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# Who We Are

- A statewide coalition of 60+ organizations and groups rooted in communities of color and people with lower incomes
- As thought leaders and organizers we build our agenda and strength with our grassroots community.
- Together we are focused on building power and capacity for a Just Transition to a clean energy economy that centers equity and is led by frontlines communities - including people of color.



# What is environmental justice?

- Environmental justice is the belief that where you live, your income, race or language ability should not determine how healthy or safe you are.
- The environmental justice movement has been primarily led by African-Americans, Latinos, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans.





# A Movement Sparks

- 1982 - Warren County, North Carolina
  - A poor, rural and overwhelmingly black community. The state government decided that the county would make a perfect home for 6,000 truckloads of soil laced with toxic PCBs
  - Frustrated residents and their allies, furious that state officials had dismissed concerns, protested the trucks. And they stopped them, lying down on roads leading into the landfill.
  - Six weeks of marches and nonviolent protests followed, and more than 500 people were arrested -- the first arrests in U.S. history over the siting of a landfill.
  - The people of Warren County ultimately lost the battle; the toxic waste was eventually deposited in that landfill.
- Warren County protests marked the first instance of an environmental protest by people of color that garnered widespread national attention.





# Building the Movement

- 1987 - United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice published "Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States",
  - The report showed that race was the single most important factor in determining where toxic waste facilities were sited in the United States. It also found that the siting of these facilities in communities of color was no accident, but rather the intentional result of local, state and federal land-use policies
- 1991 - First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit
  - The summit brought together hundreds of environmental justice leaders from the United States, Canada, Central America, the Marshall Islands and elsewhere, for the first time to network and strategize.
  - Produced the "[Principles of Environmental Justice](#)" and the "Call to Action," two foundational documents of the environmental justice movement



# Institutionalizing the Movement

- Executive Order 12898
  - 1994 - President Clinton enacted this groundbreaking order that directed federal agencies to identify and address disproportionately high adverse health or environmental effects of their policies or programs on low-income people and people of color.
  - It also directed federal agencies to look for ways to prevent discrimination by race, color or national origin in any federally funded programs dealing with health or the environment.





# Environmental Justice: EPA Definition

- Environmental justice (EJ) is 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.
  - Fair treatment means no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and commercial operations or policies.
  - **Meaningful involvement** means:
    - People have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health;
    - The public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision;
    - Community concerns will be considered in the decision making process; and
    - Decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.

# Tribal Nations & EJ

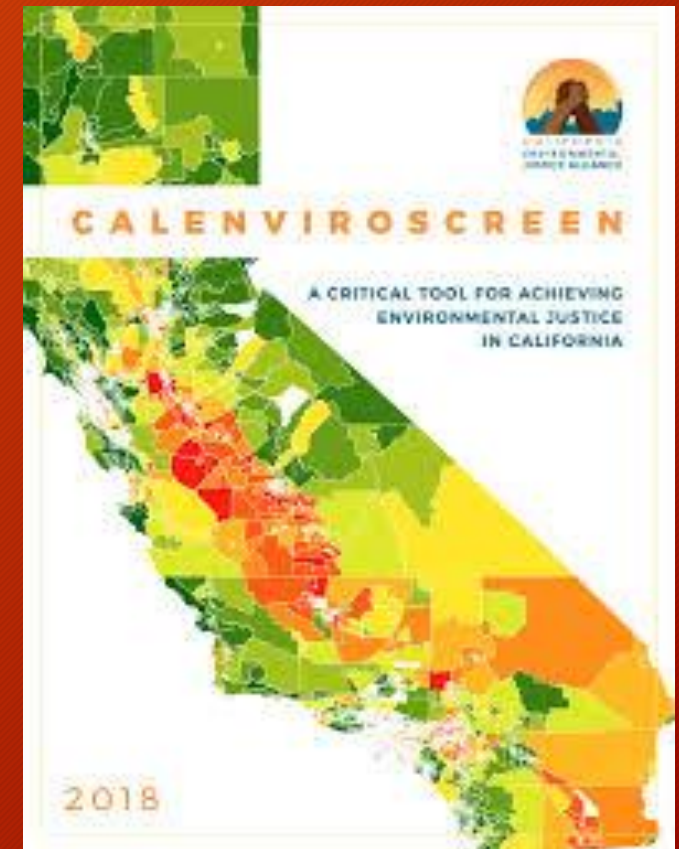
- For more than 550 Native American communities, environmental justice is more than a matter of enforcing national laws equitably; it is also a matter of a federal duty for the protection of Indian lands and natural resources.
- Equally important is the federal promise to assist tribes in managing their reservation environments under their reserved powers of self-government.
- Examples of issues in Washington
  - On the Swinomish Indian Reservation, local oil refineries disposed of hazardous wastes from their operations at the reservation dumpsite. It took nearly two decades before the Swinomish tribe was able to persuade EPA that a cleanup action was warranted.
  - **The Fish Wars** were a series of civil disobedience protests in the 1960s and '70s in which Native American tribes around the Puget Sound pressured the U.S. government to recognize fishing rights granted by the Point No Point Treaty.





# EJ in California

- Between 1999-2003, California's Legislature and Governor enacted 10 laws relating to environmental justice (EJ). These bills made CA one of the first states in the nation to codify environmental justice in state statute.
- Examples of actions taken:
  - Cal Enviro Screen - Mapping that has guided the investment of \$469 million from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund for projects that reduce greenhouse gases and benefit disadvantaged communities
  - CalEPA has established a pilot multi-agency enforcement program to prioritize compliance with environmental laws in disadvantaged communities.



# CA definition of Environmental Justice

- “Environmental justice” means the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.



# EJ in Oregon

- 1993-94 - The Oregon Environmental Equity Citizen Advisory Committee was formed to investigate how the State's environmental programs may contribute to environmental discrimination. Dept. of Environmental Quality then issued recommendations for immediate action.
- 1997 - The Governor's Environmental Justice Advisory Board was created by executive order. The board's mission was to determine how the state's natural resource agencies were implementing the directives from the 1994 recommendations.
- 2007 - SB 420 established Oregon's Environmental Justice Task Force to advise the Governor and state natural resource agencies on environmental justice concerns. The Task Force meets with EJ communities across the state and reports directly to the Governor. Additionally, the law requires state natural resource agencies address environmental justice issues as part of standard operations and report directly to the Governor on progress.

# OR definition of Environmental Justice

- Environmental Justice - or Environmental Equity-- entails the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, age, gender, national origin, education or income level, in the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

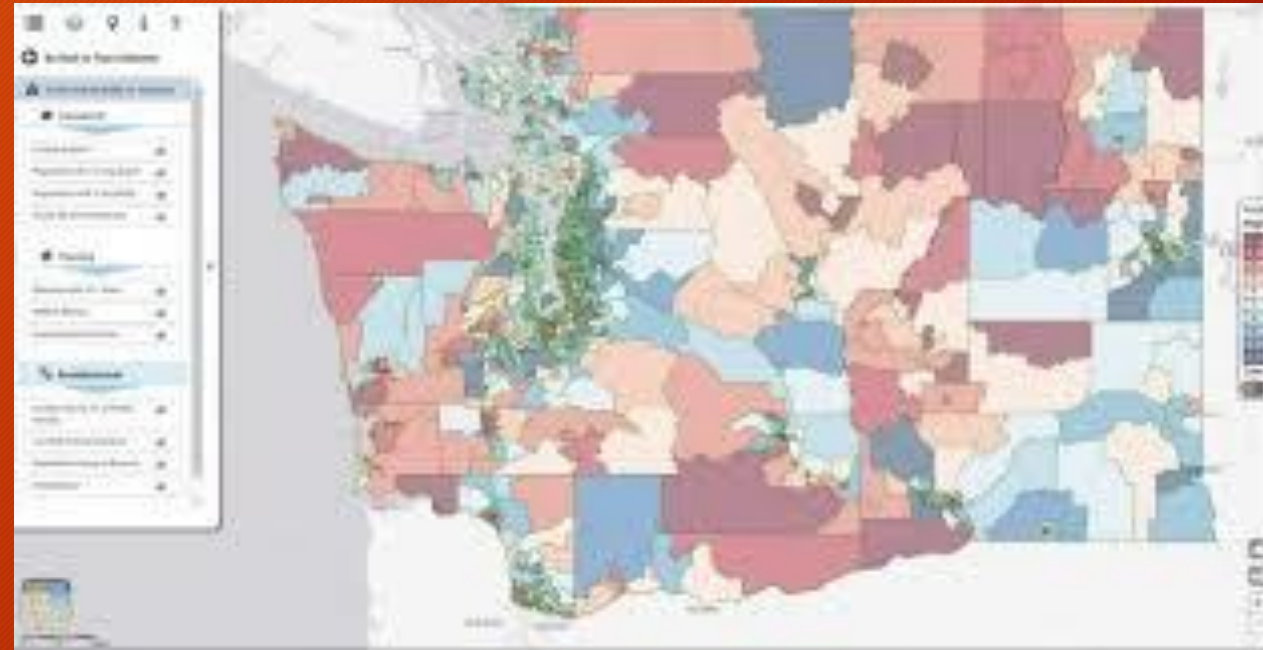


# EJ in WA - Advocates

- Communities Coalition for Environmental Justice
  - Formed in the early 90s, it was an organization that for nearly 20 years organized a multi-cultural coalition to address EJ issues.
  - A major effort that gained national attention was in 1998 - CCEJ halted the installation of an in-city medical waste incineration facility at South Seattle's Veterans Affairs Medical Center.
- Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition
  - Founded in 2001 by community, neighborhood, environmental, tribal, and small business organizations that came together to serve as EPA's Community Advisory Group for the Duwamish River Superfund site.
  - Accomplishments:
    - As a direct result of their advocacy work, U.S EPA Region 10 did the first-ever environmental justice analysis of a Proposed Cleanup Plan for a Superfund site in the U.S.
    - Worked with EPA to expand the comment period for this important decision from 30 to 105 days. During that time, over 2,300 comments in 10 different languages overwhelmingly called in favor of a stronger cleanup

# EJ in WA - State Government

- Dept. of Health and Department of Ecology co-led the development the Environmental Health Disparities Map
- Some departments have taken on individual programs and have dedicated staff to addressing environmental justice
- The EJ Taskforce is WA state's first attempt at developing a comprehensive mission and vision for incorporating environmental justice in state agencies.







Thank you!

Questions?

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