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## **New Jersey Sets National Precedent with Environmental Justice Bill Signing Today**

**(Trenton)** - After decades of local struggle and grassroots advocacy, New Jersey made history today when Governor Murphy signed into law a first of its kind Environmental Justice Bill (S232 - **Singleton/McKeon/Weinberg/Ruiz**). The law will direct the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to deny or condition certain permits due to cumulative, disproportionate impacts of pollution in environmental justice communities. This bill is the realization of countless efforts by environmental justice communities from Camden to Newark that have long called on the state to protect already overburdened communities. It is a beacon for environmental justice communities across every state and can pave the way for comprehensive national legislation.

“This new law gives the state the power to 'just say no more' pollution in my neighborhood. My children can look forward to breathing cleaner air as they recreate in Weequahic Park. Thanks to Senator Singleton, Assemblyman McKeon and Governor Murphy, New Jersey now has the strongest EJ law in the nation and demonstrates that **Black Lives Matter**,” said Newark resident **Kim Gaddy, Environmental Justice Organizer, Clean Water Action**. “Environmental justice communities like mine have suffered far too long. After more than 10 years of fighting for this legislation, our voices have finally been heard. Our communities will receive the right environmental protection for our complexion.”

“S232 gives us hope. Hope that our pleas for the right to breathe will be heard next time we face off with polluters who have been targeting Black and brown neighborhoods for decades. We can't end environmental racism with one bill but we've now taken this historical first step,” said **Maria Lopez-Núñez, Deputy Director, Organizing and Advocacy, Ironbound Community Corp.** “Newark has a fighting chance to breathe easier thanks to this law.”

“Environmental Justice communities are well aware of how race and income relate to environmental burdens. This legislation is a critical step towards ensuring that all residents of New Jersey, regardless of their zip code and color of their skin, have the right to good health, clean air, and safe waters,” said **Melissa Miles, Executive Director, NJ Environmental Justice Alliance**. “This is the moment of reckoning for racial and environmental justice in our country that makes it imperative to act. Our legislators have answered our call to action and now we must keep the voices of overburdened communities centered in the rule-making process.”

### **Key provisions of the bill are:**

- Defines “overburdened communities” as those with significant Of Color, non-English speaking or low income populations.

- Requires major polluters seeking certain permits in overburdened communities to develop “Environmental Justice Impact Statements” (EJIS) with substantive detail, meaningful public input, and real DEP oversight including technical assistance to impacted communities.
- Requires and empowers DEP to deny or condition certain permits due to disproportionate impacts based on the EJIS.

“This is a historic law for a historic moment in our country. This EJ bill can serve as a model for other states and provide some measure of relief for EJ communities suffering from the legacy of environmental racism and pollution.” said **Ana Isabel Baptista, PhD, Ironbound Community Corporation and NJ Environmental Justice Alliance Trustee.**

"The cumulative impacts policy embodied in this law will provide a foundation from which New Jersey can address environmental justice. We should combine this legislation with other policies in order to fully achieve environmental justice in our state," said **Nicky Sheats, Esq., Ph.D., New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance.** “We will need cumulative policies to address cumulative impacts and environmental justice in New Jersey in a comprehensive manner. Congratulations to everyone who worked on today's legislation and to everyone who voted for it!"

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