where funding and/or grant opportunities could benefit EJ populations. MassDEP will collaborate with other EEA Agencies to ensure access is given to EJ populations along with incentives for being an EJ

population or for collaboration with EJ populations. Work with residents of EJ populations and community-based organizations representing EJ populations to ensure that if renewable energy infrastructure is sited in an area with an EJ population, that the benefits from the project outweigh the burden on the community, to the extent applicable and allowable by law.

3. Brownfields. Explore the ability to utilize brownfields sites to increase open space and parks in areas with EJ populations.
4. Targeted Initiatives. Utilize resources (compliance, enforcement, and technical assistance) to support equitable environmental protection and opportunities in EJ populations (e.g., continued implementation of Urban Compliance Initiatives, Supplemental Environmental Programs in EJ areas).
5. Pilot a Public Environmental Conditions Database. Work on designing, building and populating a database and public interface to collect, analyze, and display data on environmental conditions, focusing on contaminant concentrations in various environmental media. The database will include data submitted electronically, but also data from formats not readily accessible (e.g., PDF files) to staff or the public. The pilot for this effort will target areas known to be degraded from historic activities to establish baseline conditions and provide an ability to monitor future changes. The plan is that this database will be available to everyone, including staff in all state programs and the public.
6. Lead in Drinking Water. Continue to enhance the Expanded Assistance Program for Lead in Drinking Water at Schools and Early Education and Care Facilities, also known as the “Lead in Schools” program. Current enhancements include targeted outreach to EJ communities, translated outreach materials, and webinars in Spanish.
7. Promoting Training for EJ Populations in Environmental Careers. Partner with technical and vocational educational institutions throughout Massachusetts to promote Wastewater (WW) and Drinking Water (DW) operator training / internships (i.e., water operator bootcamp), as well as other environmental careers.

## Enforcement of this EEA EJ Strategy

For any environmental justice concerns, complaints, compliments or ideas, or to find out more about our agency environmental, energy and climate justice efforts, please contact EEA's Office of Environmental Justice and equity or the contact below.

### MassDEP EJ Point of Contact:

Deneen Simpson  
Director of Environmental Justice  
[deneen.simpson@mass.gov](mailto:deneen.simpson@mass.gov)  
857-406-0738

<sup>[1]</sup> Theoharides, Kathleen, "EEA Environmental Justice Policy" June 24, 2021, <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/environmental-justice-policy>

<sup>[2]</sup> 552, Executive Order on Environmental Justice, November 25, 2014. <https://www.mass.gov/executive-orders/no-552-executive-order-on-environmental-justice>

<sup>[3]</sup> Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy, Chapter 8 of the Acts, 2021., <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter8>

<sup>[4]</sup> EEA Environmental Justice Policy, June 24, 2021, page 10.

<sup>[5]</sup> MassDEP's Notice of Nondiscrimination, Title VI Grievance Plan, and grievance form.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massdep-nondiscrimination-civil-rights#:~:text=MassDEP%20prohibits%20discrimination%20in%20all,including%20Vietnam%2Dera%2Dveterans>

<sup>[6]</sup> See "Chapter 8 of the Acts of 2021 at p.37-38. (<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter8>)

<sup>[7]</sup> Executive Order 592: "Advancing Workforce Diversity, Inclusion, Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, and Affirmative Action", October 20, 2020. <https://www.mass.gov/executive-orders/no-592-advancing-workforce-diversity-inclusion-equal-opportunity-non-discrimination-and-affirmative-action>

<sup>[8]</sup> MassDEP defines key actions/activities as those activities carried out by MassDEP pursuant to its requirements and responsibilities as a regulatory agency that are likely to cause significant impacts to natural resources or to public health, safety, or welfare in EJ Populations.

<sup>[9]</sup> EEA EJ Policy (updated 2021), page 4. (<https://www.mass.gov/doc/environmental-justice-policy6242021-update/download>)

<sup>[10]</sup> DOER's SMART Program offers a point system incentive for developers placing solar in low-income communities.

<sup>[11]</sup> There is MassDEP representation in the EEA Cumulative Impact Workgroup. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/cumulative-impact-analysis-in-air-quality-permitting>

<sup>[12]</sup> EEA Environmental Justice Policy, June 24, 2021, page 9.



## Department of Fish and Game



## Environmental Justice Strategy



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## DFG's Mission Statement

The Department of Fish and Game works to preserve the state's natural resources. We exercise responsibility over the Commonwealth's marine and freshwater fisheries, wildlife species, plants, and natural communities, as well as the habitats that support them.

## Secretariat EJ Strategy Requirements from the EEA EJ Policy

The Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EEA) Environmental Justice Policy (EJ) has directed all EEA Agencies to develop their own EJ Strategies. EEA Agencies shall consider how to appropriately integrate environmental justice considerations into their departments through policies, programs, or other strategies. EEA Agencies shall identify and promote agency-sponsored projects, funding decisions, rulemakings or other actions intended to further environmental justice throughout the Commonwealth to show how the fair distribution of benefits has been measured.<sup>32</sup> EEA will provide guidance to its Agencies to fulfill the EJ Strategy requirement.

## EJ Strategy

The Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Environmental Justice (EJ) Strategy encapsulates the programs, procedures, policies, and key agency actions of each of our divisions, which include the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, the Division of Ecological Restoration, the Division of Marine Fisheries, and the Office of Fishing and Boating Access.

Environmental justice is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment regardless of race, color, national origin, income, or English language proficiency. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens. Environmental justice populations are those segments of the population that the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) has determined to be most at risk of being unaware of or unable to participate in environmental decision-making, least likely to gain access to state environmental resources, or are otherwise especially vulnerable. Within the context of the DFG EJ Strategy, an EJ community is defined as a municipality that includes one or more designated EJ populations.

The DFG EJ Strategy has been developed to ensure that Department and Division activities integrate EJ principles and considerations to serve all citizens of the Commonwealth equally and



equitably and will guide the Department and our Divisions toward full implementation of the EEA EJ Policy. DFG commits to review and update this strategy no less than every three years.

Our strategy consists of three primary goals, and several objectives under each goal. The following describes these in more detail.

## PRIMARY GOALS AND INDICATORS

**GOAL 1:** Advance DFG’s capacity (meaning knowledge, resources, and capabilities) to promote and advance EJ in its mission.

### *Indicators of Success*

- DFG EJ Coordinator recruited and hired by May 2024.
- DFG EJ team operationalized by July 2024.
- One DFG-wide EJ training for all staff completed by September 2024.
- Key Division staff identified and trained in EJ issues and skills tailored to Division-specific needs by December 2024.

**GOAL 2:** Communicate effectively with and outreach actively to EJ communities.

### *Indicators of Success*

- Meet requirements of A&F Bulletin #16 (Language Access Policy) by July 2024.
- DFG EJ web page publicly available by July 2024.
- Create catalogue of EJ populations, communities, and organizations that intersect with Division programs and projects and identify suggested communication and outreach strategies for identified EJ populations, communities, and organizations by December 2024.
- Processes and procedures tailored to each Division to handle EJ concerns and requests are in place by December 2024.

**GOAL 3:** Integrate EJ principles and considerations into DFG regulatory processes, grant administration and awards, educational programing, restoration programs, and conservation and recreation projects.

### *Indicators of Success*

- Processes and procedures tailored to each Division to ensure improved communication with and access by EJ communities to DFG regulatory processes are in place by October 2024.
- Processes and procedures tailored to each Division to assess and strengthen grant administration and award processes, educational programing, restoration programs, and



conservation and recreation projects through the integration and application of EJ principles and considerations are in place by October 2024.

- Annual funding for projects within and programs that serve or impact EJ communities is tracked across Divisions with FY24 as the baseline year.

## PRIMARY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL 1:** Advance DFG’s internal capacity (meaning knowledge, resources, and capabilities) to promote and advance EJ in its mission.

*Objective 1.1: Build Internal Leadership and Responsibility for Action within DFG*

1. Hire a full-time DFG EJ Coordinator by May 2024. The DFG EJ Coordinator will be housed within the Commissioner’s office and will work with the EJ team and Divisions to identify issues, knowledge gaps, and opportunities; support EJ outreach; coordinate trainings; and advance best practices within DFG.
  - a. The coordinator will have experience in: (1) environmental justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion principles and practices, (2) strategic plan and action plan development within the context of state agency missions, opportunities, and constraints; (3) working with state or municipal Agencies or other public entities; and (4) working with a highly motivated, passionate, and engaged staff to develop environmental justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies and actions.
  - b. The coordinator, with direction from the EJ team, will:
    - i. Collect and distill existing information about the Department’s operations, fiscal processes, programs, projects, and internal practices in relation to its mission and environmental justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion principles and practices.
    - ii. Assess staff baseline knowledge, interest, and knowledge gaps in relation to environmental justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion to develop trainings and assist in strategic planning.
    - iii. Assist with identifying desired outcomes in relation to environmental justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
    - iv. Develop strategies, milestones, and metrics to achieve and evaluate outcomes.
    - v. Develop documentation regarding strategies, best practices, and implementation actions.
    - vi. Ensure that all Department staff receive appropriate training on EJ issues and best practices for integrating EJ considerations into agency work.
2. Establish a small, internal EJ team, ultimately led by the DFG EJ Coordinator and accountable to the Commissioner, with one member from each Division, by July 2024.



- a. This team will meet quarterly to assist the EJ Coordinator in the ongoing development and implementation of DFG and Division-specific EJ trainings, strategies, milestones, and metrics to achieve and evaluate outcomes.
- b. The EJ Coordinator will serve as the EJ point of contact for DFG and members of this team will serve as the EJ points of contact for the Divisions.
- c. The team will also play a role in ensuring that the DFG EJ Strategy continues to develop over time and that metrics are updated and goals are met year over year.

*Objective 1.2: Build Capacity through Training*

1. Working with EEA's EJ program and through the DFG EJ Coordinator, gain access to EJ training curricula for EJ mapping tools, community engagement, and the provisions of language services for limited English proficiency (LEP) persons.
2. Working with EEA's EJ program and through the DFG EJ Coordinator, organize and complete DFG-wide EJ training for all staff by September 2024 and EJ training for key Division staff, tailored to Division-specific issues and needs, by December 2024.

*Objective 1.3: Grow a more Diverse Workforce and Volunteer Corps*

DFG recognizes the importance of having an agency workforce and corps of volunteers that reflect the racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity of the residents of Massachusetts, including the key role that such a workforce plays in advancing equitable decisions regarding environmental permitting, siting, regulatory development, grant funding disbursement, and enforcement.

1. With DFG EJ Coordinator guidance, work with HR to improve diversity hiring practices, provide training for hiring managers, and build a diverse corps of volunteers.
2. With DFG EJ Coordinator guidance, develop a clear retention plan for diverse employees, recognizing that these staff and volunteers may face additional challenges in the workplace that jeopardize the agency's ability to retain them.

**GOAL 2. Communicate effectively with and outreach actively to EJ communities.**

*Objective 2.1: Communicate clearly, appropriately, and effectively with EJ communities.*

1. Use appropriate and multiple means to inform EJ communities of DFG and Division efforts and actions occurring in or near EJ communities.
  - a. Provide EJ point of contact for DFG (the EJ Coordinator) and EJ points of contact for the Divisions on the DFG EJ web page.
  - b. Provide a central location for notices of DFG public hearings and DFG public meetings to ensure EJ communities can easily review upcoming DFG policy discussions that may affect them.



- c. Use EEA's EJ alternate media list when needed and as appropriate.
  - d. Articulate DFG's approach and actions regarding advancing EJ to other Agencies, EJ communities, and the public via the DFG EJ web page, the MEPA catalogue where appropriate, and other communication tools.
- 2. Create an EJ web page under the Department's website by July 2024. The EJ web page will:
  - a. Provide the public with the DFG EJ Coordinator's contact information and EJ points of contact for the Divisions.
  - b. Serve as the central location for notices of all DFG public hearings and public meetings.
  - c. Provide a link to the DFG EJ Strategy and links to appropriate EEA EJ information.
  - d. Provide a link for the public to submit a concern or an information request form to the DFG EJ Coordinator.
- 3. Under the direction of the DFG EJ Coordinator, and by December 2024, identify EJ populations, communities, and organizations that intersect with Division programs and projects; develop a Public Involvement and Community Engagement catalogue of identified populations, communities, and organizations and suggested communication and outreach strategies for identified populations, communities, and organizations; provide a means of easy access to the catalogue for all DFG staff; train DFG staff in its purpose and use; and improve and update this catalogue periodically.
  - a. Use EEA's EJ organization and mailing list and alternative media outlets list as well as knowledge within each Division to create this catalogue.

*Objective 2.2: Ensure that all individuals can easily connect with DFG staff regarding environmental justice concerns, questions, requests, and opportunities and develop processes to properly handle these inquiries.*

- 1. Ensure the DFG EJ web page provides a link for the public to submit a concern or an information request form to DFG's EJ Coordinator.
- 2. Ensure the DFG EJ web page provides contact information for the DFG EJ Coordinator and EJ points of contact for the Divisions.
- 3. Ensure that the DFG EJ web page is accessible to non-English speakers and limited English proficiency (LEP) individuals.
- 4. Track all requests / inquiries / concerns received by the Department and Divisions in a process established by the DFG EJ Coordinator.
- 5. Develop processes and procedures tailored to each Division to handle EJ concerns /inquiries / requests by December 2024.

*Objective 2.3: Improve language and meeting access for non-English speakers and limited English proficiency (LEP) individuals.*

1. Under the direction of the DFG EJ Coordinator, and in coordination with the DFG EJ team, develop and implement a language access plan by July 2024 to provide non-English speakers and LEP individuals with meaningful access to DFG and Division programs, activities, and services, including but not limited to:
  - a. DFG and Division public events, meetings, and hearings.
  - b. On-demand interpretative services.
  - c. Regulatory and informational signage and postings (e.g., size, season, bag limits, as well as area closures for public safety or conservation).
  - d. Key outreach documents in the hunting, fishing boating licensing programs.
  - e. Educational programs including, but not limited to, Hunter Education, Archery Education, Trapping Education, Angler Education, Saltwater Angler Education, and Teaching with Trout.
  - f. DFG EJ web page content.
2. The language access plan will be consistent with the requirements of A&F Bulletin #16 and Title VI of the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964 and will be updated every two years.

*Objective 2.4: Use best practices to conduct outreach to EJ communities.*

1. DFG will use best practices and tailored methods to conduct outreach to EJ communities. The following are examples of outreach techniques that may be used in communicating about DFG and Division activities and programs, including but not limited to, regulatory promulgation, availability of grants, and educational programs:
  - a. Notification through non-traditional locations and means, such as houses of worship, farmers' markets, neighborhood fairs, community centers, and community web sites, as well as traditional locations and means such as libraries and government offices and social media channels.
  - b. Organizing town hall meetings or other focused community meetings organized by topic, neighborhood, or interest group.
  - c. Holding community meetings during weekend or evening hours, at accessible locations near public transportation, and/or through Zoom or other similar web-based service if requested or determined to be more effective for reaching EJ populations.
  - d. Organizing public education efforts and using lay-person's language in multiple languages as needed to enhance the community's understanding of potential impacts of projects and ability to provide meaningful input.





- e. Establishing a local information repository (public library or community center) that is convenient and accessible for members of EJ communities where information related to an issue can be obtained.

**GOAL 3. Integrate EJ principles and considerations into DFG regulatory promulgation, grant administration and awards, educational programing, restoration programs, and conservation and recreation projects.**

*Objective 3.1. Improve access to and participation in regulatory promulgation.*

1. With DFG EJ Coordinator guidance, adopt practices to ensure that EJ populations have meaningful opportunities to participate in the regulation promulgation review process.
  - a. The DFG EJ Coordinator will develop tools to allow staff to understand and consider how specific regulations may affect a specific EJ population or EJ community.
  - b. Conduct targeted outreach to the affected EJ populations during regulatory promulgation processes.
  - c. DFG recognizes that certain regulations may impact tribal hunting and fishing activities and, with DFG EJ Coordinator guidance, will continue to work with leaders of both federally recognized and state acknowledged tribes to facilitate meaningful participation in the regulatory promulgation process.
  - d. Processes and procedures tailored to each Division to ensure improved communication with and access by EJ communities to DFG regulatory processes are in place by October 2024.

*Objective 3.2. Assess and strengthen grant administration and award processes, educational programing, restoration programs, and conservation and recreation projects through the integration and application of EJ principles and considerations.*

1. Review grants administered by the Divisions with the DFG EJ Coordinator and EJ team, and with the assistance of EEA's EJ Program, to ensure that grant administration and awards processes follows best practices for ensuring EJ populations are not at a disadvantage when applying for grants.
  - a. Review scoring criteria of applications to provide additional points for those applicants that positively impact EJ populations and/or that partner with EJ organizations for implementation.
2. Review existing education programs with the DFG EJ Coordinator and EJ team to ensure that educational programs are equally available to EJ community members and follow best practices for advertising, promoting, and facilitating participation by individuals within EJ communities.



3. With guidance from the DFG EJ Coordinator, identify and develop new educational programs of interest to or with a focus on EJ communities.
4. Review restoration programs with the DFG EJ Coordinator and EJ team, to integrate best practices to promote and facilitate the equitable distribution of and access to program benefits.
5. Evaluate and update how EJ principles and considerations are incorporated and scored during conservation and recreation project identification and selection processes to promote and facilitate the equitable distribution of and access to such projects.
6. Processes and procedures tailored to each Division to assess and strengthen grant administration and award processes, educational programming, restoration programs, and conservation and recreation projects through the integration and application of EJ principles and considerations are in place by October 2024.
7. Track, and publicize through the DFG EJ web page, the locations and types of restoration, conservation, and recreation projects funded by DFG that are within EJ communities or that serve members of EJ communities.
8. Annual funding for projects within and programs that serve or impact EJ communities is tracked across Divisions with FY24 as the baseline year.

## Enforcement of this EEA EJ Strategy

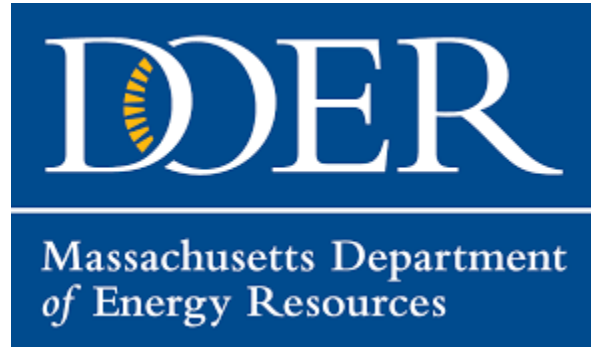
For any environmental justice concerns, complaints, compliments or ideas, or to find out more about our agency environmental, energy and climate justice efforts, please contact EEA's Office of Environmental Justice and equity or the contact below.

### DFG EJ Point of Contact:

Noah McClanan  
Director of Legislative Affairs  
[noah.mcclanan2@mass.gov](mailto:noah.mcclanan2@mass.gov)  
617-894-4366



## Department of Energy Resources



## Environmental Justice Strategy

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## Department of Energy Resources

### Introduction

The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources' (DOER or Department) mission is to develop and implement policies and programs aimed at ensuring the adequacy, security, diversity, and cost-effectiveness of the Commonwealth's energy supply to create a clean, affordable, equitable, and resilient energy future for all residents, businesses, communities, and institutions.

### Environmental Justice Background

#### Secretariat Requirements from EEA EJ Policy

The Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EEA) Environmental Justice Policy (EJ) has directed all EEA Agencies to develop their own EJ Strategies. EEA Agencies shall consider how to appropriately integrate environmental justice considerations into their departments through policies, programs, or other strategies. EEA Agencies shall identify and promote agency-sponsored projects, funding decisions, rulemakings or other actions intended to further environmental justice throughout the Commonwealth in order to show how the fair distribution of benefits has been measured.

### Key Definitions

"Cumulative Impacts" are the total effect of past, present, and future actions on the environment and human health. It includes the total harm to human health that occurs from the combination of environmental burden such as pollution and poor environmental conditions, pre-existing health conditions, and social factors and the totality of exposures to chemical and non-chemical stressors and their effects on health, well-being, and quality of life impacts.

"Environmental Justice" is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment regardless of race, color, national origin, income, or English language proficiency. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burden.

"Environmental justice principles" support people's protection from environmental pollution and the ability to live in and enjoy a clean and healthy environment, regardless of race, color,

income, class, handicap, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity or ancestry, religious belief or English language proficiency, which includes: (i) the meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies, including climate change policies; and (ii) the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and environmental burdens.

[“Environmental Justice Population”](#) refers to a neighborhood that meets one or more of the criteria defined by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Environmental Justice Policy. As of June 2023, these criteria are the following:

- The annual median household income is not more than 65 percent of the statewide annual median household income;
- Minorities comprise 40 percent or more of the population;
- 25 per cent or more of households lack English language proficiency;
- Minorities comprise 25 per cent or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150 per cent of the statewide annual median household income; or
- A geographic portion of a neighborhood designated by the Secretary as an environmental justice population in accordance with law.

[“Energy Benefits”](#) means access to funding, training, renewable or alternative energy, energy efficiency, or other beneficial resources disbursed by EEA, its Agencies, and its offices.

[“Environmental Benefits”](#) means the access to clean natural resources, including air, water resources, open space, constructed playgrounds and other outdoor recreational facilities and venues, clean renewable energy course, environmental enforcement, training, and funding disbursed or administered by EEA.

[“Environmental Burdens”](#) means any destruction, damage, or impairment of natural resources that is not insignificant, resulting from intentional or reasonably foreseeable causes, including but not limited to climate change, air pollution, water pollution, improper sewage disposal, dumping of solid wastes and other noxious substances, excessive noise, activities that limit access to natural resources and constructed outdoor recreational facilities and venues, inadequate remediation of pollution, reduction of ground water levels, impairment of water quality, increased flooding or storm water flows, and damage to inland waterways and waterbodies, wetlands, marine shores and waters, forests, open spaces, and playgrounds from private industrial, commercial or government operations or other activity that contaminates or alters the quality of the environment and poses a risk to public health.

[“Overburdened Community”](#) refers to minority, low-income, tribal, or indigenous populations or geographic locations in the United States that potentially experience disproportionate

environmental harms and risks. This disproportionality can be as a result of greater vulnerability to environmental hazards, lack of opportunity for public participation, or other factors. Increased vulnerability may be attributable to an accumulation of negative or lack of positive environmental, health, economic, or social conditions within these populations or places. The term describes situations where multiple factors, including both environmental and socio-economic stressors, may act cumulatively to affect health and the environment and contribute to persistent environmental health disparities.

“**Underserved Community**” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life. These include populations that have limited or no access to resources or that are otherwise disenfranchised, including people who are socioeconomically disadvantaged; people with limited English proficiency; geographically isolated or educationally disenfranchised people; people of color as well as those of ethnic and national origin minorities; women and children; individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs; and seniors.

## DOER Background

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources is an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The Department develops and implements policies and programs aimed at ensuring the adequacy, security, diversity, and cost effectiveness of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ energy supply within the context of creating a cleaner energy future. To that end, the DOER strives to:

- Ensure deployment of all cost-effective energy efficiency
- Maximize development of clean energy resources
- Create and implement energy strategies to assure reliable supplies and improve the cost of clean energy relative to fossil-fuel based generation
- Support Massachusetts' clean energy companies and spur Massachusetts' clean energy employment.

It has long been recognized that transitioning the energy system away from fossil fuels and towards clean and renewable energy is necessary to meet climate goals. However, simply replacing fossil fuel resources with clean and renewable energy will not fully mitigate the disproportionate impacts that have been borne by underserved and overburdened populations, such as minority populations, low-income populations, people who speak English less than fluently, tribes and indigenous populations that experience higher energy burden higher rates of energy insecurity. These communities will continue to bear the brunt of climate change impacts. To mitigate the impacts to these populations, DOER supports access to decision-making

processes including increasing transparency, access to information, and public engagement on Department policies, programs, and activities.

The Department has five policy and program divisions that oversee a wide range of policies, programs, and actions related to energy that are further described below.

- The Energy Efficiency Division develops, implements, and oversees energy efficiency activities in the Commonwealth in conjunction with other state and federal Agencies. Massachusetts is invested in helping individuals, businesses, organizations and governments make informed choices about energy. Using energy more efficiently can help reduce waste, grow our economy, reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions, and relieve individual energy burden.
- The Policy, Planning, and Analysis Division gathers and analyzes energy data to provide a comprehensive overview of energy prices, competitive markets, energy resiliency, and more for the Commonwealth. As part of its work, the Division provides pricing surveys for heating and transportation fuels for Massachusetts residents, business, and institutions. In addition, the Division also provides market analysis in support of DOER's other divisions to assist with energy resiliency, policy development and implementation.
- The Green Communities Division serves all 351 Massachusetts cities and towns, primarily helping to identify and put in place solutions that reduce long-term energy costs, impact GHG, and strengthen local economics. The Division provides grants, technical assistance, and local support to help municipalities implement clean energy and energy efficiency projects in municipal buildings, facilities, and schools.
- The Leading by Example Division works collaboratively with state Agencies and public colleges and universities to advance clean energy and sustainable practices that reduce the environmental impacts of state government operations through strategic partnerships, technical assistance, grant funding and nation-leading best practices. By demonstrating leadership within state government, LBE strives to empower residents and businesses to take action to collectively address the energy and environmental challenges facing the Commonwealth.
- The Renewable and Alternative Energy Division develops programs and initiatives that promote access to and assist in the installation of renewable energy for residents, business, and institutions in the Commonwealth. The Division provides information regarding the different types of renewable energy, funding programs and incentives, installation assistance, and more available in Massachusetts.



## EJ Strategy

The EJ Strategy is the Department's strategic plan for advancing environmental justice. The objective of the strategy is to improve equitable outcomes for communities that are underserved and overburdened, including but not limited to potentially impacted minority populations, low-income populations, people who are not fluent in English, and tribes and indigenous peoples. The Department is committed to the principles of environmental justice in the agency's programs, policies, and activities. Fair treatment and meaningful involvement are the guiding principles for the Department's strategy.

The strategy below outlines the Department's vision for environmental justice by establishing strategic goals and listing examples of key actions the Department may take to make progress toward these goals. The strategic goals are as follows:

### *Goal 1: Increase Department staff's awareness of environmental justice considerations relevant to Department programs, policies, and activities.*

- Increase awareness of environmental justice issues by establishing environmental justice training, education, and awareness opportunities to ensure that DOER staff are fully aware of their responsibilities under Massachusetts Executive Orders [EO 526](#) and [EO 552](#). Educate the Department with EEA-developed trainings on available environmental justice resources (including mapping tools) to help staff understand the processes and tools available.
- Develop Department strategies to identify and address environmental justice concerns in Department programs, policies, and activities by participating in the inter-agency environmental justice task force led by EEA. Update Department staff regarding key Secretariat actions to advance environmental justice principles.
- Develop informational sessions and trainings for DOER staff to ensure new and existing staff are aware of DOER's environmental justice goals and to facilitate opportunities to improve equity and environmental justice across its policies and programs.

Achieving better environmental justice outcomes and measurable reductions in disparities requires a workforce that is trained and prepared to address complex environmental justice issues. Instituting training, education, and awareness opportunities for agency staff increases their understanding of the disparate energy burdens and energy benefits that different populations experience. By establishing foundational knowledge, agency staff will be better prepared to analyze, consider, and address environmental justice concerns to the extent practicable and supported by law.

### *Goal 2: Integrate environmental justice principles into DOER operations including the development and implementation of policies, programs, and activities.*

- Develop and disseminate information, resources, and internal guidance that highlight opportunities for advancing environmental justice principles in Department’s policies, programs, and activities.
- Develop and periodically review, evaluate, and revise guiding frameworks, evaluation tools, and operational guidelines that will help DOER staff assess and determine whether environmental justice principles are thoroughly incorporated into Departmental actions.
- Prioritize support of clean energy and sustainability efforts in environmental justice neighborhoods and other underserved and overburdened communities.
- Utilize tools and resources, such as EEA’s Environmental Justice Map Viewer Tool and Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s (DPH) Environmental Justice Mapping tool, to enhance inclusive community planning for environmental justice assessment and to understand the cumulative impacts of prior state and federal policies, programs, and activities and to facilitate inclusive community planning in the development and implementation of Department programs, policies, and activities.

Institutionalizing environmental justice principles in Department decision-making processes will strengthen the DOER’s ability to address complex environmental justice issues proactively and will ensure staff are positioned to apply best practices and strategies for advancing environmental justice principles in their decision making and functional areas and improve on-the-ground results for overburdened communities.

*Goal 3: Strengthen outreach to communities and stakeholders through public engagement.*

- Enhance public participation and meaningful involvement in Department decision-making by providing resources and technical assistance to stakeholders and the general public.
- Improve Department language access resources by developing a department-wide language access plan, consistent with EEA’s Environmental Justice Strategy and A&F Bulletin #16, procuring language access services, and identifying and translating critical agency documents into the languages spoken by at least 5% of the population served by the program, service, or activity. The access plan will also emphasize the use of accessible language in public facing materials and explore the use of non-written materials (e.g., videos, story maps) in Department communications.
- Schedule public hearings in geographically diverse locations throughout the Commonwealth as well as virtual options and hearings at varying times of day to accommodate diverse audiences, to the extent permitted by applicable law.
- Improve transparency and visibility of DOER processes, policies and programs, as well as other relevant state and/or federal energy programs, and facilitate opportunities for public engagement through increased use of social media, as appropriate, posting public meetings on DOER’s webpage in a consistent manner, improving navigability of DOER’s

website, and creating a mechanism through which the public can more easily provide feedback on DOER policies and programs.

- Consider and adopt, where appropriate, methods of engaging with stakeholders and the general public that do not require the internet (e.g., phone calls, radio PSAs, community newsletters, mail).
- Investigate opportunities for informal stakeholder and public engagement, such as hosting informational webinars to increase awareness of DOER programs and offerings.
- Identify and pursue additional opportunities for meaningful stakeholder and public engagement in the development, implementation, and enforcement of Department policies, programs, and activities.

Creating opportunities for meaningful involvement in public processes is a foundational component of environmental justice. When meaningful involvement opportunities exist, communities are empowered to take positive action to produce more equitable outcomes in their communities. The Department will strive to support public engagement by reducing barriers to participation to the greatest extent feasible.

*Goal 4: Expand collaboration and knowledge-sharing with interagency and community-based partners to efficiently focus DOER resources and technical assistance.*

- Collaborate with other EEA Agencies to collectively reduce energy-related environmental burdens and increase energy benefits in environmental justice neighborhoods, underserved areas, and overburdened communities. Identify and share best practices and lessons learned with Department staff on how to address environmental justice concerns that is gained from interagency collaborations.
- Through stakeholder outreach efforts at DOER and EEA, as appropriate, seek input from applicable stakeholders to develop environmental justice guidance for Department-funding programs and activities.
- Through DOER's EJ Task Force representative, maintain communication with EEA environmental justice staff on DOER's EJ initiatives and provide EJ-related metrics and other data for inclusion in EEA's annual environmental justice report.

Strengthening collaboration and coordination on environmental justice issues between EEA Agencies and public stakeholders can lead to more equitable outcomes and the reduction of cumulative environmental burdens, all while increasing energy benefits where practicable and advisable.

Goal 5: Establish equity and environmental metrics as they relate to energy and climate, and use these metrics to set measurable targets to advance equity and environmental justice priorities.

- Use new and existing data sources, input from external stakeholders, and established best

practices from other state Agencies and other states, to identify key metrics each DOER Division may use to track and improve equity and environmental justice priorities across its programs and policies. These metrics may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Energy burden;
  - funds awarded or provided to EJ neighborhoods;
  - number of grants awarded to facilities in EJ neighborhoods;
  - number or size of clean energy generating facilities in EJ and non-EJ neighborhoods;
  - public hearings/listening sessions hosted in EJ neighborhoods;
  - percentage or number of DOER public facing materials that are translated into community relevant languages; Percentage or number of DOER public meetings that are offered in community relevant languages; and
  - electric vehicle rebates issued to residents in EJ neighborhoods.
- Use identified metrics to set baselines and targets that will help reduce energy burden and ensure the benefits of the clean energy transition reaches environmental justice populations.

This goal will align with federal funding requirements (e.g., Justice40) and ensure the work being conducted across DOER's Divisions result in measurable, positive impacts for environmental justice populations.

#### Implementation Plan

The Department will develop an implementation plan that includes logistical guidance for the strategies outlined in this document. The implementation plan will include a strategy for creating public facing reporting on the Department's environmental justice and equity goals and any metrics adopted by the Department as part of its Environmental Justice Strategy. The implementation plan may also include timelines for action that consider programmatic, legislative, and regulatory responsibilities.

#### Hiring

The DOER acknowledges the importance of having an agency workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity of the residents of Massachusetts, including the key role that such a workforce plays in advancing equitable decisions regarding the implementation of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies. In alignment with Executive Order 592, "Advancing Workforce Diversity, Inclusion, Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, and Affirmative Action," EEA and the DOER commit to incorporating diversity hiring practices and to provide training for hiring managers in order to promote equitable decision-making regarding hiring, including using criteria in job-postings that require successful

applicants to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the needs of environmental justice populations, and underserved and overburdened communities in the Commonwealth.

### Conclusion

The Department's strategy reflects its commitment to focus on environmental justice populations by ensuring the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, income, class, handicap, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity or ancestry, religious belief or English language proficiency with respect to the development and implementation of programs, policies, and activities. Mitigating environmental burdens, creating access to clean energy and electrification program, and increasing energy benefits in environmental justice neighborhoods will be an ongoing and evolving process. The Department will track its progress towards meeting the goals outlined in the strategy by collecting data that will be reported in EEA's annual environmental justice report. The DOER will review and update its strategy no less frequently than once every three years in-coordination and consultation with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

*About This Policy: The Department shall implement this Policy consistent with, and to the extent permitted by, existing law and applicable regulations. This Policy is intended only to integrate environmental justice considerations into the Department's policies, programs and other strategies and is not intended to create any right to judicial review of the Department's compliance or noncompliance with the same, nor does it create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by any party against the Department, its management, employees, or any other person.*

### Enforcement of this EEA EJ Strategy

For any environmental justice concerns, complaints, compliments or ideas, or to find out more about our agency environmental, energy and climate justice efforts, please contact EEA's Office of Environmental Justice and equity or the contact below.

#### DOER EJ Point of Contact:

Danilo Morales

Clean Energy Program and Outreach Manager

[Danilo.morales@mass.gov](mailto:Danilo.morales@mass.gov)

## Department of Public Utilities



## Environmental Justice Strategy



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## Definitions

“Department” or “DPU” means the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities.

“Division” means a branch of the Department that is responsible for the oversight of a specific Department function.

“Environmental Justice” is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment regardless of race, color, national origin, income, or English language proficiency. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens.

“Environmental Justice (“EJ”) Population” means: (1) a Neighborhood that meets one or more of the following criteria: (a) the annual median household income is not more than 65 percent of the statewide annual median household income; (b) minorities comprise 40 percent or more of the population; (c) 25 percent or more of households lack English language proficiency; or (d) minorities comprise 25 percent or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150 percent of the statewide annual median household income; or (2) a geographic portion of a neighborhood designated by the Secretary of EEA as an EJ population in accordance with the law.

“Hearing Officer” means an attorney designated by the Commission, pursuant to G.L. c. 25, § 4, to preside over a Department proceeding.

“Limited English Proficiency” means a person who does not speak English as a primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

“Neighborhood” means a census block group as defined by the United States Census Bureau, excluding people who live in college dormitories and people who are under formally authorized, supervised care or custody, including federal, state or county prisons.





## Mission Statement

The Department of Public Utilities is an adjudicatory agency overseen by a three-member Commission. The Department is responsible for the oversight of investor-owned electric power, natural gas, and water utilities in the Commonwealth. In addition, the Department is charged with developing alternatives to traditional regulation, monitoring service quality, regulating transportation and gas pipeline safety, and the siting of certain energy facilities.

The mission of the DPU is to ensure that consumers' rights are protected, and that utility companies are providing the most reliable service at the lowest possible cost. The DPU oversees the public safety from transportation and gas pipeline-related accidents, and the energy facilities siting process. The Department seeks to promote safety, security, reliability of service, affordability, equity, and greenhouse gas emission reductions.

## Statement of Authority

### Secretariat Environmental Justice Strategy ("EJ Strategy") Requirements from EEA EJ Policy

The EEA EJ Policy requires all EEA Agencies to develop individual EJ Strategies tailored to their individual missions. The Department's EJ Strategy is structured in a manner that ensures the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens regardless of race, color, national origin, income, class, handicap, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity or ancestry, religious belief or English language proficiency.

Also, in addition to the EJ Strategy, each EEA agency is required to create a Public Involvement and Community Engagement Plan that outlines its efforts to enhance public participation opportunities for agency activities that potentially affect EJ populations. The Department intends this document to serve as both its EJ Strategy and Public Involvement Plan until the Public Involvement Plan is developed.

## Department EJ Strategy

The Department's EJ Strategy establishes practices and principles, consistent with statutes and regulations, to promote EJ considerations across the Department's proceedings involving EJ communities. As described in detail below, the Department will:

- Finalize a policy on enhanced notice procedures within the next twelve months to increase awareness of and public participation in Department proceedings;
- Include more plain language in its notices designed to inform the public about proceedings before the Department;



- Establish standards for petitioners before the Department to file plain language summaries of their proposals;
- Require the distribution companies to provide bill impact analyses on EJ populations in base distribution rate proceedings;
- Require the distribution companies to track and report on EJ-related performance metrics and post these on the Department website;
- Summarize public comments in Department orders;
- Assign staff to act as EJ liaison and EJ point-of-contact to handle inquiries regarding engagement with EJ communities and language access;
- Provide more educational materials on its website; and
- Promote staff training on language access and EJ matters.

### Public Outreach

**Strengthen Community/Public Outreach.** The Department opened a proceeding to develop strategies to enhance public access to Department hearings and proceedings (D.P.U. 21-50). The Department will incorporate the policies developed through the D.P.U. 21-50 proceeding into the EJ Strategy. In addition, the Department will assign a staff person to act as la point-of-contact to help the public learn about participating in Department proceedings and access filings and records. The staff person acting as a point-of-contact for inquiries regarding engagement with EJ populations and language access.

**Department EJ Website.** The Department will maintain a webpage designed for EJ populations. The EJ webpage will contain information useful for EJ populations, including, but not limited to:

- Contact information for the Department’s EJ point-of-contact;
- A link to the EEA EJ Policy;
- A link to EEA’s EJ website;
- A link to the Department’s Language Access Plan;
- A link to EEA’s Title VI Non-Discrimination Complaint Form;
- Information for non-English speakers and persons with limited English proficiency about requesting interpretation and translation services;
- Translations of vital documents relative to consumers’ rights; and
- A non-exhaustive list of useful links on the Department’s website to help customers navigate their energy bills. Such links may include information on energy incentive programs and arrearage management programs.

**Language Access Plan.** The Department is also committed to ensuring that persons with limited English proficiency are provided with the opportunity for meaningful involvement and



participation in Department proceedings in accordance with legal requirements, as set out in the Executive Office of Administration and Finance Administrative Bulletin #16, as revised on March 20, 2015. The Department's Language Access Plan describes the Department's language access services, policies, and procedures and is accessible on its website at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/2018-dpu-language-access-plan/download>.

#### Department EJ Analyses

Consistent with applicable law and the Department's scope of authority, the Department will continue to conduct analyses of agency actions that may have an impact on EJ populations, assess strategies to address EJ concerns, and promote the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens.

At the outset of Department proceedings, Hearing Officers will identify whether the proceeding impacts a neighborhood with an EJ population. This process will involve, among other things, a review of geographic information systems data provided by EEA to determine if the affected community or communities meet the criteria for an EJ population. If an EJ population is identified as being impacted by the proposal, the assigned Hearing Officer will notify the EJ point-of-contact, the case supervisor, and the Chief of Staff. The Hearing Officer will provide notice regarding the proceeding in accordance with this EJ Strategy.

#### Department EJ Team

The Department Chief of Staff will establish an EJ Team comprising the EJ point-of-contact and representatives selected by the Chief of Staff and Commission. The EJ Team will meet regularly to review Department EJ-related practices and will, no less than every three years, review and update the EJ Strategy.

#### Metrics

The Department will create and track the following metrics:

- Participation in public hearings;
- EJ webpage statistics;
- Requests for interpretation by a participant at a public hearing;
- Percent of requests for interpretation fulfilled; and
- Number of proceedings that specifically impact an EJ neighborhood, and how notice was provided in each instance.

#### Trainings/Shared Resources

The Department will hold annual staff trainings on the Department's language access and EJ policies. These trainings will include:

- The Department's procedures for requesting interpretation and document translation services;



- The Department's procedures for requesting to work with staff volunteer interpreters; and
- How to successfully use the Department's assisted listening and interpretation equipment.

Department staff will also participate in any required trainings hosted by EEA. Staff will be encouraged, as practicable, to participate in EEA trainings related to:

- The use of available state mapping and screening tools in order to identify EJ Neighborhoods and assess project impacts in these areas;
- The definition, practices, and goals of stakeholder engagement; and
- The concept of Environmental Justice Principles.

### Diversity and Hiring Practices

The Department acknowledges the importance of having an agency workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of the residents of Massachusetts, including the key role that such a workforce plays in advancing equitable decisions regarding environmental and energy permitting, siting, regulatory development, policy and law enforcement, and other matters relevant to the Department's jurisdiction. The Department commits to implementing all EEA directives with regard to equitable hiring practices.

### Enforcement of this EEA EJ Strategy

The Department has a designated EJ point-of-contact named below to answer questions regarding this Strategy or any other EJ-related matter.

#### Agency EJ Point-of-Contact

Scott Seigal, Hearing Officer  
 Department of Public Utilities  
 Legal Division  
 One South Station  
 Boston, MA 02110  
[Scott.Seigal@mass.gov](mailto:Scott.Seigal@mass.gov)  
 (617) 305-3771



Commonwealth of Massachusetts Energy Facilities Siting  
Board (EFSB)  
Environmental Justice Strategy

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## Background

### Energy Facilities Siting Board

The Energy Facilities Siting Board (“Siting Board” or “EFSB”) is an independent state board that reviews proposals to construct large energy facilities including generating facilities, electric transmission lines, intra-state natural gas pipelines, and natural gas storage tanks. To obtain Siting Board approval, an applicant of a proposed facility must demonstrate that the facility would provide a reliable energy supply, with a minimum impact on the environment, at the lowest possible cost. The Department of Public Utilities (“Department” or “DPU”) administratively supports the work of the Siting Board and its staff, but the nine-member Siting Board independently determines whether to approve or deny these projects. Siting Board staff also conduct DPU siting-related proceedings that do not fall within the Siting Board’s jurisdiction.<sup>5</sup>

### Commonwealth Policies

As part of its review of jurisdictional facilities, the Siting Board must consider whether a project applicant’s plans for construction are consistent with current health, environmental protection, and resource use and development policies as adopted by the Commonwealth. G.L. c. 164, § 69J. See also G.L. c. 164, § 69J½ (requiring consistency with current health, environmental protection, and energy policies). The Siting Board considers a variety of policies, including the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs’ (“EEA”) Environmental Justice Policy (“EJ Policy”)<sup>6</sup> and the Commonwealth’s Language Access Policy (Administration and Finance Bulletin #16).<sup>7,8</sup>

Section 13 of the EJ Policy directs EEA Agencies to “develop their own strategies to proactively promote environmental justice in all neighborhoods in ways that are tailored to the Agencies’ mission.” The A&F Bulletin #16 directs each agency to develop a language access plan (“LAP”) through which it works to implement protocols for providing services to non-English speakers and persons with limited English proficiency.

### Purpose of EJ Strategy

The Siting Board’s Environmental Justice Strategy (“EJ Strategy”) aims to ensure the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental

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<sup>5</sup> The Department reviews certain energy facilities under its own statutory jurisdiction that pre-dates the establishment of the Energy Facilities Siting Council in 1973 (the predecessor agency of the Energy Facilities Siting Board). The Siting Board is an independent agency administratively located within the Department, although by statute it is not subject to the Department’s supervision or control.

<sup>6</sup> The EJ Policy is at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/environmental-justice-policy6242021-update/download> (updated on June 24, 2021). The EJ Policy also explicitly applies to the Siting Board. See Section 20.

<sup>7</sup> The A&F Bulletin is at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/language-access-guidelines/download>.

<sup>8</sup> In March 2021, Governor Baker signed into law Chapter 8 of the Acts of 2021, An Act Creating a Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy (“Climate Roadmap Act”).

laws, regulations, and policies, and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens regardless of race, color, national origin, income, or English language proficiency. The Siting Board shall consider environmental justice principles and community-specific environmental justice conditions in making any policy and rendering any decision related to matters within its statutory jurisdiction. The Siting Board's policies and decisions shall also reflect careful consideration of the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens. We expect that our EJ Strategy will continue to evolve over time, responding to the changing needs of the Commonwealth's environmental justice populations.

### Notice of Inquiry

On June 30, 2021, the Siting Board opened a Notice of Inquiry ("NOI"), EFSB 21-01, to explore avenues to (1) increase the visibility of the Siting Board's public notices and (2) promote equitable and meaningful public and stakeholder involvement in Siting Board's proceedings.<sup>9</sup> Through its NOI, the Siting Board seeks input from relevant stakeholders, public officials, and members of the public on best practices for promoting public involvement in its proceedings. Subject to its review and approval, the Siting Board will issue a final written decision on the NOI, accompanied by a Public Involvement and Community Engagement Plan ("PIP") and Siting Board-specific LAP detailing implementation measures and timelines that advance the provisions in the Siting Board EJ Strategy. See section titled "EJ Strategy Implementation", below.

The Siting Board received numerous public comment letters from stakeholders in the initial NOI comment period. The comments covered a wide range of ideas on how the Siting Board can enhance its procedures: e.g., alternative notice distribution methods, language access and accommodations, opportunities for public comment, accessibility for public comment hearings, project information on the Siting Board website, project applicant compliance, transparency by the Siting Board, and awareness of participation in Siting Board proceedings. On August 25, 2022, the DPU and Siting Board conducted a joint stakeholder roundtable to gather input on improving public and stakeholder involvement in our proceedings. The DPU and Siting Board also sought additional comments from the public in September 2022. Although the suggestions offered and currently under review are intended to improve the Siting Board's overall transparency, service and support to its stakeholders, many of the suggestions are particularly well suited to the needs of EJ populations.

### NOI Team

The NOI is being conducted by a team comprising the Siting Board Director, General Counsel, and staff. The NOI Team intends to develop detailed implementation plans as part of the forthcoming Siting Board decision on the NOI that will expand on the provisions contained in this EJ Strategy. Throughout 2022, the NOI Team considered responses to the two NOI and the roundtable to help guide the Siting Board in the development and implementation of its EJ Strategy. Additionally, EEA issued another version of this EJ Strategy and solicited public

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<sup>9</sup> See <https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/DPU/Fileroom/dockets/bynumber/EFSB21-01>.



comments. Many of the resulting changes from all comments received are reflected in this version of the EJ Strategy. The Siting Board will continue to incorporate policies developed through the NOI proceeding into the EJ Strategy.

## Definitions

The terminology defined below is taken from EEA's EJ Policy. It is important to clearly define these terms so the public can hold the Siting Board accountable in our analysis of proposed facilities and other projects.

**"Environmental Justice Population"** means (A) a neighborhood that meets 1 or more of the following criteria: (i) the annual median household income is not more than 65 per cent of the statewide annual median household income; (ii) minorities comprise 40 per cent or more of the population; (iii) 25 per cent or more of households lack English language proficiency; or (iv) minorities comprise 25 per cent or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150 per cent of the statewide annual median household income; or (B) a geographic portion of a neighborhood designated by the Secretary as an environmental justice population in accordance with law.

**"Environmental Justice Principles"** are principles that support protection from environmental pollution and the ability to live in and enjoy a clean and healthy environment, regardless of race, color, income, class, handicap, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity or ancestry, religious belief or English language proficiency, which includes: (i) the meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies, including climate change policies; and (ii) the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and environmental burdens.

**"Energy Benefits"** means access to funding, training, renewable or alternative energy, energy efficiency, or other beneficial resources disbursed by EEA, its Agencies and its offices.

**"Environmental Benefits"** means access to clean natural resources, including air, water resources, open space, constructed playgrounds and other outdoor recreational facilities and venues, clean renewable energy course, environmental enforcement, training and funding disbursed or administered by EEA.

**"Environmental Burdens"** means any destruction, damage, or impairment of natural resources that is not insignificant, resulting from intentional or reasonably foreseeable causes, including but not limited to climate change, air pollution, water pollution, improper sewage disposal, dumping of solid wastes and other noxious substances, excessive noise, activities that limit access to natural resources and constructed outdoor recreational facilities and venues, inadequate remediation of pollution, reduction of ground water levels, impairment of water quality, increased flooding or storm water flows, and damage to inland waterways and waterbodies, wetlands, marine shores and waters, forests, open spaces, and playgrounds from

private industrial, commercial or government operations or other activity that contaminates or alters the quality of the environment and poses a risk to public health.

“[Meaningful Involvement](#)” means that all neighborhoods have the right and opportunity to participate in energy, climate change, and environmental decision-making including needs assessment, planning, implementation, compliance and enforcement, and evaluation, and neighborhoods are enabled and administratively assisted to participate fully through education and training, and are given transparency/accountability by government with regard to community input, and encouraged to develop environmental, energy, and climate change stewardship.

“[MEPA](#)” is the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, M.G.L. Ch.30, Sections 61-621. Under the MEPA statute, EEA reviews the potential environmental impacts of state agency actions that exceed certain regulatory thresholds. MEPA involves public review and comment, and is subject to strict statutory deadlines on the length of reviews.

“[Neighborhood](#)” means a census block group as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau but not including people who live in college dormitories or people under formally authorized, supervised care or custody (i.e., in federal or state prisons).

## [EFSB Public Process](#)

The Siting Board provides a range of opportunities for individuals and organizations to participate and be heard throughout the various phases of its proceedings, from initial applicant filings, to public comment and evidentiary hearings, to Board meetings, and if approved, construction and operation of facilities. Interest in Siting Board proceedings may range from gathering information from project notices or the Siting Board website, to providing oral and written comments at public hearings, to seeking full legal rights of participation, such as receiving documents and other information, offering evidence, questioning witnesses, and appealing decisions of the Siting Board. The Siting Board regularly evaluates how it delivers public information through various communication methods and outlets, and improves information-delivery venues and processes when possible, and as new opportunities arise.

### [Access to Project Information](#)

#### [Access at the Start of a Proceeding](#)

The Siting Board seeks to ensure that project information is readily available for review to all stakeholders. A project applicant’s full petition is made available at multiple locations and in multiple languages (as applicable) to provide for public access to these documents. The Siting Board requires a project applicant to place physical copies of certain documents in one or more repositories such as a public library, local government office, project applicant’s office, or other accessible locations in the community. The public can also request physical access to project records at the Siting Board/DPU offices or in additional formats (e.g., large print, Braille).

Electronic versions of the petitions can be found at the Siting Board’s website and the project applicant’s website, which are linked in widely distributed public notices. The Siting Board also creates project-specific webpages at the start of a project proceeding, which it updates during the course of the proceeding. The webpages contain, at a minimum, public comment hearing information; links to project information by topic; project review schedules and dates; and links to background information about the Siting Board with easily understood summaries of key processes and procedures.

#### [Access After a Proceeding](#)

The Siting Board also seeks to ensure that its project approval/rejection decisions and orders are accessible to the public. Electronic versions of decisions and orders are available within hours on the Siting Board/DPU websites. The Siting Board provides summaries at the start of its decisions and orders. The Siting Board will endeavor to write these summaries of decisions and orders in plain language. The Siting Board also ensures that, where applicable, advisory opinions, rulings, and other decisions that have precedential value are published online.

Once a Siting Board proceeding is concluded, if the project is approved and the project applicant has received other required permits, the project applicant can commence construction. The Siting Board requests and reviews community outreach project plans to be used by project applicants to inform abutters of construction activities. The Siting Board will continue to identify ways that project applicants can and should keep abutters informed of construction activities (including what information project applicants should keep up to date on their project websites).

#### [Notice Distribution](#)

The Siting Board requires extensive and timely notice by project applicants for all proposed projects including mailed notices to area residents (including both property owners and renters), businesses, and local and state officials, as well as newspaper publication of notice. The Siting Board requires project applicants to notify residents within certain distances of new proposed facilities by U.S. mail. Based on the demographic information of residents living near a proposed project, the Siting Board may require the notice and mailings to be translated into other languages and published in news media outlets applicable to those other languages and locations.

The Siting Board also ensures that project information is posted on the project applicant’s and Siting Board’s websites (including the project-specific webpages). The Siting Board requires project applicants to provide additional notice to community-based organizations (including environmental justice organizations and indigenous organizations) in the area of a project, using the “EJ Mailing List” developed and maintained by EEA. At the beginning of the long form notice, the Siting Board provides a plain language summary, which provides public hearing information and a short description of the project. The Siting Board will endeavor to provide these summaries in plain language, at an eighth grade reading level.

By notifying residents in the vicinity of a proposed project, the Siting Board seeks to promote awareness of the proposal and enable those who want more information or wish to provide comments with the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to and inform the Board's consideration of a proposed project. To further enhance the understanding of the geographic location of a project in relation to individual residents' locations, the Siting Board requires project applicants to provide GIS-based interactive maps on their websites enabling residents to enter their property addresses and view their proximity relative to the proposed project.

#### Public Comment

The Siting Board recognizes the diversity of environmental justice populations across the Commonwealth and that members of a given community where a project may be proposed have unique insights regarding the people, places, environment, culture, and history in the given community. The Siting Board also recognizes the value and importance of gaining a broad understanding of this local perspective and incorporating these elements into the Siting Board's review process. The Siting Board allows comments to be submitted in writing or electronically before, during and after public comment hearings, and orally at public comment hearings at the beginning of a proceeding.

The Siting Board relies on comments from the public as an important source of information on potential issues to investigate over the course of a proceeding. The Siting Board's objective in conducting a public comment hearing is to provide a robust, inclusive, and useful forum for the public to learn more about a proposed project, and enable the Siting Board to learn about community concerns. Based on the demographic information of residents living near a proposed project, the Siting Board may require interpretation of the public comment hearing into other languages. The Siting Board also provides attendees with the ability to enable closed captioning during remote public hearings. As described below, the Siting Board provides for requests for additional languages and accommodations.

In selecting a venue and dates/times for in-person public comment hearings, the Siting Board recognizes that every environmental justice population has distinct characteristics and, in accordance considers the following objectives, including whether:

- The meeting time is most conducive to public participation (i.e., in the evening)
- The venue is Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant
- The venue has sufficient audio-visual equipment connection capabilities
- The venue can adequately ensure public safety
- The venue is suitable for hybrid remote/in person hearings

In addition, the Siting Board considers whether:

- Populations in rural areas can access the meeting venue

- Neighborhood stakeholders or municipal officials recommend the venue location and meeting times
- The venue is near the proposed project location
- The venue is typically used by the community, and can accommodate all interested attendees
- The venue is near public transportation and/or has ample free parking
- The venue can adequately ensure public safety

Since 2020, the Siting Board has conducted its public comment hearings remotely and posted recordings of the hearings on the [EFSB YouTube page](#). The Siting Board intends to resume in-person hearings and also continue providing videoconferencing access for those wishing to participate remotely.

### Participation in Proceedings

Individuals, organizations, businesses, or other entities (such as a municipality) wishing to participate beyond the public comment phase of a proceeding may petition the Siting Board to intervene as a party or participate as a limited participant. In order to intervene as a party, a petitioner must demonstrate that he or she is, or may be, "substantially and specifically affected" by the proceeding. The issues raised in the petition to intervene must be specific to the potential intervenor and must fall within the scope of the Siting Board's review, such as visual impacts, noise, air or water pollution, traffic, or magnetic fields that could have a temporary or permanent impact on the petitioners or their property. See 980 CMR 1.05; see also G.L. c. 30A, §§ 1, 10.

Individuals or organizations that are permitted to intervene as a party are known as "intervenors." As a full party, an intervenor may submit questions to the project applicant, ask questions at the evidentiary hearings, present evidence, and file briefs consistent with the procedural rules and the schedule established for that case. An intervenor also has the right to appeal a Siting Board Final Decision to the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts. Individuals or organizations seeking to participate as a limited participant need not demonstrate "substantial and specific" interest; however, a petition to participate as a limited participant should describe the manner in which the Petitioner is interested, and the purpose for which participation is requested. Limited participants may receive copies of filings and file briefs.

The Siting Board provides a handbook that explains the various ways to participate in its review process. This handbook is currently provided in the following languages: [English](#) and [Spanish](#).<sup>10</sup> The Siting Board is exploring the use of other media that may be useful in explaining basic procedures for public participation, and perhaps an overview of the specific projects under review.

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<sup>10</sup> The Siting Board is in the process of translating the handbook into other languages spoken in the Commonwealth.

## Language Access

The Siting Board seeks to ensure that persons with limited English proficiency are provided with the opportunity for meaningful involvement and participation in Siting Board proceedings. At the start of a proceeding, Siting Board staff reviews demographic information for the areas in which facilities are proposed to identify populations with limited English proficiency that may require translation of documents and interpretation services. In such cases, the Siting Board requires the project applicant to provide notice in the identified additional languages spoken in the community and, where applicable, publish the notice in non-English language newspapers in local circulation.

The Siting Board includes simultaneous interpretation for additional languages at both virtual and in-person public comment hearings. These services are provided where there is an identified limited English proficient population and upon request. Interpretation is also provided at evidentiary hearings and Board meetings, as needed. The Siting Board is in the process of updating its LAP. Elements of the LAP are described in section titled “Language Access Plan” below.

## Climate Change Policies

The Siting Board considers the current and future impacts of climate change on environmental justice populations and others in its decisions and evaluates an applicant’s treatment of climate change adaptation, mitigation, and resiliency as part of its environmental review. For example, the Siting Board analyzes sea level rise and storm surge impacts on facilities in coastal communities. The Siting Board also assesses a project’s compliance with state resiliency and climate change plans. The Siting Board will also work with the Massachusetts Climate Chief and the Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience in the implementation of climate policy. The Siting Board recognizes that climate change impacts and resilience measures may present particular challenges for environmental justice populations and require particular attention in reviews.

## Consistency with MEPA

### MEPA Protocols

In 2022, the MEPA Office issued two protocols relative to environmental justice: (i) MEPA Public Involvement Protocol for environmental justice populations; and (ii) MEPA Interim Protocol for Analysis of Project Impacts on environmental justice populations. The MEPA Public Involvement Protocol requires that project applicants identify nearby environmental justice populations and engage in pre-filing outreach to those populations. Project applicants must provide a description of public involvement strategies as part of the MEPA filing, and specifically state how community-based organizations and tribes were informed of ways to request a community meeting. Facility applications before the Siting Board often require a MEPA filing as well.

The MEPA Interim Protocol for Analysis of Project Impacts on environmental justice populations requires a project applicant to assess and describe any existing unfair or inequitable environmental burden and related public health consequences impacting the environmental justice population. These impacts include those from any prior or current private, industrial, commercial, state, or municipal operation or project that has damaged the environment, including cumulative health impacts and sea level rise. The Siting Board reviews these analyses in its evaluation of a project proposal and makes applicable findings in its decisions.

#### Enhanced Public Participation

The Siting Board employs enhanced public participation procedures in its review of energy facility petitions. Under Section 20 of the EJ Policy, enhanced public participation is required for Siting Board proceedings based on the same environmental impact thresholds used by the MEPA Office (in Section 16) for its enhanced public participation:

- 1) Any project that exceeds an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) threshold for air, solid and hazardous waste (other than remediation projects), or wastewater and sewage sludge treatment and disposal; and
- 2) The project site is located within one mile of an EJ Population (or in the case of projects exceeding an ENF threshold for air, within five miles of an EJ Population).

The Siting Board will continue to use enhanced public participation procedures in its review of energy facility petitions.

#### Enhanced Analysis of Impacts

Pursuant to the EJ Policy, the Siting Board employs enhanced analysis of impacts and mitigation procedures in its review of proposed energy facilities. Under Section 20 of the EJ Policy, the enhanced analysis of impacts and mitigation is required for Siting Board proceedings based on the same environmental impact thresholds used by MEPA (in Section 17) for its enhanced analysis of impacts and mitigation:

- 1) Exceed a mandatory EIR threshold for air, solid and hazardous waste (other than remediation projects), or wastewater and sewage sludge treatment and disposal; and
- 2) Are located within one mile of an EJ Population (or in the case of projects exceeding a mandatory EIR threshold for air, within five miles of an EJ Population). The project proponent may submit actual air modeling data on the project's area of potential air impacts in its EIR scope to modify the presumed five-mile impact area.

Decisions issued by the Siting Board include measures to mitigate such impacts for the affected communities, with enhanced review required where environmental justice populations are present. In its review of generation facilities, the Board considers cumulative health impacts, including consideration of compound effects caused by proximity to multiple energy, industrial, or transportation sources. The Siting Board will continue to conduct enhanced analysis of impacts and mitigation procedures in its review of proposed energy facilities under Section 20.

## EJ Strategy Implementation

### Public Involvement and Community Engagement Plan (PIP)

All EEA Agencies must create a PIP that establishes an inclusive, robust public participation program for key agency actions that focuses agency resources on outreach activities that enhance public participation opportunities for agency activities that potentially affect environmental justice populations. The EFSB is developing its PIP as part of the NOI process. The Siting Board will post its draft PIP for a 60-day public comment period and will consider comments received and incorporate improvements to its draft PIP. The Siting Board will publish its final PIP, translated in all appropriate language, on its website. The Siting Board will consult PIPs from appropriate Agencies (e.g., other EEA Agencies and other state energy regulatory Agencies) to help guide the Siting Board in the development of its PIP. The Siting Board will ensure that its PIP is implemented consistent with applicable state and federal non-discrimination laws.

### Language Access Plan

The Siting Board is developing its LAP as part of the NOI process. The Siting Board will post the draft LAP for a 60-day public comment period and will consider all comments received and incorporate improvements to its draft LAP. The Siting Board will publish its final LAP, translated into all appropriate languages on its website. The LAP is intended to remove barriers to access and improve opportunities for the public input and participation for stakeholders with limited English language proficiency. The Siting Board's LAP will, at a minimum, contain the following information:

- Identification of thresholds for presumptively translating project documents and providing simultaneous language interpretation by qualified interpreters of live proceedings for public comment hearings, evidentiary hearings, and Board meetings in appropriate languages to allow individuals with limited English proficiency to meaningfully participate in those proceedings and activities
- Description of the Siting Board's language service protocols (i.e., the process to request either interpretation services or translation of documents.)
- Description of the Siting Board's requirements for selecting an interpretation service for hearings
- Description of common "key public documents" of interest to the general public that the Siting Board will translate into the top languages spoken in the Commonwealth for individuals with limited English proficiency who are served by or likely to be encountered by Siting Board activities<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The Siting Board considers these documents to include the EFSB Handbook (which provides a detailed description of the Siting Board's review process, and an explanation of the various ways to participate in that process), accommodation request information, and this EJ Strategy. The NOI Team will continue to identify additional



- Description of project-specific “key public documents” of interest to a particular individual with limited English proficiency or group of individuals with limited English proficiency that the Siting Board will require to be translated into languages prevalent in the project area<sup>12</sup>
- Description of the Siting Board’s approach to provide translated “key public documents” and increase messaging to persons with limited English proficiency on its webpages and/or social media
- Consideration of the best way to receive feedback on the accuracy and quality of the language assistance services
- A process for consideration and evaluation of new technologies that can expand and enhance the language services available in Siting Board proceedings

### Metrics

To measure progress towards its EJ Strategy goals, the Siting Board proposes to establish metrics to track public participation. The Siting Board will begin tracking these metrics in Fiscal Year 2024 and provide them to the EEA Environmental Justice Office to publish in annual reports. Some of the criteria that may be considered by the Siting Board are the following:

- Number of interpretation and translation requests, including languages requested and accommodated
- Number of hearing and visual accommodation assistance requests and those granted
- Funds expended by the Siting Board and project applicants for interpretation and translation services
- Number of positive/negative comments received regarding quality of translation/interpretation
- Percentage of staff who attended environmental justice-focused trainings
- Percentage of agency public meetings that were conducted with language services

### Periodic Assessments

The Siting Board will periodically, but no less than every three years, review its EJ Strategy, PIP and LAP. The documents will be reviewed by an Environmental Justice Team, including the Siting Board Director and General Counsel. The review conducted by the Environmental Justice Team will continue any unfinished analysis from the NOI and monitor agency performance as measured by the metric data collected and examine new opportunities or techniques. The review will ensure that: (1) there are no redundancies or conflicts with corresponding policies/documents in other Agencies; (2) development and implementation of the

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documents that are critical for persons to understand their rights in Siting Board matters and update the list in the LAP.

<sup>12</sup> The Siting Board considers these documents to include public notices, MEPA outreach materials (if not already translated), maps legends, and additional outreach materials. The NOI Team will continue to identify additional documents and update the list in the LAP.

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documents/policies progress expeditiously and meticulously; and (3) the priorities of and feedback from environmental justice populations across the Commonwealth inform development and implementation. The Siting Board's website will feature periodic updates on the three documents discussed above.

## Workforce Commitments

### Trainings

The Siting Board will ensure that all staff have been appropriately trained on its EJ Strategy, as well as on the nature of applicable non-discrimination obligations. Siting Board staff will also attend trainings conducted by EEA and the Department on language access and environmental justice policies, and/or any appropriate trainings by external organizations (e.g., U.S. Environmental Protection Agency). Required trainings hosted by EEA include:

- The use of available state mapping and screening tools to identify environmental justice neighborhoods and assess project impacts in these areas; and
- The definition, practices, and goals of stakeholder engagement.

### Staffing

The Siting Board understands and values the importance of having an agency workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of the residents of Massachusetts. It is the Siting Board's view that such a workforce plays a vital role in advancing equitable decisions regarding environmental and energy permitting, siting, regulatory development, policy and law enforcement, and other matters relevant to the Siting Board's jurisdiction. The Siting Board commits to implementing all EEA directives regarding equitable hiring practices.

The nine-member Siting Board is composed of the Secretary of EEA, who serves as Chair, the Secretary of Housing and Economic Development, the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection, the Commissioner of the Department of Energy Resources, two Commissioners from the DPU, and three public members appointed by the Governor. The three public members are experienced in environmental, labor and energy issues. The statutory composition of the Siting Board provides broad subject matter expertise; as a matter of agency policy, the Siting Board aspires to have a Board that also reflects the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of the residents of Massachusetts.

## Conclusion

The Siting Board through the EEA EJ Policy and this EJ Strategy commits to ensuring equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens.

## Enforcement of this EEA EJ Strategy

For any environmental justice concerns, complaints, compliments or ideas, or to find out more about our agency environmental, energy and climate justice efforts, please contact EEA's Office of Environmental Justice and equity or the contact below.

For questions regarding this EJ Strategy, please contact:

Andrew Greene

Director, Energy Facilities Siting Board

[Andrew.Greene@mass.gov](mailto:Andrew.Greene@mass.gov)

For specific accommodation requests, please contact:

Yonathan Mengesha

Program Coordinator, Energy Facilities Siting Board

[Yonathan.Mengesha@mass.gov](mailto:Yonathan.Mengesha@mass.gov)

# Massachusetts Clean Energy Center



## Environmental Justice Strategy

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# Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC)

## Environmental Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy

### MassCEC Background and Mission Statement

Established by Chapter 23J of the General Laws, the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) began operating in 2009. MassCEC is a quasi-public agency funded primarily by the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust Fund, authorized by the Massachusetts Legislature in 1997.

MassCEC is dedicated to growing the clean energy sector through support for innovation, market development and adoption, and workforce and industry development. MassCEC's mission is to accelerate the clean energy and climate solution innovation that is critical to meeting the Commonwealth's climate goals, advancing Massachusetts' position as an international climate leader while growing the state's clean energy economy.

MassCEC is committed to creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization where everyone is welcomed, supported, respected, and valued. We are committed to incorporating principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice in all aspects of our work in order to promote the equitable distribution of the health and economic benefits of clean energy and support a diverse and inclusive clean energy industry. MassCEC strives to lead and innovate in equitable clean energy and climate solutions.

Working in close coordination with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), MassCEC supports innovative clean energy and climate solutions with a focus in four critical areas: the built environment, transportation, net zero grid, and offshore wind. Through strategic grants and investments, MassCEC supports solutions that foster development of the state's clean energy economy, accelerate the state's reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and drive down costs to both businesses and consumers associated with clean energy and climate solutions. MassCEC also funds workforce training efforts to ensure we have a well-trained and diverse clean energy workforce to meet the state's ambitious climate goals, and supports programs that make clean energy technologies and solutions accessible for low- and moderate-income residents and residents in environmental justice communities. Throughout its various programs and initiatives, MassCEC facilitates collaboration across a wide range of stakeholders (including companies, academic innovators, private investors, government Agencies, non-profit organizations, and communities) to catalyze and deploy clean energy and climate solutions throughout the Commonwealth.

## EEA Environmental Justice Policy

EEA's [Environmental Justice \(EJ\) Policy](#) requires all EEA Agencies to develop their own EJ strategies. The policy states that "EEA Agencies shall consider how to appropriately integrate environmental justice considerations into their departments through policies, programs, or other strategies. EEA Agencies shall identify and promote agency-sponsored projects, funding decisions, rulemakings or other actions intended to further environmental justice throughout the Commonwealth in order to show how the fair distribution of benefits has been measured.

The EJ Policy describes "environmental justice" in the following manner:

"Environmental justice is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment regardless of race, color, national origin, income, class, handicap, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity or ancestry, religious belief or English language proficiency. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens."

Further, the policy defines "energy benefits" as "access to funding, training, renewable or alternative energy, energy efficiency or other beneficial resources disbursed by EEA, its Agencies and its offices."

EJ neighborhoods are those segments of the population that EEA has determined to be most at risk of being unaware of or unable to participate in environmental decision-making or to gain access to state environmental resources, or are especially vulnerable. They are defined as neighborhoods (U.S. Census Bureau census block group data for minority criteria, and American Community Survey (ACS) data for state median income and English isolation criteria) that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- The annual median household income is not more than 65 per cent of the statewide annual median household income; minorities comprise 40 per cent or more of the population;
- 25 per cent or more of households lack English language proficiency; or
- Minorities comprise 25 per cent or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150 per cent of the statewide annual median household income.

As a quasi-public state agency, MassCEC is not subject to the EEA EJ policy but nonetheless seeks to integrate the principles of environmental justice and reach EJ neighborhoods and other

underserved populations with clean energy benefits. Further, as an agency that supports the growth of the clean energy industry, MassCEC seeks to promote the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) throughout the industry and help guide its growth in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive manner.

## EJ and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy

MassCEC's EJ and DEI Strategy outlines the strategic framework and key actions MassCEC will take to integrate environmental justice principles within its programs, partnerships, and role as leader and convener of the clean energy industry.

### Key Agency Actions:

- Work towards a MassCEC workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity of the residents of Massachusetts, educate staff on DEI and EJ principles, and share resources and best practices with external stakeholders where appropriate;
- Strengthen DEI and EJ-related stakeholder networks and enhance communication throughout development and implementation of MassCEC programs and activities in order to meaningfully involve and equitably distribute program benefits to a diverse set of populations and communities that reflect the racial, ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the residents of Massachusetts;
- Establish goals for agency wide spending for areas such as EJ neighborhoods, Gateway Cities, Low- and Moderate-Income Initiatives, and Translation services by end of FY2023.

Additional details on MassCEC actions in these areas are described below.

### Promoting Education and Awareness of EJ and DEI

MassCEC acknowledges the importance of having a workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity of the residents of Massachusetts, including the key role that such a workforce plays in advancing equitable decisions regarding environmental and energy burdens and grant disbursement.

MassCEC will ensure that staff understand EJ and DEI principles through EJ- and DEI-related trainings and workshops. In pursuit of this objective, MassCEC has hired a DEI consultant and made training sessions with the consultant mandatory for all staff. When applicable and appropriate, MassCEC will seek to share EJ and DEI resources and best practice guides with industry, government entities, and other interested parties. Below is a non-exhaustive list of actions that MassCEC will take to educate its own staff on EJ- and DEI-related principles and share best practices with the clean energy community:

- Retain a DEI consultant to train and educate MassCEC staff on DEI principles;
- Convene working groups comprised of MassCEC staff to assess and develop strategy on EJ and DEI issues within MassCEC and also within MassCEC's programming;



- Attend EEA-hosted EJ trainings and disseminate appropriate knowledge and best practices to MassCEC staff and stakeholders;
- Incorporate diversity into our hiring practices and provide training for hiring managers in order to promote equitable decision-making, including in the hiring process, evaluating applicants' ability to consider the needs of vulnerable populations, environmental justice neighborhoods, and under-served areas of the Commonwealth;
- Incorporate DEI and EJ- training into new employee on-boarding process;
- Seek to publicize job openings at MassCEC in relevant forums that may be more accessible to members EJ communities (e.g., job boards and web sites at relevant interest groups and advocacy organizations, and Universities and Community Colleges that service EJ Neighborhoods);
- Acknowledgement of employees' efforts to support MassCEC's EJ/DEI work during performance reviews.
- Update MassCEC's About Us website to include MassCEC's values and commitment to equity, and update website, job postings, and program collateral respectively;
- Host key agency documents and DEI- and EJ-related documents on the MassCEC website for public access in multiple languages as appropriate and available, tracking number of documents translated and financial resources utilized for translation; and
- Share best practices and learnings with clean energy industry and other government entities, as appropriate and applicable.

#### Strengthen EJ and DEI Stakeholder Networks and Enhance Communication

Through its role as a clean energy technology and market accelerator, MassCEC has strong relationships with the private sector. However, in order to develop programs that ensure the equitable distribution of clean energy benefits, MassCEC must develop equally strong relationships with EJ neighborhoods and DEI community groups, advocacy groups, and other EJ- and DEI-related stakeholders.

MassCEC will meaningfully involve these groups in program development, recruitment, and implementation. EEA's EJ Policy states that "meaningful involvement" encompasses the following: "all neighborhoods have the right and opportunity to participate in energy, climate change, and environmental decision-making including needs assessment, planning, implementation, compliance and enforcement, and evaluation, and neighborhoods are enabled and administratively assisted to participate fully through education and training, and are given transparency/accountability by government with regard to community input, and encouraged to develop environmental, energy, and climate change stewardship." Below is a non-exhaustive list of actions that MassCEC will take to strengthen its collaboration and communication with EJ and DEI stakeholders:

- Provide a list of EJ and DEI organizations, community groups, EJ media groups, advocacy groups accessible to all MassCEC staff:
  - Include previously engaged organizations and regularly update with new connections; and
  - Share and coordinate with EEA and EEA Agencies, as appropriate and applicable.
- Build relationships with EJ and DEI stakeholders and community groups through regular communication and engagement:
  - Convene meetings with DEI and EJ stakeholders (such as neighborhood-based organizations, DEI-focused industry groups, and low-income ratepayer advocacy groups, environmental justice advocacy groups) to understand clean energy needs and priorities.
  - Attend EEA-led listening sessions and focus groups with EJ stakeholders
- Develop best practices to engage EJ and DEI-related stakeholders in both MassCEC program development and implementation:
  - Develop guiding frameworks and protocols for collecting stakeholder input for MassCEC program design, engaging stakeholders early and often, and offering language services if requested and feasible;
  - Develop best practices and accountability mechanisms for engaging stakeholders throughout relevant MassCEC programs or grant project implementation such as ensuring one Community Development group, one community-based organization or non-governmental organization, and one EJ advocacy group provide high level best practices recommendations on program development
    - Example: Grant opportunities including EmPower (a clean energy access program), ACTNow (a clean transportation program), and the Offshore Wind workforce development program sought feedback from EJ and DEI-related stakeholders to develop solicitation materials, with survey outreach and Notices of Intent. These programs also sought feedback informally through direct outreach;
    - Example: An income-tiered EV carshare pilot project under MassCEC's ACTNow program includes a Community Development Corporation, as a member of the grant project team, to help in developing a replicable community partnership model for future project implementation.
    - Example: Use the MassCEC Clean Energy & Equity Working Group to provide input into development of MassCEC's Workforce Development Strategy and programming.
- Develop mentorship methodology in applicable MassCEC programs to create a more diverse future pipeline of grant applicants and recipients:

- Target capacity-building with EJ and DEI-related partners, vocational schools, community colleges, community-based organizations and non-profits, etc.;
  - Example: The Clean Energy Internship program, which facilitates the placement of MA students and recent graduates into clean energy careers, has a specific carveout of funding for minority students and will leverage trusted training partner organizations to reach these students. The program in FY 2022 will support up to four of these organizations to recruit and mentor minority students.
  - Example: MassCEC's technology innovation programs provide additional support to incubators, accelerators, and other innovation industry partners for DEI initiatives in order to support diversifying the clean energy innovation industry.
- Publicize relevant programs, grant opportunities, and trainings within EJ neighborhoods with postings, local community group sponsorship, flyers, or outreach events in community centers, faith-based centers, and already established neighborhood pathways;
- Prioritize EJ and other underserved populations in program participation where appropriate through targeted communication, education, and training:
  - Assess and increase accessibility of current communication and outreach;
    - Provide program materials in other languages, where appropriate;
    - Diversify communication channels where appropriate (e.g., leveraging community partner networks and existing in-person EJ neighborhood communication pathways like: churches, farmers' markets, fairs, community centers, schools etc.);
    - Continue to use social media and other web-based tools to reach broader audiences;
  - Seek partnerships with trusted community partners to reach priority populations;
  - Develop educational materials, programs, or initiatives based on the feedback from MassCEC's Clean Energy & Equity Working Group;
    - May include technical literacy initiatives, directed media campaigns, etc.;
    - Example: The EmPower Massachusetts pilot program has included stakeholder workshops, targeting those that represent historically underserved or vulnerable communities (including environmental justice communities, low-income advocates, minority groups) with the goal of identifying applicants and facilitating relationships for grant opportunities. If the grant applicant for the program is not a community-based organization, the applicant will be required to partner with a community-based organization for project implementation.

## EJ and DEI Strategies and Metrics in Program Areas

On December 31, 2022, MassCEC began integrating environmental justice and DEI principles throughout its programs and strategic initiatives at the program level. Through the meaningful involvement of EJ and DEI stakeholders, the agency will seek to understand EJ and DEI priorities and needs within its innovation, market development and adoption, and workforce and industry development programs. Additionally, MassCEC has begun the hiring process for a "director of performance management" position. This person will be tasked with tracking metrics across the organization, including all DEI and EJ related metrics.

MassCEC has developed best practices to integrate EJ and DEI considerations into its major functions as an agency (e.g., development of programs, convening industry) in fall 2022.

MassCEC has begun tracking agency wide spending in EJ neighborhoods, Gateway Cities, Diversity Equity and Inclusion Initiatives, Low- and Moderate-Income Initiatives, and Translation services in FY2023, with a full year of information tracking occurring in FY2024. MassCEC has set agency wide goals for the future in these areas in July 2022. Below is a non-exhaustive list of actions that MassCEC will take to incorporate EJ and DEI principles within its key areas of work:

- Gather feedback from stakeholders, including EJ neighborhood representatives through initiatives such as the EEA EJ Listening Sessions to identify, refine, and implement EJ and DEI goals and priorities within relevant MassCEC's programs and strategic initiatives;
- Integrate EJ and DEI principles and identified goals within programmatic decision-making, addressing both MassCEC-wide program development and project-specific decision-making to facilitate the just, diverse, equitable, and inclusive distribution of energy benefits and other MassCEC impacts throughout the Commonwealth;
- Establish goals for agency wide spending for areas such as EJ neighborhoods, Gateway Cities, Low- and Moderate-Income Initiatives, and Translation services by FY2023. Spending will be tracked in these areas starting FY2024.
- Develop and ensure implementation of a standardized process and template that incorporates EJ and/or DEI criteria and language into solicitations, RFPs and contracts where appropriate to promote a diverse, equal, and inclusive clean energy industry:
  - Example: Contracts under the Investments BRIDGES loan program included a provision that requires a company, within ninety (90) days of a letter agreement, institute a DEI policy to encourage hiring of a diverse team, provide equal and fair treatment for all team members, and ensure a workplace environment where all team members feel valued and have to the opportunity to fully participate in creating business success; and
  - Example: The MassCEC Offshore Wind Team has included a section in the selection criteria for an offshore wind workforce development solicitation that

considers the extent to which an applicant demonstrates a genuine and proactive commitment to DEI and EJ as part of evaluation and selection process.

- Develop grants or initiatives to provide clean energy benefits to EJ neighborhoods. Identify existing MassCEC grants or initiatives that have a potential connection to EJ populations and work with grantees and/or partners to identify ways to enhance benefits to these communities, including reducing or eliminating the cost-share required:
  - Example: The EmPower Massachusetts grant program is specifically designed to bring clean energy benefits to historically underserved populations, including EJ neighborhoods, and all projects will be led by community-based organizations, individuals, or other groups with a history of working with these populations. The goals of the program are to implement clean energy projects in these communities and to build organizational and community capacity for future projects;
  - Example: The ACTNow clean transportation program reduced the required cost share (25% rather than standard 50%) for projects that benefit EJ communities; and
  - Example: The Clean Energy Internship Program reserves funding for students and employers in Gateway cities so as to diversify students and employers in the program.
  - Example: The Technical Trades pilot is seeking to explore how MassCEC can best support training that results in certificates, accreditations, and on-the-job training so that workforce training can better serve residents who aren't pursuing college degrees.
- Prioritize programs and initiatives that enhance EJ and DEI goals in MassCEC's programmatic planning process.
  - Example: The Catalyst grant program recently opened with a carveout for woman- and minority-owned startups in order to support diversity in the clean energy industry.

Example: MassCEC developed a transportation grant program ACT4All ("Accelerating Clean Transportation for All") that identified equitable transportation access and reduction of burden as key goals of the potential projects.

### Periodic Review

MassCEC will periodically, but no less than every 3 years, review this its EJ Strategy and Program Metrics.

### Enforcement of this EEA EJ Strategy

For any environmental justice concerns, complaints, compliments or ideas, or to find out more about our agency environmental, energy and climate justice efforts, please contact EEA's Office of Environmental Justice as outlined on Page 19 of this EEA EJ Strategy.

#### Agency EJ Point of Contact:

Stephanie Simmons  
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[ssimmons@masscec.com](mailto:ssimmons@masscec.com)  
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# Massachusetts Water Resources Authority



## Environmental Justice Strategy



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## Mission

The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) was established by the legislature in 1984, tasked with cleaning up Boston Harbor and modernizing the region's water and wastewater systems. MWRA now provides wholesale water and wastewater services to over 3 million people in 61 communities throughout the Commonwealth. MWRA's mission is to protect public health, ensure environmental stewardship, maintain customer confidence, and support a prosperous economy by providing reliable, cost-effective high-quality water and sewer services.

MWRA's Five Year Strategic Business Plan for fiscal years (FY) 2021-2025 provides a management tool for identifying and prioritizing the strategic initiatives critical to MWRA's mission. It ensures staff are all working toward the same goals and objectives and also tracks progress and identifies new issues as they arise. It provides transparency for our ratepayers and helps to ensure these initiatives are carried out within the annual capital budget spending limits adopted by the MWRA Board of Directors. Within the Strategic Business Plan, MWRA's goals and initiatives are grouped by the following strategic priorities: Water Quality and System Performance; Water Management and System Performance; Infrastructure Management and Resilience; Finance and Systems Management; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Workforce Development; and Environmental Sustainability.

## Purpose

This EJ Strategy outlines MWRA's actions and visions for promoting EJ considerations across MWRA's programs, policies and activities.

Environmental Justice (EJ) is the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment regardless of race, color, national origin, income, or English language proficiency. EJ requires equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens.

EJ Populations are those segments of the population that EEA has determined to be most at risk of being unaware of or unable to participate in environmental decision-making or to gain access to state environmental resources or are especially vulnerable. Based on EEA's definition and mapping, approximately 60% of residents in MWRA's service area also live in EJ Populations.



## Development and Goals

MWRA's commitment to EJ is embedded in our mission and spans beyond the context of this EJ Strategy. MWRA recognizes that its role as a public entity places it in a position to be a leader and a role model in making sure that our mission is carried out in a manner that moves towards a more equitable and just society. MWRA also recognizes the importance of providing accessible communication, engaging with communities, and fostering involvement from all members of the public.

This EJ Strategy will be the roadmap as MWRA continues to incorporate EJ principles into our decision-making processes and will be used to guide, achieve and expand on our goals, activities and initiatives. As a living document, this strategy shall be reviewed regularly and revised as necessary in consideration of evolving EJ goals, programs, policies, and activities. Through the following initiatives, MWRA intends to better serve the needs of and strengthen communication with all the residents of MWRA member communities, including EJ Populations. MWRA hopes these initiatives will serve to aid and empower EJ Populations, including indigenous tribes and organizations, in their efforts to build and sustain environmentally sound communities.

### **I. COMMITMENT TO OUR MEMBER COMMUNITIES:**

MWRA's EJ commitment to our member communities includes the following initiatives relating to communication and outreach, public engagement and participation, training, hiring, grants and zero interest loan opportunities, and environmental and public health.

#### **A. Communication and Outreach**

- MWRA will continue to utilize its website at [MWRA.com](http://MWRA.com) to convey relevant, accessible, and updated information to the public, including EJ Populations. The website is continuously updated with a variety of useful information including; press releases, public notices, information on and links to public meetings, information regarding upcoming and ongoing construction, employment opportunities, contact information, special projects and initiatives, water quality data, information regarding combined sewer overflows (CSO), financial reports, environmental and planning documents, and information on grant and zero interest loans.
- MWRA's website currently includes a Google Translation Tool, to ensure webpages can be translated into a variety of languages. MWRA is also in the process of redesigning and upgrading the website, which will improve accessibility and include built-in language translation capabilities.
- MWRA's website includes a specific [Environmental Justice Webpage](#), which provides information regarding MWRA's commitment to EJ, MWRA EJ contact information, links to



EEA EJ resources and maps. This EJ Strategy, and information on translation and interpretive services, will also be available.

- MWRA will continue to evaluate available tools to share information, specifically targeting EJ Populations. MWRA currently uses social media platforms including Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter (X). MWRA will utilize EEA resources and conduct additional research to identify alternative media outlets and non-traditional engagement methods. Options may include community email listservs, senior and community centers, neighborhood associations, and culturally specific newspapers.
- MWRA will continue to expand the use of [Everbridge](#), an online platform through which members of the public can sign up to receive text and/or email notifications from MWRA regarding a variety of topics including: construction projects updates, impacts to water or wastewater service, meeting notices and minutes, water quality reports, job postings and other topics. Subscribers can tailor notifications they wish to receive based on topic or geographic location (e.g., updates on a construction project in their neighborhood).
- MWRA will continue to maintain several existing avenues to receive communication from the public including an [Ask MWRA](#) email address and various 24/7 telephone hotlines. More information can be found at MWRA's [Who to Ask: How to Contact Us Webpage](#).
- MWRA will continue to distribute public notices and flyers to surrounding and impacted communities regarding upcoming and ongoing MWRA construction projects. Special attention will be taken to ensure notifications are distributed to surrounding and impacted EJ Populations who may already be disproportionately impacted by existing environmental burdens. Notices will convey information about the project such as purpose, expected impacts to the community, schedule, and MWRA contact information. Notices will be written using plain, non-technical language and will be translated appropriately.
- MWRA will work with EEA and the Interagency Work Group to ensure compliance with the Executive Office for Administration and Finance (A&F) Bulletin #16 which provides guidance to state agencies as they develop Language Access Plans to (a) Improve access to state services, programs and activities on the part of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons; (b) Reduce disparities and delays, if any, in provision of state services/programs to eligible LEP persons; and, (c) Increase agency effectiveness. MWRA will make interpretive and translation services available at public meetings and forums when significant LEP Populations are identified in the area or may be impacted by the topic, and as requested.
- MWRA will conduct public meetings, listening sessions, and forums in a manner that is inclusive of EJ Populations. Both remote and in-person participation options may be

offered, to increase accessibility and participation. MWRA will also consider the timing (day/evening) of public meetings to allow for maximum participation from community members.

**B. Public Engagement and Participation**

- MWRA will continue to provide its Portable Water Fountains as a free public service to community events in MWRA member communities. In 2022, MWRA brought water fountains to over 100 community events across our service area, including many in or serving EJ Populations. In addition, MWRA staff will also continue to attend community events to engage with the public and distribute educational materials including information on MWRA's water and wastewater systems, indoor and outdoor conservation, water quality, and employment opportunities.
- MWRA's School Program will continue to bring hands-on activities and demonstrations on topics including surface water quality, water supply and conservation, and responsible sewer use to classrooms across the MWRA service area. During the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years, staff visited 117 schools in communities with residents considered EJ Populations. MWRA's School Program also provides training for teachers to assist with the integration of these topics into their curriculums. An annual Poster and Writing Contest is also held for students in grades K-12 in MWRA communities, which challenges students in MWRA communities to create posters or write essays, poems or stories about topics such as "What I Love about Boston Harbor" and "Don't Flush That!"
- MWRA mails its Annual Drinking Water Quality Report (AWQR) to every household in MWRA water communities. Readers can access the online version of the AWQR in multiple languages on MWRA's website with the Google Translate tool. MWRA also publishes a Spanish language report for distribution and offers a larger-print report.
- Public Engagement Highlight: MWRA's Updated CSO Long Term Control Plan Public Engagement Strategy

MWRA's community engagement strategy associated with its Updated Combined Sewer Overflow Long Term Control Plan, which is being developed in partnership with Cambridge and Somerville, provides an ongoing example of MWRA's commitment to public engagement and participation, specifically with EJ Population.

A combined sewer overflow (CSO) occurs when a large rainstorm overwhelms a combined sewer system, causing stormwater mixed with wastewater (or sewage) to discharge into a waterbody. Since the late 1980's, MWRA, along with several community partners, has achieved significant CSO reductions and improvements in water quality in

the water bodies of metro Boston, reducing CSO volume by 88%. In partnership with Somerville and Cambridge, MWRA is in the process of developing an Updated CSO Control Plan in an effort to further reduce CSOs to the Charles River, Upper Mystic River, and Alewife Brook.

Over the next three and a half years, MWRA and our partners will work to develop and model alternatives to reduce CSOs and aim to meaningfully engaging impacted communities and clearly sharing critical information throughout the process. MWRA recognizes that it is important that the public actively participates in the development of CSO solutions, rather than be presented with alternatives after they are determined. As most of Cambridge and Somerville are comprised of EJ Populations, it is especially important that our engagement efforts reach those speaking languages other than English. To assist in public engagement, we are also partnering with Somerville's consultant, the Consensus Building Institute (CBI).

MWRA, Cambridge, and Somerville held two public meetings in 2022 on the Updated CSO Long Term Control Plan, incorporating principles of MEPA's Public Involvement Protocol for Environmental Justice Populations. The first meeting in June 2022 provided an introduction on the Updated Control Plan, while the second meeting in December 2022 focused on our work updating precipitation projections to reflect the future impacts of climate change. Both meetings were held virtually over Zoom and included a presentation and Q&A. In order to reach the widest audience possible, the meetings were interpreted live into eight languages commonly spoken in Somerville and Cambridge. Prior to these meetings, notifications were posted on each entity's website and flyers were distributed to community groups. Five additional public meetings are planned over the next three and a half years, mainly focusing on collaboratively developing, screening, and measuring the results of CSO reduction alternatives. MWRA and partners plan to include translation and interpretation services for the remaining five public meetings, as appropriate.

In addition to the public meetings, MWRA and partners are utilizing various other methods of public engagement. Surveys are being used not only to receive information on who is participating, but to understand what they are hoping to gain from the Updated CSO Long Term Control Plan development process. After the second public meeting, participants were asked to fill out a detailed survey. Major themes of survey responses were summarized and will guide the rest of the planning process. Surveys are

expected to be utilized throughout the project to engage the community. A specific Updated CSO Control Plan Website has been created that describes the project, which includes recordings and slides from previous presentations, an FAQ section, and news about upcoming events and meetings. The public can sign up to a listserv for regular updates and use this website as an important resource throughout the planning process. Lastly, we plan to expand outreach efforts through participation at regional public events in order to engage with residents in person, and conduct focus groups outside of the public meetings to gather input.

#### C. Training

MWRA will continue to implement the following initiatives in an effort to provide training and education for staff on EJ topics and considerations.

- MWRA will continue to educate staff on this EJ Strategy and EJ principles including, MWRA's responsibility to work collaboratively with communities and EJ populations.
- MWRA staff will be encouraged to attend trainings hosted by MWRA's internal EJ Taskforce, EEA or third-party consultant. Topics may include instructions for using EEA EJ resources and mapping and how to foster meaningful community engagement.
- MWRA will continue to host its Lunchtime Speaker Series. A joint effort of MWRA's EJ Task Force and Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Workgroup, this series features presentations by notable experts on a variety of topics related to EJ, DEI and Public Health. All staff are encouraged to participate either in person or online, and the events have been well attended. Recent speakers include Massachusetts Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer, staff from the Boston Public Library Leventhal Map Center, Biobot CEO and co-founder Mariana Matus and GreenRoots. While the primary goal of this Speaker Series is to educate staff on important topics related to EJ and DEI, these presentations also provide MWRA a valuable opportunity to develop partnerships with participating organizations, presenters, and community groups.
- MWRA will continue to seek opportunities for staff to volunteer and support EJ efforts in the communities in which we work and live. In 2023, MWRA partnered with GreenRoots to participate in two clean up events, picking up trash and debris at Island End Park in Chelsea.

#### D. Hiring:

- MWRA acknowledges the importance of having an agency workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity of the residents of Massachusetts, including the key role that such a workforce plays in advancing equitable decisions regarding environmental and energy permitting, siting, regulatory development, grant disbursement, and law enforcement. MWRA is committed to ensuring equal employment opportunities, and to providing training for hiring managers to promote equitable decision-making, including using criteria in interview questions that require successful applicants to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the needs of EJ Populations, vulnerable neighborhoods, and other under-served communities. Further, MWRA has and will continue to attend career fairs that promote social responsibility, EJ, and DEI.
- In order to ensure equitable participation in MWRA's employment opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, national origin, age, ancestry, citizenship, disability, veteran status and marital status, MWRA's Affirmative Action Program will continue to review every job referral. Additionally, as part of DEI recruitment and Office of Federal Contractor Compliance Programs (OFCCP) outreach activities, the agency actively engages and shares job announcements with employer partners such as the Urban League of Massachusetts, Boston Veterans Services, STRIVE, and Boston Justice Resource Institute. Further, as part of its talent acquisition strategy, MWRA will continue to post opportunities in targeted newspapers, such as the Banner and El Planeta.
- In addition to serving on MWRA's interview selection committees, Affirmative Action representatives will continue to assist Human Resources staff in creating and vetting interview questions for jobs. The Five-Year Business Plan includes updates to Affirmative Action workforce goals every year.

E. Grant and Zero Interest Loan Opportunities:

- MWRA's [Community Support Program](#) will continue to administer water and wastewater financial assistance programs. These programs are available to certain MWRA member communities, most of which contain EJ Populations. MWRA staff are available to and work closely with communities who are interested in these programs and seeking assistance.
- MWRA's Local Water System Assistance Program (LWSAP) and Lead Service Line Replacement Program (LLP) provide 10-year interest-free loans to MWRA water communities. Several communities with high numbers of lead service lines also contain EJ Populations. Participating communities can benefit from lead removal grants to meet federal goals and assist residents that may be unable to afford the removal of lead service lines (Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) currently offers

technical assistance grants for lead inventory development). A community's participation in this program has the potential to positively impact EJ Populations. These Populations may be disproportionately impacted by the presence of lead service lines and associated health impacts.

- MWRA's Infiltration and Inflow (I/I) Program is a grant and loan program available to MWRA wastewater communities to fund local I/I reduction and sewer system rehabilitation projects. Participating communities can receive up to a 75% grant and a 25% 10-year interest-free loan for qualifying projects. A community's participation in this program has the potential to positively impact EJ Populations by reducing I/I entering the wastewater collection system thereby reducing the potential for surcharging and CSOs during wet weather.

#### F. Environmental and Public Health

- In order to maintain and ensure the reliability of its water and wastewater systems, MWRA performs maintenance on its vast network of infrastructure including treatment plants, facilities, pipelines, tunnels and aqueducts. MWRA also periodically constructs new infrastructure to improve system resiliency and performance. MWRA will work to ensure construction projects equitably benefit all members of its member communities, including EJ Populations. MWRA will consider environmental impacts and mitigation measures during project planning, design and construction in an effort to ensure that EJ Populations are not disproportionately impacted.
- MWRA will continue to ensure that all construction projects adhere to applicable local, state and federal environmental permitting and regulatory requirements, including review under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and MEPA EJ Protocols, as appropriate. MWRA will aim to apply the principles of MEPA EJ Protocols to all MWRA construction projects, including those that do not require MEPA review.
- MWRA continuously tests its drinking water in accordance with all state and federal standards. Monthly and annual water quality test results are posted on MWRA's website, along with contact information for MWRA staff in case of questions. Routine testing uses six general indicators of water quality including microbial, turbidity, corrosiveness, and disinfectant, chemical and mineral analysis. MWRA continues to maintain high-quality drinking water, protecting public and environmental health in member communities, including for EJ Populations.
- MWRA will continue to support testing for lead in schools, including in EJ Populations. MWRA, in coordination with MassDEP, provides no cost lab analyses and technical assistance for schools and daycare centers in MWRA water communities.



- MWRA is committed to water conservation and efficiency. MWRA's [Water Conservation Program](#) will continue to provide low-flow water fixtures (showerheads, faucet aerators, leak detection dye tablets, and educational brochures) to communities, residents, environmental groups, and other interested stakeholders within the service areas. MWRA purchases these easy to install kits in bulk and provides them upon request.
- Beginning in early 2020, MWRA implemented a monitoring program to track COVID-19 in wastewater. This data provided public health officials across the Commonwealth with vital information necessary to make decisions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, in 2020, MWRA stored and assisted in the distribution of 770,000 KN95 masks to elderly residents in Massachusetts on behalf of MassHousing.
- MWRA will continue to maintain public access and recreational opportunities as a resource to all members of the public, including EJ Populations. Both MWRA's Deer Island Wastewater Treatment Plant and Nut Island Headworks are part of the Boston Harbor Islands National and State Park and provide extensive publicly accessible recreational opportunities including walking, jogging, sightseeing, picnicking, fishing and bicycling. At Deer Island, MWRA maintains 60 acres of open space, including 2.6 miles of paved accessible perimeter path, 10 landscaped overlooks with interpretive signage and dramatic views of the Boston Skyline and other Harbor Islands and a new ADA accessible fishing pier. This state of the art fishing pier was constructed by the Department of Fish and Game in an effort to promote and provide accessible opportunities for a wide range of saltwater anglers in an urban environment. Deer Island was specifically chosen as a host site due to its proximity and accessibility from surrounding urban areas. Nut Island provides 20 acres of open space including paved trails and fishing opportunities. Deer Island and Nut Island are each the site of Annual "Reel Fun Fishing Day" community events, hosted in collaboration with the National Park Service, the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries and Wildlife, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Boston Harbor Now, and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay.
- MWRA also partners with host communities in MetroWest to create and maintain trails on inactive aqueducts to provide additional publicly accessible open space and recreational opportunities. Through this program, approximately 20 miles of trails have been opened for public use and enjoyment.

### Cumulative Impact Analysis

MWRA will work to develop a methodology, metrics, and data to quantify the cumulative impact of activities and proposed projects, taking into account activities located in or impacting EJ Populations. Further, MWRA will collaborate with other local, state and federal agencies and

review and build upon current work designed to identify EJ Populations as well as Indigenous Organizations and Tribes with disproportionately high and adverse environmental exposures.

Examples of metrics and data MWRA may include in its Cumulative Impact Analysis relate to construction projects located in or near EJ Populations, public meetings, usage of translation and interpretive services, loans and grants awarded to communities that contain EJ Populations, and water quality.

**A. Climate Change Resiliency Efforts.**

- Protecting MWRA infrastructure and ensuring continuous drinking water and wastewater services without disruption is critical for health and safety in our 61 service communities. MWRA is cognizant that approximately 60% of residents in our communities also live in EJ Populations and that failure of our facilities or disruption in service would be particularly impactful to these EJ Populations. MWRA is continuously working to mitigate the impacts of climate change on our facilities and increase resiliency.
- As a result of climate change, the metropolitan Boston area has and is expected to continue to experience more intense precipitation events, increasing temperatures, and rising sea levels. Over the past decade, MWRA has prioritized evaluating and proactively addressing the vulnerability of our coastal infrastructure. MWRA assessed each coastal facility to determine its risk of flooding in a 100-year storm (based on FEMA maps) with 2.5 feet of sea level rise. There were 16 vulnerable facilities identified and flood protection measures have been installed including walls around critical equipment and stop logs at windows and doors. 2.5 feet of sea level rise is in line with the latest projections in Massachusetts' Coast Flood Risk Model and the Greater Boston Research Advisory Group Report through the 2050-2070 period. This work has significantly mitigated the near and mid-term flooding risk to our facilities.
- MWRA will continue to consider climate change and opportunities to increase resiliency as our infrastructure and facilities are planned for upgrades and rehabilitation projects. MWRA recently completed a major upgrade of its Chelsea Creek Headworks facility which was originally built in the 1960's and is a critical component of the MWRA's wastewater system. Impacts of climate change were considered during design of this rehabilitation project and mitigation measures were incorporated during construction to improve resiliency of the facility, now and into the future.
- The impacts of climate change are expected to result in increasing frequency and duration of storms. MWRA will continue to ensure that its large reservoirs can capture and accommodate this additional water by conducting routine inspections and maintenance of all its dams, dikes and spillways.



## B. Greenhouse Gas Reduction

- MWRA's service area is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, most notably extreme heat, sea level rise, and more intense storms. EJ Populations are likely to feel the brunt of these changes and are most at risk. Rapidly reducing greenhouse gas emissions is a key strategy to mitigate these risks. In support of the Commonwealth's leadership and net zero greenhouse gas emissions 2050 target, MWRA continues to take measures to mitigate and reduce greenhouse gas emissions across its operations.
- Since MWRA started collecting data in 2006, its greenhouse gas emissions have dropped 38%, already meeting the State's interim 2025 target of 33%. These reductions are mainly driven by reduction in electricity usage due to the implementation of energy efficiency projects throughout MWRA's operations, and installation of renewable energy infrastructure, including steam generators that utilize digester gas, hydropower facilities, solar arrays, and wind turbines. MWRA continues to investigate ways to reduce greenhouse gases further, such as electrification of heating at facilities, expanded use of electric vehicles, additional renewable energy projects, and optimizing energy use in operations.
- Additionally, to ensure that energy savings and greenhouse gas emission reducing efforts are considered in capital planning, MWRA has adopted a social cost of carbon of \$125 per metric ton of CO<sub>2</sub> for use when evaluating the life cycle costs of new projects. The social cost of carbon is an estimate of the economic costs, or damages, of emitting one additional metric ton of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

### Additional Information

If you have questions regarding MWRA's EJ Strategy or to find out more about MWRA's EJ initiatives, please contact Tomeka Cribb, Associate Special Assistant for Affirmative Action and Compliance at [Tomeka.Cribb@mwra.com](mailto:Tomeka.Cribb@mwra.com) or 617-788-4033. MWRA responds to public inquiries and concerns with thorough investigations, implementation of necessary corrective actions, and feedback and communication with the complainant.

### Agency EJ Point of Contact:

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