

Dear allies,

We are reaching out to you with respect to the Environmental Justice and Cumulative Impacts Bill (S232) sponsored by Troy Singleton.

As you may know, we have been working in a coalition led by EJ voices to carefully craft a strong EJ bill with NJDEP, Senator Singleton and the Governor's Office. This substantive work to make this a strong bill reflects the deep knowledge and experience of frontline EJ leaders in NJ.

The NJ EJ Alliance, Ironbound Community Corp and Clean Water Action have been working closely together on ensuring that this EJ bill has teeth and passes through the legislature. Our three organizations have struggled together for over a decade on this issue.

We are respectfully asking all mainstream environmental groups and other allies to work with us in a spirit that reflects the values of justice, mutuality and inclusion represented in the [EJ Principles](#) and [Jemez Principles](#), which say "We Speak for Ourselves".

We ask that you refrain from negotiating, speaking on behalf of or leading on this Bill without the prior consultation and input of our coalition. You may understand why, after years of struggling to build relationships that appropriately center EJ leadership, we were alarmed to hear that some of our allies have rushed to support the Bill without prior consultation and in a manner that is unacceptable to us, precisely because it does not center EJ leadership. These actions raise a number of issues that go beyond support for this particular bill. The EJ movement has successfully made EJ an important issue but it has come with a risk to the EJ movement and EJ residential communities. As larger, White led organizations with more resources, but without an EJ history, enter the EJ space there is a danger that people Of Color led organizations and organizations with a history of working on EJ, will be effectively marginalized in that space. This risk has been heightened with the recent emphasis on issues of racial and social justice. There is valid apprehension in the EJ community that groups without a strong history in EJ will capitalize on opportunities involving funding, publicity, and policy and political influence related to EJ. This may already have happened and can happen even with good intentions. We understand that matters like these that involve racial issues between the EJ and environmental movements, as well as in the country, can be complicated and volatile but they must be voiced and engaged.

The EJ Bill (S232) that is currently up for review in the Budget committee represents the hard won revisions that we labored to get included, it makes this version of the bill stronger in a number of critical ways including: (1) more inclusive definition of an overburdened community (35% Low income or 40% non-white or 40% linguistically isolated); (2) the review of new permits and permit renewals; (3) an EJ review of disproportionate impacts relative to non EJ areas; (4) directs that NJDEP "Shall deny" permits in those EJ communities where the disproportionate burden is demonstrated in the EJ analysis, among other details.

We know that we will surely need all the support of your groups and networks to help push this Bill to passage, and we welcome that support in a manner that is consistent with EJ values. To this end, we ask that if you plan on advocating for this bill that you please reach out directly to any of the points of contact listed below so that we can brief you and coordinate efforts.

We also ask that you stay in close communication with us if you decide to push support for the Bill through your networks, for example, If the Bill language changes in any way, please check back in with us about it before supporting the Bill and direct any substantive questions from legislators and the media about the Bill and about Environmental Justice to us. I have included our contacts below for such inquiries. This is a historic moment that demands us to break with past behavior that has not centered EJ Leadership and therefore has been harmful to the relationship between EJ and environmental groups. Let's meet the moment.

If you want to discuss any of these ideas in general, and before taking action on the Bill, please contact us.

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