



Environmental Justice Implementation Highlights

The Coastal Commission adopted its Environmental Justice Policy and implementation actions in March 2019. Over the last year, the Commission has made progress on a number of actions, which are highlighted below.

Public Engagement and Participation

- Created and continue to update the Commission's Environmental Justice webpage with new materials, including the policy in English and Spanish, story map, and webinars.
- Continued to expand communication methods with stakeholders through our listserv, social media and other technology.
- Created an Environmental Justice Unit to guide the application of the Environmental Justice Policy.
- Established an environmental justice team with staff in every district office of the Coastal Commission to be the first point of local contact for environmental justice groups and stakeholders. These staff members have received training to provide more effective and personalized responses to issues and facilitate ongoing communication among staff and environmental justice communities.
- To make meetings more geographically accessible, the Commission has adopted the practice of setting an annual meeting calendar that includes at least three Commission meetings in more inland areas accessible by public transit.
- Conducted environmental justice webinars to inform the public about the new policy.
- In an effort to expand participation, the Commission held its first remote hearing in Marina in November 2019 so that those unable to travel 100 miles to the central meeting location in Half Moon Bay could speak on the proposed Cal Am desalination plant. Commission staff also created an FAQ sheet at the request of stakeholders to distribute to their community.
- Created language appropriate materials in Spanish and English explaining how to fill out comment cards at Commission meetings. The material is posted in clear view of the public at meetings and is also included in printed agendas.

Staff Training and Capacity

- Developed a team of environmental justice and equity champions across the agency through the training and formulation of the Environmental Justice Team and the Government Alliance on Race and Equity Team (GARE) . About 20 staff members completed two years of training on race and equity principles in Sacramento, as part of a group of 12 state agencies with GARE. The team focused on creating a racial equity action plan with a long list of actions and goals aimed at improving recruitment, hiring, retention and training.
- Submitted formal budget requests and received approval for two environmental justice staff positions to focus on policy implementation, community outreach and issue identification, including one senior level staff position.
- Provided initial training on equity and environmental justice issues for the entire staff in January 2020, organized by GARE and EJ team members. This included speakers from CalEPA, the California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) and the Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE). Staff learned about the foundational concepts of environmental justice and racial equity. Staff also prepared and held breakout sessions on EJ policy implementation, meaningful engagement, unconscious bias, and diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Smaller, focused, follow-up trainings are being planned.

Implementing the Environmental Justice Policy

- Provided support and guidance for staff to incorporate environmental justice issue identification, research and analysis in their work. A list of these proposals was described in the 2019 Year in Review, as well as the 2019 Environmental Justice Highlights which also included the Santa Monica Civic Center and Soccer Field project, the Sun-soaked Music Festival, Surf Beach public access expansion, and more.
- Organized a monthly all-staff call to answer questions and discuss upcoming projects and permit applications that may include environmental justice elements.
- Strongly encouraging local governments and ports to update their local coastal program and port master plan to address environmental justice issues and working with them on ways to include policies.
- Continuing to seek legislation to restore Coastal Act policies regarding affordable housing.
- Created a new Environmental Justice, Diversity, and Tribal Relations section in the Commission's Five-Year Strategic Plan Update and alerted stakeholders and environmental justice groups to provide additional input at public hearings in letters and emails.