



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Special Environmental Resource Concerns

Environmental Justice

Clean Air Act
Criteria Pollutants

Clean Air Act
Regional Visibility
Degradation

Clean Water Act

Coastal Zone
Management
Areas

Coral Reefs

Cultural
Resources

Endangered
and Threatened
Species

Environmental
Justice

Essential Fish
Habitat

Floodplain
Management

Invasive
Species

Migratory Birds

Prime and
Unique
Farmlands

Riparian Areas

Wetlands

Wild and Scenic
Rivers

Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, issued February 11, 1994, requires each Federal agency to make environmental justice a part of its mission. Agencies must identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority populations, low-income populations, and Indian Tribes.

What is it?

The term “environmental justice” means that, to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law, all populations are provided the opportunity to comment before decisions are rendered on proposed Federal actions. Furthermore, the principles of environmental justice require that populations are allowed to share in the benefits of, are not excluded from, and are not affected in a disproportionately high and adverse manner by government programs and activities affecting human health or the environment.

Why is it important?

Environmental justice must be addressed throughout the U.S., its territories and possessions, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Mariana Islands. These issues encompass a broad range of impacts covered by NEPA, including impacts on the natural or physical environment and related social, cultural, and economic impacts.

What can be done about it?

The primary means to attain compliance with environmental justice considerations are: 1) assessing the presence of environmental justice communities in a project area that may experience disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, and 2) the inclusion of low-income, minority, Tribal, or other specified populations in the planning process. There may be a need to develop separate Government to Government consultations to address any environmental justice issues for Tribal Governments (contact your State American Indian Emphasis Program manager). The USDA Departmental Regulation (DR) 5600-002, Environmental Justice, provides detailed determination procedures for NEPA and non-NEPA activities and suggests social and economic effects to consider when assessing whether there are disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects to environmental justice communities in a project area.

Environmental Justice at a Glance

Problems / Indicators - Disproportionately high or adverse impacts to specific populations	
Causes	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land use changes/conversions Area-wide/watershed/complex projects Projects involving broad scope of impacts – local/regional/national Controversial projects Human health or environmental effects that may be disproportionately high or adverse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect demographic data from EPA, Census Bureau, other sources Initiate early government-to-government consultation with Tribes, as necessary Conduct public meeting(s) Conduct specific outreach to EJ communities Create agreements, as needed

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