



# **What is Environmental Justice and How can you Meaningfully Participate in Decisions Impacting Your Community**

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**Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs**

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**Caroline Lemoine**

**Deputy Director of Environmental Justice**



# Basics of Environmental Justice

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## What is Environmental Justice?

The concept of environmental justice means that all people should have 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.

Decision-makers achieve the goal that all people must have equal protection to enjoy a healthy environment by providing:

- Fair Treatment
  - Prevention of disproportionate negative environmental hazards impact caused by governmental decisions or policies
- Meaningful Involvement
  - Participation in decision processes that may have direct impact on the quality of life of its residents and the environment
  - Ensuring community voice influences decision-makings or policies
  - Ensuring access to **all** people in its decision-making processes
- Equitable Distribution
  - Ensuring equal distribution of environmental benefits and burdens



# Basics of Environmental Justice

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## Understanding the Term “Environmental” in Environmental Justice

According to Oxford dictionary the term “Environmental” relates to the natural world in which people, animals, and plants live and the impact of human activity on its conditions.

The aim of **environmental** justice is for all people to have the right and equal access to these environmental fundamentals, which include but is not limited to:

- ➡ Clean air
- ➡ Clean water resources
- ➡ Open space
- ➡ Access to outdoor recreational facilities
- ➡ Clean renewable energy



# Basics of Environmental Justice

## What is an Environmental Justice Community?

An environmental justice community is one that is disproportionately burdened of environmental pollutions and hazards. According to the law in Massachusetts, a community is defined as environmental justice if it meets one or more of these criteria:

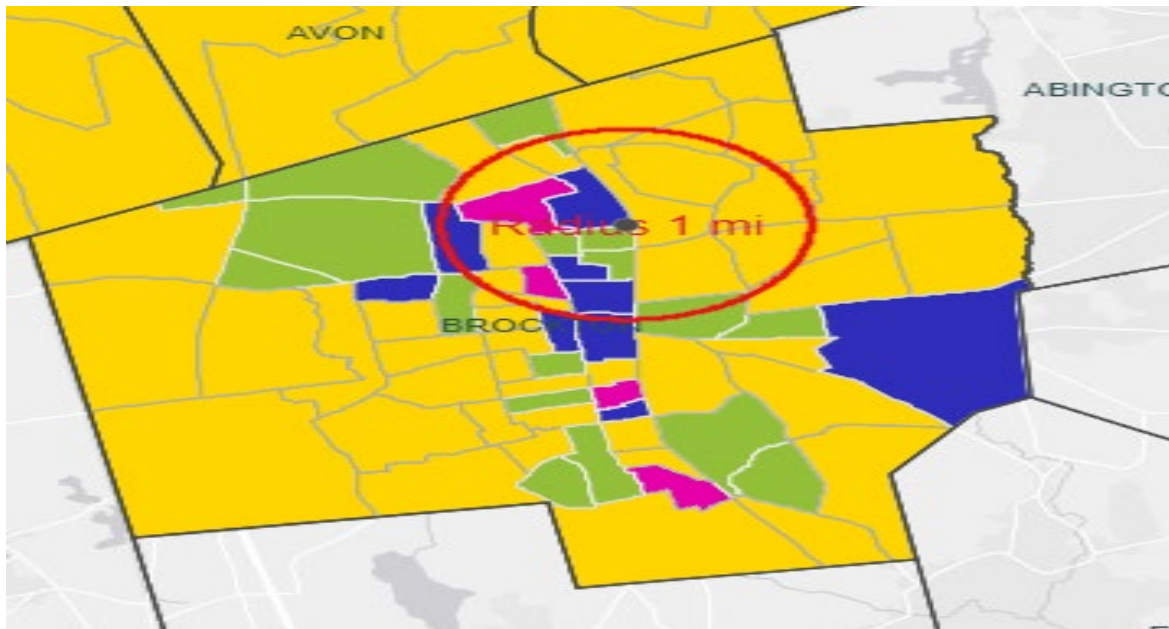
- ➡ 40% of the population comprise of **minorities**
- ➡ Community median **household income** is no more than 65% of statewide annual median household income
- ➡ 25% of the population **lack English proficiency**
- ➡ 25% of the population comprise of **minorities and the household income of the municipality** is no more than 150% of the statewide annual median household income



# Basics of Environmental Justice

## Breakdown of Neighborhoods in Brockton

- Yellow = 40% comprise of minority
- Green = 25% comprise of minority and municipality annual household income is < than 150% of statewide income
- Pink = Minority and English isolation
- Blue = Minority, Income, and English isolation

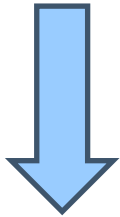




# Basics of Environmental Justice

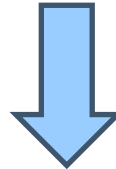
## Environmental Justice Community vs. Non-Environmental Justice Community

92% of the population in Abington is White  
(2022 census.gov data)



NO

Abington median household income is \$120,535 and the statewide household income is \$93,550  
(2022 census.gov data)



NO

Block group 3 in Rockland median household income is \$51,763  
(EJ Map Viewer)



YES



# Your Voice Matters

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## Why Your Voice Matters

- ★ Your quality of life is likely to be impacted negatively by agency decisions or policies
- ★ You know the difficulties your community is facing
- ★ You can best inform decision-makers and policy-makers about the consequences of the burden your community has and continues to bear
- ★ You know what's best for your community

