[HISTORY](http://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/History/Pages/default.aspx)

History of the Office OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

* In 1999, DEP developed a statewide Environmental Justice Work Group (EJWG).
* In 2001, the EJWG produced the Environmental Justice Work Group Report which recommended to the DEP to develop an Environmental Justice Advisory Board and an Office within DEP to address environmental justice issues.
* In 2002, DEP established the Office of Environmental Advocate as a resource and a point of contact for addressing environmental concerns, and to foster community involvement by increasing community awareness. By doing so, DEP would be better prepared to serve all residents of Pennsylvania.
* The group recommended the creation of environmental policy in Pennsylvania based on respect and sensitivity towards everyone, and with special considerations to protect vulnerable communities. The goal was the inclusion of community members and advocates as partners and participants in the planning and decision-making processes.
* With the creation of the Environmental Justice Public Participation Policy in 2004, residents in environmental justice communities were granted enhanced public participation opportunities during the department’s permitting process with certain major permit applications, in addition to the normal course of public involvement. The policy provides EJ communities the opportunity of an informational public meeting, a summary of the proposed application, increased outreach and access to information on permit applications, and the involvement of a regional coordinator to facilitate communication between the industry, DEP and the community.

[LISTENING SESSIONS](http://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/Pages/Listening-Sessions.aspx)

REMOVE ALL EXISTING. Replace with below:

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Patrick McDonnell hosted nine listening sessions across the state between April 12, 2017, and May 25, 2017, soliciting feedback on DEP’s policies regarding environmental justice, the principle that communities should not be disproportionately exposed to adverse environmental impacts.

The Department solicited input on the following questions:

 •  What environmental justice concerns are most pressing in your community?

 •  Do you feel that the current definition of an environmental justice community (20% poverty and/or 30% minority) properly represents the needs of your community and the Commonwealth at large?

 •  Do you feel the DEP is engaged with marginalized communities to ensure that they have a voice in the decision making process? How can the DEP be more engaged with these communities?

 •  What tools have you used to find out information on DEP permitting/enforcement actions?

 •  What ways can the DEP be more effective at sharing information with the public?

 •  How can the DEP be more effective at receiving public input?

 •  What resource(s) is your community lacking that the DEP can provide that would assist in efforts to ensure environmental equity?

 •  What additional steps can be taken by the Department to effectively reach out to these vulnerable communities to ensure that their concerns are taken into consideration?

As a result of the feedback received during the Listening Tour, DEP is analyzing how environmental justice communities are defined, examining potential improvements to the public participation process, and developing best practices for engaging communities during decision-making processes, among other topics. Throughout this review, DEP will continue to facilitate conversations with the public and the Environmental Justice Advisory Board regarding revisions to DEP’s existing policies and procedures.

[Comment Document](file:///J%3A%5CListening%20Sessions%5COEJ%20Listening%20Session%20Comment%20Document%20Categorization%20Order%20Final.pdf)

[Greene County Listening Session Transcript](file:///J%3A%5CListening%20Sessions%5CTranscripts%5CGreene%20Co.%20Session%2004.12.17.pdf)

[Allegheny County Listening Session Transcript](file:///J%3A%5CListening%20Sessions%5CTranscripts%5CPittsburgh%20Session%2004.13.17.pdf)

[Lycoming County Listening Session Transcript](file:///J%3A%5CListening%20Sessions%5CTranscripts%5CWilliamsport%20Session%2004.20.17.pdf)

[Erie County Listening Session Transcript](file:///J%3A%5CListening%20Sessions%5CTranscripts%5CErie%20Session%2004.27.17.pdf)

[Dauphin County Listening Session Transcript](file:///J%3A%5CListening%20Sessions%5CTranscripts%5CHarrisburg%20Session%2005.02.17.pdf)

[Lehigh County Listening Session Transcript](file:///J%3A%5CListening%20Sessions%5CTranscripts%5CAllentown%20Session.5.11.17.pdf)

[Lancaster County Listening Session Transcript](file:///J%3A%5CListening%20Sessions%5CTranscripts%5CLancaster%20Session%205.15.17.pdf)

[Delaware County Listening Session Transcript](file:///J%3A%5CListening%20Sessions%5CTranscripts%5CChester%20City%20Session.05.23.17.pdf)

[Philadelphia County Listening Session Transcript](file:///J%3A%5CListening%20Sessions%5CTranscripts%5CPhiladelphia%20Session.05.25.17.pdf)

[Electronic and Physical Testimony](file:///J%3A%5CListening%20Sessions%5CPhysical%20Email%20Testimony%5CAll%20Email-Physical%20Submission%20Testimony.pdf)

DEP’s release of the listening tour transcripts and comment document is part of DEP’s ongoing efforts to improve the public’s access to information and to increase communities' environmental awareness.

# [SUMMARIES AND DOCUMENTS](http://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/Pages/Summaries-and-Documents.aspx)

# SUMMARIES AND DOCUMENTS

## DOCUMENTS

* [Enhanced Public Participation Policy (PDF)](http://www.elibrary.dep.state.pa.us/dsweb/Get/Version-48671/012-0501-002.pd%20f)
* [2001 Environmental Justice Work Group Report (PDF)](http://files.dep.state.pa.us/PublicParticipation/Office%20of%20Environmental%20Advocacy/EnvAdvocacyPortalFiles/2013/Environmental_Justice_Work_Group_June_2001.pdf)
* [Federal Environmental Justice Executive Order](https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-executive-order-12898-federal-actions-address-environmental-justice)

### FACT SHEETS AND OTHER RESOURCES

* [Listening Tour Brochure](http://files.dep.state.pa.us/PublicParticipation/Office%20of%20Environmental%20Advocacy/EnvAdvocacyPortalFiles/2017/EnvironmentalJusticeBrochure2017.pdf)
* [Flood Related Information](http://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/My-Water/PrivateWells/Pages/Storm-Related-Information.aspx#.Vgw4yPlViko)
* [Citizen's Guide to Explosives Regulations in Pennsylvania (PDF)](http://www.elibrary.dep.state.pa.us/dsweb/Get/Document-116330/5600-FS-DEP3144.pdf)

## DEP ENHANCED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY

### THE PENNSYLVANIA ENHANCED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Under the guidance of the Environmental Justice Advisory Work Group, DEP developed the [EJ Enhanced Public Participation Policy (PDF).](http://www.elibrary.dep.state.pa.us/dsweb/Get/Version-48671/012-0501-002.pdf) The policy was created to ensure that EJ communities have the opportunity to participate and be involved in a meaningful manner throughout the permitting process when companies propose permitted facilities in their neighborhood or when existing facilities expand their operations. Appendix A of the policy includes a list of permits which trigger the EJ Enhanced Public Participation Policy.

#### POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

##### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

* DEP strongly encourages applicants to meet with community stakeholders. DEP notifies the applicant early in the process when a permit application meets the criteria for EJ, and, when appropriate, provides assistance to the applicant with outreach initiatives.
* DEP produces and distributes project summary documents regarding the proposed activity.
* DEP provides stakeholders with information regarding proposed permit conditions and, when needed, offers clarification to help make project details more apparent.

##### PUBLIC INFORMATION

* DEP encourages the use of electronic, conventional and non-conventional methods of spreading information to community members.
* Public Notices are written in terminology easily understood by the majority of readers within the EJ area.
* Notices are placed in publications widely read by the community in those areas, and placed locally in areas of high visibility.
* Applicants are encouraged to mail all the appropriate information about the project to those in an EJ area.

##### PUBLIC MEETINGS

* Pre-application meetings: As part of the enhanced public participation strategy, DEP strongly encourages potential applicants to meet with community stakeholders prior to submitting an application to DEP.
* Informational meetings: DEP, in coordination with the applicant, schedules an informational meeting within 30 days of receipt of the application. The purpose of the meeting is to inform the residents of the scope and nature of the project in a timely, interactive manner. This meeting is in addition to any other currently required public meetings and/or hearings.
* Applicants’ role: Applicants are encouraged to fully participate in the meeting, and may take the lead in setting up and conducting the meeting. It benefits everyone when the meeting takes place as early in the process as possible. DEP’s EJ Coordinators are available to advise or to help applicants advertise the meeting to the local community.

##### SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

* DEP provides a summary of the application that explains the project in terms understandable to the majority of readers within an EJ area. [A sample summary (PDF)](http://files.dep.state.pa.us/PublicParticipation/Office%20of%20Environmental%20Advocacy/EnvAdvocacyPortalFiles/2012/EJ_websiteupdate/Plain%20Language%20Summary.pdf) is available. This summary addresses the purpose and location of the proposed activity or facility, and anticipated impacts. These summaries can also be used in other aspects of public outreach.
* Document Availability - Access to relevant information is vital to meaningful participation. DEP’s efforts to ensure participation include:
	1. Identification of convenient locations where the public can review applications
	2. Additional support on how to locate materials in a file
	3. If needed, extended hours for file review or reviews by appointment, including evenings and weekends.

[FOR](http://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/Pages/Listening-Sessions.aspx) [PERMIT](http://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/Pages/For-Permit-Applicants.aspx) [APPLICANTS](http://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/Pages/For-Permit-Applicants.aspx)

For Permit Applicants

If the facility will be located within an EJ Community, DEP recommends following the steps outlined below:

* Become familiar with the [Environmental Justice Enhanced Public Participation Policy.](http://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/Pages/DEP-Enhanced-Public-Participation-Policy.aspx)
* Contact the [EJ coordinator in your region](http://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/Pages/Contact-Us.aspx).
* Engage the local community early in the process and schedule at least one public meeting. The EJ coordinator will assist in planning an effective community meeting.

Sample Documents:

* [Covanta Energy Corporation's Community Outreach and Environmental Justice Policy (PDF)](http://files.dep.state.pa.us/PublicParticipation/Office%20of%20Environmental%20Advocacy/EnvAdvocacyPortalFiles/2012/CVA_Community_Outreach_and_EJ_Policy_Final_Letter.pdf)
* [Plain Language Summary (PDF)](http://files.dep.state.pa.us/PublicParticipation/Office%20of%20Environmental%20Advocacy/EnvAdvocacyPortalFiles/2012/EJ_websiteupdate/Plain%20Language%20Summary.pdf)
* [Meeting Invitation Flyer (PDF)](http://files.dep.state.pa.us/PublicParticipation/Office%20of%20Environmental%20Advocacy/EnvAdvocacyPortalFiles/2012/EJ_websiteupdate/Meeting%20Flyer.pdf)
* [EJ Community Involvement Checklist (PDF)](http://files.dep.state.pa.us/PublicParticipation/Office%20of%20Environmental%20Advocacy/EnvAdvocacyPortalFiles/2012/EJ_websiteupdate/EJ%20Checklist.pdf)
* [Permit Applicant Outreach Activities Guide Fact Sheet (PDF)](http://www.elibrary.dep.state.pa.us/dsweb/Get/Document-99779/0100-FS-DEP4440.pdf)
* [Public Notice (PDF)](http://files.dep.state.pa.us/PublicParticipation/Office%20of%20Environmental%20Advocacy/EnvAdvocacyPortalFiles/Sample_Public_Notice.pdf)

[FAQS](http://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/Pages/FAQ.aspx)

FAQs

[FAQs Español (PDF)](http://files.dep.state.pa.us/PublicParticipation/Office%20of%20Environmental%20Advocacy/EnvAdvocacyPortalFiles/2012/EJ_websiteupdate/FAQs%20Espanol.pdf)

**What is "environmental justice"?**
The term environmental justice has been defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

**What is the objective of the Office of Environmental Justice?**
The OEJ was established for the residents of Pennsylvania, both as a resource and a point of contact for addressing environmental concerns. The primary goal of the OEJ is to increase community involvement by increasing community awareness. By doing so, we will be better prepared to serve all residents of Pennsylvania.

**What are the current objectives of DEP's Environmental Justice Program?**
The objectives are to:

* Promote intra-departmental coordination and collaboration;
* Foster relationships between DEP and communities;
* Strengthen and utilize the Environmental Justice Advisory Board;
* Further develop the infrastructure of the Office of Environmental Justice;
* Encourage interagency coordination (i.e., Department of Community and Economic Development, Department of Health, Department of Public Welfare);
* Identify any causes of environmental inequities in Pennsylvania.

**What is the Environmental Justice Advisory Board?**

The Environmental Justice Advisory Board was established as part of a recommendation from the original Environmental Justice Work Group and has been charged with the goal of advising DEP on how to best implement the consensus recommendations from the Work Group Report. The board meets several times a year and discusses numerous issues pertaining to Environmental Justice in Pennsylvania.

**How can I participate if I am not on the advisory board?**
All meetings are open to the public. At each meeting, the Board provides an opportunity for attendees to provide comments to the advisory board. The department also accepts comments, concerns and recommendations through written correspondence.

**Where will the meetings be held?**
Meetings are held in the Rachel Carson State Office Building, 400 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA, or elsewhere in the state. Please see the events listing for dates and times of upcoming meetings.

**Who should I contact for more information about DEP's Environmental Justice Program?**
Office of Environmental Justice
Rachel Carson State Office Building
P.O. Box 2063
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2063
717-783-2300

[CONTACT US](http://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/Pages/Contact-Us.aspx)

Contact Us

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