

New Jersey Environmental Justice Law



A

What is the EJ Law?

NJ is the first state in the US with an EJ Law.

Primary purpose of the EJ Law is to require the DEP to evaluate the environmental and public health impacts on overburdened communities when reviewing permit applications for certain facilities.

An overburdened community is a community that meets the following criteria:

- At least 35% of the households qualify as low-income;
- At least 40% of the residents identify as a minority or from a Tribal group; or
- At least 40% of the households are not proficient in English

Over 4.5 million NJ residents reside in overburdened communities. This law seeks to limit further placement and expansion of polluting facilities in overburdened communities.

B

What does the EJ law do?

EJ Law would regulate the permit application process for the following industries:

- Major sources of air pollution (i.e., gas fired power plants and cogeneration facilities);
- Resource recovery facilities or incinerators; sludge processing facilities;
- Sewage treatment plants with a capacity of more than 50 million gallons per day;
- Transfer stations or solid waste facilities;
- Recycling facilities that receive at least 100 tons of recyclable material per day;
- Scrap metal facilities;
- Landfills; or
- Medical waste incinerators, except those attendant to hospitals and universities.

Permit applications are required to:

- Prepare an environmental justice impact statement;
- Transmit that statement to the DEP and to the municipality where the overburdened community is located
- Organize and host a public meeting within the overburdened community.
- The DEP must then decide on the application in favor of eliminating or minimizing the risk of harm to the community.

C

What is Environmental Justice (EJ)?

Environmental Justice is the right that all people have to live, work and play in a clean and healthy environment. These rights are violated for many low-income and communities of color from a disproportionately high number of environmental and public health stressors located within these communities. These communities, identified as overburdened communities, suffer higher rates of negative health impacts, such as asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and elevated blood lead levels.

Children in these communities are particularly vulnerable, with higher rates of developmental disorders impacting these populations, which ultimately impacts the future success of the children and the overall growth, stability, and well-being of the entire community.

NJ's Environmental Justice Mapping, Assessment, and Protection (EJMAP) tool

This tool allows users to put in any address and find out if it is located in an Overburdened Community. It also allows users to identify the latest (2020) Census tract data as well as polluting facilities across the state.

Use the camera on your phone to scan this QR code, and it will pull up the EJMAP tool and try it out.

