

Administrative Policy

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Policy title: Environmental justice

Policy type: Human Resources

Policy owner: Human Resources Management Team

Effective date: November 2020

Replaces or Supersedes: October 11, 2012

Date of Policy review: Fall 2020

Policy statement: The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) expects the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of communities of color, Indigenous communities, and low-income communities in agency actions and decisions that affect them. It is the policy of the MPCA that an outcome of its work, in addition to protecting and improving the environment and public health, must address environmental justice concerns.

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Peter Tester, Deputy Commissioner

Purpose: Coordination and collaboration with members of environmental justice communities and MPCA Divisions, Programs, and Units is a priority in addressing environmental inequities and related health disparities caused by disproportionate pollution impacts.

“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.

“Community of color” means any geographically distinct population with a substantial number of individuals who identify as Black, African-American, Latinx, Asian American, Asian Minnesotan, Asian Pacific Islander, or any other nonwhite race.

“Environmental justice” means the right of communities of color, Indigenous communities, and low-income communities, to the enjoyment of a healthy environment and to fair treatment with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

“Environmental justice community” or “EJ community” means a people group or geographic location that experiences environmental justice related harms and risks.

Meaningful Involvement happens when:

1. People have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health;
2. The public’s contribution can influence the regulatory agency’s decision;
3. Community concerns are considered in the decision-making process; and
4. The decision makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.

Communities of color, indigenous communities, and low-income residents have a right to live in conditions that support a healthy and fulfilling life. The MPCA is committed to using its authority and influence to identify and support opportunities that improve environmental conditions and reverse generations of environmental inequities in areas of concern, enhancing environmental quality, and providing economic opportunities for future generations of Minnesotans.