

Tentatively Approved Definition for WA Environmental Justice Definition

During the June 22nd Meeting the EJ Task Force tentatively approved the following proposal for a statewide definition for environmental justice.

Definition

“The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies including focusing on addressing disproportionate environmental and health impacts by prioritizing highly impacted communities, equitably distributing resources and benefits, and eliminating harm.”

Explanation of Draft Definition:

- This definition is meant to guide institutions, including Washington State agencies, with identifying environmental justice issues in addition to the Environmental Protection Agency’s definition that has a procedural equity focus.
- This definition does not replace the purposes that an EJ mission statement, EJ goals, EJ principles, or community EJ definitions serve.
- In an effort to avoid contradicting the EPA and to keep important EJ considerations intact, the full EJ definition from the EPA is embedded within this proposed definition for EJ in Washington.
 - **Federal Definition:** “The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.”
- This enhanced definition adds a distributional equity component in the second half of the sentence.