



U.S. Department of Justice Environmental Justice Strategic Plan

Pursuant to Executive Order 14096,
*Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to
Environmental Justice for All*

I. Executive Summary of the Environmental Justice Strategic Plan

The Department of Justice’s (the “Department” or “DOJ”) Environmental Justice Strategic Plan (“Plan”) includes a summary of the Department’s past and existing efforts to address environmental injustice and a description of how we engaged the community to develop this Plan. The Plan then sets forth a vision statement for advancing environmental justice and four goals that will direct our environmental justice work going forward. The Plan also outlines objectives and priority actions that the Department will pursue to advance each goal and performance indicators to measure our progress, all of which are discussed below in Section V, Advancing Environmental Justice through Goal-Setting. Those goals and objectives are:

Goal 1: Prioritize cases with potential to advance environmental justice and make strategic use of the Department’s legal tools.

Objectives:

- 1) Prioritize investigations and cases that will advance public health and reduce environmental harms in overburdened and underserved communities.
- 2) Pursue the full range of remedies available under the law.
- 3) Consider use of alternative Department resources to assist communities with environmental justice concerns.

Key Performance Metrics for Goal 1:

- Number of matters that address adverse environmental and public health effects brought under civil rights statutes each year;
- Percentage of environmental enforcement matters in or substantially affecting overburdened and underserved communities that are favorably resolved;
- Percentage of participants in Community Relations Service-facilitated environmental justice programs who perceive stronger community capacity to address alleged inequities.

Goal 2: Meaningfully engage with impacted communities and expand efforts to communicate environmental justice efforts.

Objectives:

- 1) Track the Department’s progress through increased reporting.
- 2) Increase community outreach, public participation, and awareness of the Department and its environmental justice initiatives.

Key Performance Metrics for Goal 2:

- Percentage of participants in DOJ facilitated environmental justice programs who affirm increased awareness of DOJ’s abilities to address alleged inequities;
- Number of case-specific outreach plans;
- Maintenance of environmental justice coordinators at each United States Attorney’s Office (“USAO”).

Goal 3: Increase education and collaboration relating to environmental justice.

Objectives:

- 1) Continue development of environmental justice-related training and guidance for Department staff.
- 2) Expand efforts to collaborate with federal, Tribal, state, local, and territorial partners.
- 3) Counsel client agencies on environmental justice concerns.

Key Performance Metrics for Goal 3:

- Percentage of trainees (or recipients of materials) who perceive increased awareness and capacity to identify and address environmental justice concerns;
- Number of trainings offered;
- Number of participants at the trainings;
- Number of task forces that are focusing on or are incorporating environmental justice in their efforts.

Goal 4: Ensure the Department considers the environmental justice impacts of the management and operation of the agency.

Objectives:

- 1) Assess and evaluate environmental justice in the Department's climate adaptation efforts, including management of its procurement and real property.

Key Performance Metrics for Goal 4:

- Addition of an environmental justice layer onto existing GIS-based DOJ Climate Resilience Dashboard;
- Percentage of staff trained on the Dashboard.

This Plan fully incorporates and thereby supersedes the [2022 Comprehensive Environmental Justice Enforcement Strategy](#) and the Department's 2014 environmental justice guidance and strategy, while including significant elements from both. This Plan also fulfills the Department's responsibilities under [Executive Order 12898](#) and [Executive Order 14096](#), including to have an agency-wide environmental justice strategy. The Plan addresses other Department activities such as management of the agency, and it requires the Department to seek appropriate opportunities to partner with federal agencies, such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA"); Tribal, state, and local agencies and organizations; and the communities most affected by relevant violations of federal law, to provide holistic, lasting relief. The Plan aims to ensure that the Department vigorously and transparently works to secure environmental justice using all available authorities, legal and managerial tools, and current science.

II. Environmental Justice at the Department of Justice

This Environmental Justice Strategic Plan is a continuation and elevation of the Department's past and current efforts to advance environmental justice. For years, Department attorneys from various components have advanced environmental justice in the courts. For instance, the following components have significant activities touching on environmental justice efforts:

The [Environment and Natural Resources Division](#) ("ENRD") litigates civil and prosecutes criminal cases that arise under approximately 150 federal environmental and natural resource laws, such as the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Toxic Substances Control Act, and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (or "Superfund"). ENRD also handles cases relating to Tribal rights and resources. ENRD's enforcement work aims to improve environmental conditions, workers' safety, and quality of life for people across the nation. ENRD's civil enforcement program also takes actions in bankruptcy cases to protect environmental obligations owed to the United States when a responsible party goes into bankruptcy. ENRD's civil enforcement cases are generally based on referrals from the EPA or other federal agencies. The Environmental Crimes Section within ENRD prosecutes and assists in the investigations of pollution, wildlife, worker safety, and animal welfare crimes. The Section works closely with USAOs and criminal investigators from the EPA, the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service, DOJ's Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other federal agencies.

[USAOs](#) have broad authority to prosecute criminal cases that impact environmental protection and support the public health and safety of communities. USAOs partner with DOJ litigating components and also investigate and litigate their own cases in delegated and monitored matters.

The [Civil Rights Division](#) upholds the civil and constitutional rights of all persons and enforces the nation's civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. It also investigates discrimination in programs and activities receiving federal funds. Through the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, the Civil Rights Division investigates discriminatory investment patterns, leading to more equality in mortgage and neighborhood access. The Civil Rights Division has investigative authority and investigates and originates its own cases and matters.

The [Civil Division](#) enforces and defends laws that protect the health, safety, and economic security of all people, as well as laws that protect the financial and regulatory interests of the United States. For example, the Civil Division's enforcement work protects consumers from faulty or dangerous products, including contaminated food and defective medical products that harm human health or conceal human health issues. The Civil Division also pursues cases under the False Claims Act against those who defraud the United States by knowingly and materially misrepresenting their compliance with environmental or public health-related conditions imposed by federal programs or contracts. Additionally, the Civil Division handles both affirmative and defensive cases designed to ensure that those with monetary and programmatic responsibilities to the federal government fulfill those responsibilities, including

entities in bankruptcy that have decommissioning, reclamation or remediation obligations. Several sections within the Civil Division have investigative authority and investigate and originate their own cases.

Numerous other components contribute to environmental justice work at the Department, including the [Office of Tribal Justice](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Office of the Solicitor General](#), [Office for Access to Justice](#), and [Community Relations Service](#).

For nearly three decades, the Department has worked to refine and coordinate these efforts to address environmental justice. In 1995, in response to Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, the Department issued its first environmental justice strategy. That policy was updated in 2014. Building on past successes as well as lessons learned, in 2022, the Department released its most recent environmental justice strategy—the Comprehensive Environmental Justice Enforcement Strategy (“Strategy”). This Strategy has been successfully implemented across major Department components through the new [Office of Environmental Justice](#). In its first years of implementation, Department components and personnel strengthened relationships within and outside the Department to identify the areas of greatest concern to impacted communities and ensure timely and effective remedies for environmental violations. For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation actively integrated environmental justice into its Public Corruption & Civil Rights Section through its Environmental Crime Initiative, established in early 2022 to expand training, liaison relationships, and casework to combat environmental crime nationwide. The Department also instituted the Environmental Justice Enforcement Steering Committee, which includes the leadership of many Department components and bureaus who meet regularly to learn from one another and pursue a holistic approach to advancing environmental justice. The Department increased its transparency in this work by [reporting](#) on the early successes of the Strategy.

III. Meaningful Engagement and Consultation in the Development of the Environmental Justice Strategic Plan

The Department’s Office of Environmental Justice led the charge in planning and executing outreach for this Plan, which updates and builds upon our past environmental justice strategies and efforts. In the early stages of developing this Plan, the Department participated in two listening sessions with other federal agencies and the White House Council on Environmental Quality: an informal listening session at the National Congress of American Indians in Washington, D.C.; and a similar informal listening session at the National Environmental Justice Conference and Training Program.

In early May, the Office of Environmental Justice launched its [webpage](#) dedicated to the Environmental Justice Strategic Plan with information about the draft Plan, which included ways for the public to submit comments—either by written mail, email, or online survey.

Later that month, the Department hosted virtual listening sessions with a total of over 170 participants, many of whom shared comments about the Plan and other environmental justice concerns. And in June 2024, the Department participated in an in-person meeting in Washington,

D.C. with the Anacostia, D.C. Coordinating Council, a local non-profit organization committed to advancing equity in the city.

The Department also sought input directly from Tribal Nations about the Plan. In June, the Department participated in a Tribal consultation at the National Congress of American Indians Mid-Year 2024 Annual Convention in Cherokee, North Carolina. And in July, the Department attended a virtual Tribal consultation that produced more feedback from Tribal members on the Plan.

In addition, the Department hosted six in-person listening sessions on the Plan in communities across the country that were identified because of environmental justice concerns in their region. In June and July 2024, DOJ held in-person sessions in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Bridgeport and Hartford, Connecticut, and Charleston and Beckley, West Virginia.

At each of these sessions, we received significant feedback on the Plan. Those comments have immeasurably improved the Plan and will inform our work to implement the Plan.

IV. Environmental Justice Vision Statement

The Department adopts the following as a statement of its vision for environmental justice work going forward: Ensure comprehensive attention to environmental justice throughout the Department of Justice to deliver environmental justice to all communities across America.

V. Advancing Environmental Justice Through Goal-Setting

The following are the goals, objectives, and priority actions that will guide the Department's efforts in the collective pursuit of environmental justice, as well as the metrics we will use to track our progress.

Goal 1: Prioritize cases with potential to advance environmental justice and make strategic use of the Department's legal tools to address environmental justice concerns.

1. Objective: Prioritize investigations and cases that will advance public health and reduce environmental harms in overburdened and underserved communities.

There are communities around the nation that bear the effects of pollution disproportionately. Where federal law has been violated, the Department—whether in DOJ-initiated investigations or working with the EPA or other federal partners on referred matters—must identify those cases that will result in significant reductions in environmental and public health harms or injury to natural resources for overburdened and underserved communities. In appropriate cases where enforcement of federal laws can achieve meaningful relief to address these injuries, the Department should file lawsuits or bring charges to address environmental violations or contamination. These enforcement actions must be among the Department's top enforcement priorities. The Department must consider and make use of all enforcement

authorities where appropriate, including environmental protection laws, civil rights laws, worker safety and consumer protection statutes, and fraud statutes.

Priority actions that will help the Department meet this objective include continuing to bring cases that advance environmental justice under the traditional environmental statutes, while also using other available enforcement authorities to support this effort. These authorities include but are not limited to: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as well as other civil rights authorities; the Occupational Safety and Health Act; the Consumer Product Safety Act; the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act; and other provisions of Titles 15, 18, and 49 of the United States Code. Priority actions may also include pursuing actions to remedy violations of material environmental or public health-related requirements that are included in federal grants or contracts using the False Claims Act or other Civil Division authorities. The Department will also consider both civil and criminal enforcement in cases where it is appropriate.

The Department will improve data collection from federal grant recipients to support our enforcement and investigative activities, including Title VI and civil fraud enforcement.

The Department will also continue intra-agency collaboration through the Environmental Justice Enforcement Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is co-chaired by the Assistant Attorneys General of ENRD and the Civil Rights Division, or their designees. The Committee includes representatives from the Office of the Attorney General; the Office of the Deputy Attorney General; the Office of the Associate Attorney General; ENRD; the Civil Rights Division; the Civil Division; the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys (“EOUSA”); the USAO for the Eastern District of Washington; the USAO for the Eastern District of Louisiana; the USAO for the Southern District of New York; the Office of Justice Programs; the Office of Tribal Justice; the Office for Access to Justice; the Community Relations Service; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Bureau of Prisons; and other relevant components. The Committee meets regularly to ensure coordination among the components, to share information that could implicate multiple authorities, and to provide guidance and recommendations to Department leadership on all aspects of the implementation of this Plan.

Finally, the Department will continue identifying ways to address and incorporate Tribal environmental justice concerns into the Department’s enforcement work while recognizing the unique sovereign status of federally recognized Tribes. This includes finding opportunities to work as appropriate with the governments of federally recognized Tribes during litigation. The Department, specifically ENRD, USAOs, EOUSA, and the Office of Tribal Justice, will consider developing additional mechanisms to (1) facilitate consideration of unique issues identified by Tribes in cases brought pursuant to this Plan; (2) identify appropriate opportunities to work with the governments of federally recognized Tribes, including consortia of such Tribes; (3) work with other federal agencies to coordinate investigative resources and enforcement authorities; and (4) recommend ways to address and incorporate Tribal concerns into the Department’s enforcement work.

2. Objective: Pursue the full range of remedies available under the law.

The Department will consider all appropriate resolutions and remedies under its enforcement authorities that could advance environmental justice. Department attorneys handling civil and criminal cases will coordinate and collaborate with each other, agency partners, and affected communities to employ those authorities and resources that are most likely to achieve meaningful results for impacted communities.

Priority actions that will help the Department meet this objective include requiring Department attorneys to consider, to the extent practicable and appropriate, the full range of remedies available under applicable enforcement authorities, as well as creative ways to advance environmental justice through different resolution structures. Possible remedies include those that are designed to deter future violations, such as civil penalties paid to the United States Treasury, criminal fines and penalties, and incarceration. They could also include remedies meant to provide relief for individual victims, such as monetary damages as authorized under certain civil rights statutes or restitution in criminal cases. Finally, these remedies could include injunctive relief or conditions of probation designed to stop ongoing violations, to require certain remedial actions from defendants, and to ensure future compliance. In appropriate cases, these remedies can include preliminary or interim relief to prevent or minimize exposure to harmful pollution while permanent remedies are being considered. In some cases, it might be appropriate to seek long-term remedies that are phased so that communities that have borne the greatest impacts of the violations receive relief first. Injunctive relief could also include community projects and partnerships aimed at advancing environmental justice under various statutory authorities when appropriate and available. Such remedies must be used in accordance with applicable Department and agency guidance.

In all the Department's enforcement actions taken under the Department's environmental authorities, the full range of remedies considered will also include measures to reduce or offset the environmental harms that have resulted from past and ongoing violations (often referred to as "mitigation"). For example, mitigation might include measures to restore or replace damaged wetlands or other impacted areas, rehabilitate degraded rivers and streams, retrofit or replace school buses or other vehicles with less polluting engines, or require changes at an industrial facility to reduce emissions below legal limits to offset harms caused by past or ongoing violations. In addition, appropriately tailored Supplemental Environmental Projects—environmentally beneficial projects that are not required by law but that a defendant agrees to undertake as part of the settlement of an enforcement action—in civil enforcement cases under DOJ's environmental authorities can secure significant environmental and public health benefits for impacted communities. Relatedly, in appropriate criminal cases brought under environmental statutes, community service payments can be used to mitigate and redress harms to the public, the environment, and natural resources that do not fit squarely within the bounds of restitution. Such remedies must be used in accordance with applicable Department and agency guidance.

In addition, the False Claims Act provides for treble damages, which allows the Department to obtain a damage award that is greater than its actual damages. For example, in the case of large grants for which materially false statements about compliance with environmental

or public health-related conditions have been made, treble damages may provide significantly greater deterrence than penalties under other statutory authorities.

Finally, the Department will contemplate ways to ensure remedies available to Tribes are comprehensive and appropriate in cases involving: Tribal Nations and indigenous peoples; the United States' Tribal trust obligations; damage or potential injury to cultural and sacred sites and resources; impacts to fisheries and traditional hunting and gathering areas; impacts or impairments to treaty rights; and impacts to water and land resources on or needed to support Tribal homelands or associated rights.

3. Objective: Consider use of Department resources beyond enforcement actions to assist communities with environmental justice concerns.

Under its statutory authorities, the Department has legal tools other than enforcement actions that can be used to advance environmental justice.

Priority actions that will help the Department meet this objective include engaging its Community Relations Service (“CRS”) to assist communities in resolving tensions or conflicts related to alleged discriminatory practices based on race, color, or national origin. CRS also supports communities working to prevent or respond to hate incidents or hate crimes related to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability status. CRS has a wealth of valuable expertise and experience regarding community engagement, mediation, and facilitated dialogue. Within its jurisdictional areas, CRS can help community groups meaningfully participate in environmental decision-making that may affect them. The Department and its components will consider engaging CRS in helping communities with environmental justice concerns navigate complex legal and regulatory schemes to ensure their access to clean water, clean air, and other natural resources. CRS will also publish an environmental justice fact sheet that outlines available CRS services that are responsive to environmental justice concerns and will add an environmental justice dialogue to its roster of quarterly collaborative convenings of local civic, youth, and faith leaders.

The Department will coordinate among its components with independent investigative authority after environmental and climate-related disasters and will ensure availability of its non-investigative/litigation services and resources to communities and community members after environmental disasters. For example, the Department's Office for Access to Justice has deep experience in collaborating with civil legal service providers across the country and houses the Federal Government Pro Bono Program, which connects legal services organizations with federal government volunteers. Through the Office for Access to Justice and other components, the Department will work to increase the availability of and coordination with legal services following, and, in some circumstances, preceding environmental and climate-related disasters to support communities with environmental justice concerns seeking to access legal protections, public benefits, and mechanisms for obtaining available remedies.

Finally, the Department will consider how it can support lawsuits brought by parties outside the Department by intervening in pending litigation and filing statements of interest or amicus curiae briefs in cases with environmental justice impacts. This includes, but is not limited

to, cases that involve Tribal cultural and sacred sites and resources, impacts to fisheries and traditional hunting and gathering areas, impacts or impairments to treaty and reserved rights, and impacts to water and land resources on or needed to support Tribal homelands or associated rights.

Key Performance Metrics for Goal 1:

- Number of matters that address adverse environmental and public health effects brought under civil rights statutes each year;
- Percentage of environmental enforcement matters in or substantially affecting overburdened and underserved communities that are favorably resolved;
- Percentage of participants in CRS-facilitated environmental justice programs who perceive stronger community capacity to address alleged inequities.

Goal 2: Meaningfully engage with impacted communities and expand efforts to communicate environmental justice efforts.

1. Objective: Track the Department's progress through increased reporting.

Communities facing environmental harms should be able to easily access information about filed and concluded enforcement actions and the benefits the Department's actions achieved. The Department will provide such information, taking into account the needs of individuals with disabilities and limited English proficiency, as well as relevant cultural considerations. Though enforcement work often warrants or requires confidentiality in certain respects, the Department can honor those interests and legal obligations while establishing a culture of transparency in this work.

Priority actions that will help the Department meet this objective include ensuring the Office of Environmental Justice has resources to dedicate to increased transparency for work related to this Plan. Every month, components will send the Office of Environmental Justice information related to efforts to advance environmental justice, including summaries of complaints filed, cases concluded, and press releases about cases and projects launched by the Department. The Office of Environmental Justice will regularly update its website to include this information about cases in their earlier stages, such as when a complaint or indictment has been filed, as well as information about concluded enforcement actions and any judgments or remedies that result. This website will be accessible and translated into various languages. The Department will make use of DOJ's social media channels as appropriate. The Office of Environmental Justice will also create plain-language, multilingual public-facing resources for affected communities about the Department's environmental justice efforts and provide more frequent updates via listserv about filed and resolved cases.

The Office of Environmental Justice will also establish a method for the public, including local community members, to anonymously report environmental justice concerns to the Department.

Finally, the Department will regularly assess the effectiveness of actions taken pursuant to this Plan and adjust accordingly. The Office of Environmental Justice will publicly report on these results in the Department's annual environmental justice report.

2. Objective: Increase community outreach, public participation, and awareness of the Department and its environmental justice initiatives.

The Department will increase its community outreach efforts related to environmental justice. All outreach efforts conducted by the Department will provide appropriate services and access for individuals with disabilities and limited English proficiency and consider culturally relevant practices as appropriate and practicable. Securing environmental justice demands the meaningful involvement of affected communities in the decisions that impact them. Such involvement informs the Department and agency partners about violations and possible sources of evidence, as well as harms to communities and individual victims and potential remedies. It aids Department and agency efforts to identify the environmental injustices that are of greatest concern to impacted communities. It also helps ensure the public is familiar with federal environmental laws; enforcement processes; the roles that federal, Tribal, state, territorial, and local government agencies play; the available remedies to address environmental harms; and how to report concerns about polluting activities or potential violations of law.

While conducting outreach on the development of this Plan, the Department heard from the public that it is important we understand the local community before doing any community outreach. Many local community groups and legal service programs have existing outreach programs and expertise specific to the community, and they may already be handling issues related to the community's environmental justice concerns. Therefore, before starting any outreach effort, either case-specific or otherwise as discussed below, the Department will engage as appropriate in background work to learn more about the community and what engagement practices work best for that community. Such background work may include speaking with community leaders, outreach experts, other government officials already engaged in outreach activities in the community, and legal service providers. Department components will connect with USAOs when engaging in community outreach in their respective districts. The Office for Access to Justice has relationships with many of the legal service providers and may be a useful resource to other Department components. CRS may also serve as a resource.

Priority actions that will help the Department meet this objective include developing case-specific community outreach plans with consideration of the most effective methods for reaching each specific community. In appropriate cases, the attorneys handling a case will develop and implement a case-specific community outreach plan that describes the timing and appropriate steps to take, if any, given the stage and circumstances of the case. These plans should be developed in collaboration with the investigative or referring agency, such as the EPA, where feasible. Department components are encouraged to reach out to USAOs early when considering how to develop community outreach plans in appropriate cases, and USAOs that have attorneys and staff engaged in community outreach are encouraged to partner with Department components to support effective collaboration. The Department's Language Access Coordinator, within the Office for Access to Justice, is also a resource for attorneys and components seeking to ensure that outreach plans are accessible to communities with limited

English proficiency. For cases involving or affecting Tribal communities, Department attorneys should consider seeking assistance from the relevant U.S. Attorney Tribal Liaison, designated experts in ENRD, and the Office of Tribal Justice. No one form of community engagement will fit all situations—it is important to find approaches that work for the needs of the communities in each case. These outreach plans will strive to provide as much transparency as possible for communities during active cases. Case teams will be proactive in understanding what transparency looks like to each individual community, with the assistance of the Office of Environmental Justice as needed.

The Department will also conduct general outreach to communities regarding environmental justice. When appropriate, USAOs and other Department components, with the support of and often including the Office of Environmental Justice, should participate with agency partners in conducting general outreach to communities regarding environmental justice concerns. This should help consolidate general outreach efforts, as appropriate, to limit the burden on communities to participate. This includes participating in local, regional, or national listening sessions and other outreach on these issues. This outreach should inform stakeholders about Department authorities, case examples, and resources available to them so they are better able to engage on issues of concern to them. This outreach will include efforts to increase awareness of environmental justice enforcement and funding tools among legal service providers. The Office for Access to Justice, in collaboration with the Office of Environmental Justice and other Department stakeholders, will develop mechanisms to disseminate this information to local and state-level legal service organizations.

The Department has designated an environmental justice coordinator in each of the 94 USAOs and has met the goal expressed in Section 3.5 of the Department’s 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. The Department will continue ensuring there are designated environmental justice coordinators in each USAO and prioritize defining their role and goals. Environmental justice coordinators will consider appropriate outreach efforts to identify areas of environmental justice concern in communities within their district. The environmental justice coordinator, with the assistance of their USAO’s Community Outreach Coordinator or Public Information Officer, will host meetings with and in communities with environmental justice concerns in their region. The USAOs, with assistance from the environmental justice coordinator, will continue to maintain and publicize a procedure for members of the public to report environmental justice concerns within that office’s jurisdiction.

Finally, the Office of Environmental Justice will continue to organize and participate in independent, non-case-specific engagement sessions and serve as a resource for case-related outreach to communities with environmental justice concerns. The Office of Environmental Justice will also create plain-language, accessible, and multilingual public-facing resources related to these outreach efforts.

Key Performance Metrics for Goal 2:

- Percentage of participants in DOJ facilitated environmental justice programs who perceive increased awareness and community capacity to address alleged inequities;

- Number of case-specific outreach plans;
- Maintenance of environmental justice coordinators at each USAO.

Goal 3: Increase education and collaboration relating to environmental justice.

1. Objective: Continue development of environmental justice-related training and guidance for Department staff.

To sustain our commitment to environmental justice, the Department needs a workforce that is informed about environmental justice issues and concerns. This requires developing environmental justice education programs and training opportunities for Department personnel. It also requires components to prioritize implementation of this Plan and establish any additional guidance needed for implementation.

Priority actions that will help the Department meet this objective include developing training and guidance materials for Department staff. The Department will provide annual or more frequent training focused on environmental justice issues specific to the agency to appropriate staff. The Department will also host training that covers compassionate and empathetically focused community engagement, such as culturally relevant outreach practices and communicating with plain language and without “legalese.” In addition, the Department will continue to train staff on environmental justice mapping tools such as appropriate environmental and other indicators from [EPA’s EJScreen](#) and the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) created by the White House Council on Environmental Quality. The Office of Environmental Justice, with the assistance of the Steering Committee, will work with relevant Department components to assess existing training and reference materials and courses and identify training needs relating to environmental justice enforcement issues. The Office of Environmental Justice will also conduct regular reviews and updates of environmental justice guidance and materials.

The Department will also require all components to consider developing more detailed implementation instructions and resource materials to facilitate implementation of this Plan for all levels of staff. Components with responsibilities or authorities that relate directly or indirectly to environmental justice will develop such instructions and resources, will designate environmental justice coordinators, and will designate environmental justice coordinators within sub-components as appropriate. In addition, each component with enforcement authority that relates directly or indirectly to environmental justice will, with the aid of other federal investigatory agencies where appropriate, develop protocols for assessing environmental impacts in investigations and referred cases. Such protocols should include, at minimum, a methodology for identifying and assessing (1) any actual or threatened adverse impacts to public health or the environment from systemic environmental violations, contamination, or injury to natural resources, and (2) information concerning the affected community and potential remedies for public health or environmental harms. Each such component will identify those enforcement actions that are most likely to achieve meaningful reductions in communities with environmental justice concerns and will give priority consideration to those matters.

The Department will also engage in Nation-to-Nation consultation with federally recognized Tribal governments in accordance with [Executive Order 13175](#), *Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments*, and the Department's Policy on Tribal Consultation. In addition, ENRD and the Office of Tribal Justice will hold regionally focused summits to facilitate engagement between federal and Tribal representatives.

Finally, ENRD and the Office of Tribal Justice will continue collaborating with Tribal governments on developing environmental justice materials for Department staff that speak to the sovereign status of Tribal governments and their relationship with federal agencies as well as the unique considerations of Tribal environmental justice. Those considerations include damage or potential injury to cultural and sacred sites and resources, impacts to fisheries and traditional hunting and gathering areas, impacts or impairments to treaty rights, and impacts to water and land resources on or needed to support Tribal homelands or associated rights.

2. Objective: Expand efforts to collaborate with federal, Tribal, state, local, and territorial government partners.

Environmental justice requires the Department to collaborate with other federal agencies, as well as Tribal, state, local, and territorial government partners to obtain holistic, durable relief for communities with environmental justice concerns. The Department will enhance its efforts to collaborate with these partners to learn about possible cases, coordinate enforcement efforts, and identify resources for communities with environmental justice concerns.

Priority actions that will help the Department meet this objective include continuing to participate on federal interagency committees that relate to environmental justice concerns. The Department will provide technical assistance to other federal agencies to address environmental justice issues to the extent the law permits.

In addition, Department components are encouraged to work with their agency partners to develop procedures for improving information-sharing, enhancing investigative capabilities, and coordinating potential environmental justice-related enforcement actions. In addition to the EPA, other federal agencies have regulatory, enforcement, cleanup, or restoration authorities that can contribute to providing timely and effective remedies for environmental violations, contamination, and injury to natural resources. These agency partners include, but are not limited to: Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and Federal Aviation Administration; Department of Housing and Urban Development; Coast Guard; Army Corps of Engineers; Department of the Interior; Department of Agriculture; Department of Defense; Department of Energy; Department of Commerce; Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Mine Safety and Health Administration; Food and Drug Administration; and Consumer Products Safety Commission.

The Department will also look for opportunities to support other federal agencies' training regarding environmental justice.

The Department, specifically the Civil Rights Division, will partner with federal agencies that enforce Title VI of the Civil Rights Act to train agencies on how to best enforce its provisions, and coordinate investigations when appropriate.

The Department will continue to consider that the federal government has special responsibilities involving federally recognized Tribes. Environmental and health-related cases affecting such Tribes will implicate additional issues involving the relationship between the Department of Justice, the Department of the Interior, and Tribal Nations. The Department will work with Tribal Nations to develop additional policies to consider the unique issues in these cases.

The Department will partner with and initiate the creation of environmental task forces. Local or regional environmental enforcement task forces, which generally include federal, Tribal, state, territorial, and local government partners, have proven to be an effective way of focusing and coordinating enforcement efforts. Where such a task force already exists that can assist in developing and pursuing environmental justice-related enforcement matters, USAOs and other Department components are encouraged to participate. Where such a task force does not already exist or is inactive, USAOs and Department components are encouraged to consider establishing or reinvigorating it as a tool to develop and pursue environmental justice-related enforcement matters, especially in districts that are likely to have a significant number of such matters. The Department, specifically ENRD, will assist and support the incorporation of environmental justice principles into the work of environmental enforcement taskforces, including through the development and dissemination of resources.

3. Objective: Counsel client agencies on environmental justice concerns.

The Department is responsible for defending federal agencies in litigation. Department attorneys who work with agency clients during investigations, litigation, or in their capacity as legal advisers should counsel agencies on environmental justice issues relevant to their respective agency programs and policies, as well as in litigation involving the defense of an agency action.

Priority actions that will help the Department meet this objective include ensuring that Department attorneys and staff who review legislative and regulatory initiatives evaluate such initiatives for their consistency with and efficacy in enhancing environmental justice. To ensure consideration of environmental justice concerns, the Office of Environmental Justice should review all legislative and regulatory initiatives that may relate to environmental justice. The Department must also consider Tribal sovereignty and trust and treaty and reserved rights when reviewing legislative and regulatory initiatives, and incorporate the relevant components, specifically ENRD and the Office of Tribal Justice, to review these issues.

Finally, Department attorneys will advise client agencies of their obligations under law and responsibilities under environmental justice executive orders and consider environmental justice in resolving litigation against client agencies. Department attorneys should identify possible environmental justice concerns at the start of a defensive civil action and coordinate with the Office of Environmental Justice on how to best address those concerns in the defense of the agency, as well as develop guidance to counsel the agency on potential future actions. When

counseling federal agencies that face allegations of environmental violations or cleanup obligations that may impact overburdened or underserved communities, DOJ components have a responsibility to advance environmental justice and timely remedies. In such cases, DOJ components should work with those agencies to secure consideration of and adherence to relevant executive orders and laws.

Key Performance Metrics for Goal 3:

- Percentage of participants in Office of Environmental Justice/DOJ facilitated environmental justice programs who affirm increased awareness of DOJ’s abilities to address alleged inequities;
- Number of trainings offered;
- Number of participants at the trainings;
- Number of task forces that are focusing on or are incorporating environmental justice in their efforts.

Goal 4: Ensure the Department considers the environmental justice impacts of the management and operation of the agency.

1. Objective: Assess and evaluate environmental justice in the Department’s climate adaptation efforts, including management of its procurement and real property.

The Department is committed to combating the climate crisis and environmental hazards that flow from it by maximizing opportunities to integrate the most current climate science and assessment of climate-related risks into the management of its procurement, real property, and financial programs. DOJ has a long history of supporting renewable, clean energy through both the construction of onsite renewable energy projects and the purchase of delivered renewable energy and renewable energy certificates. The Department is aiming to maintain climate-ready facilities and supply of products and services, while moving toward carbon-free electricity, the use of zero-emissions vehicles, and net-zero emissions buildings, consistent with [Executive Order 14057](#) and the accompanying [Federal Sustainability Plan](#). The Office of Environmental Justice has joined the Department’s Environmental and Sustainability Management Team to advance environmental justice in the operation and management of the agency.

Priority actions that will help the Department meet this objective include ensuring that the Department adheres to the most up-to-date National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) regulations in 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508 and other relevant resources to address environmental justice considerations through agency operation and management. For example, the Department is considering environmental justice concerns through its NEPA implementation related to the development of onsite power purchase agreements, with the intent of moving toward carbon-free electricity, as well as in the development and use of zero-emissions vehicles and equipment. In addition, Department bureaus, with assets such as buildings, are including environmental justice in their internal NEPA regulations. DOJ’s Bureau of Prisons (“BOP”) directly addresses

environmental justice in its internal NEPA regulations that apply to new and existing BOP facilities as well as the closing of existing BOP institutions. Environmental justice is a consideration noted in DOJ's Drug Enforcement Administration's instructions for completing an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement.

The Department, in the management of its assets, will utilize the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool created by the White House Council on Environmental Quality as well as appropriate environmental and other indicators from EPA's EJScreen tools. Merging environmental justice data with facility data can help the Department better understand the potential environmental impacts of its actions, including but not limited to siting decisions for new construction projects. Adding an environmental justice layer in the DOJ Climate Resilience Dashboard, which is a tool that consolidates several climate hazard datasets with DOJ owned, delegated, and leased facilities locations, will support project prioritizations that would potentially minimize adverse impacts to the environmental conditions of local communities.

Finally, the Department will provide communities with environmental justice concerns with opportunities for meaningful involvement in any operational planning or decision-making that may lead to disproportionate and adverse human health or environmental effects on those communities whenever possible.

Key Performance Metrics for Goal 4:

- Addition of an environmental justice layer onto existing GIS-based DOJ Climate Resilience Dashboard;
- Percentage of staff trained on the Dashboard.