Environmental Justice Strategies and Implementation
Incorporating Environmental Justice Strategies and Implementation into Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Operations

Policy and goals
On October 11, 2012, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) renewed its commitment to practice environmental justice in its day to day work and updated its policy to strive for the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all Minnesotans. In addition, the MPCA has included environmental justice goal in its 2013-2017 Strategic Plan:

**Goal:** Pollution does not have a disproportionate negative impact on any group of people.

**Objectives:**
- Develop and implement program strategies to identify and address environmental justice concerns.
- Identify and enhance opportunities for all Minnesotans to provide meaningful input into MPCA environmental decision making.

Strategies
In January 2013, the MPCA developed an initial strategy and implementation plan to support meaningful deployment of environmental justice principles. The implementation plan is meant to be dynamic and evolve as we learn.

The following are the MPCA’s initial strategy elements:

1. MPCA intends to deploy a structure parallel to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to facilitate efficient communication and coordination and an effective partnership with the federal government. The structure has two primary elements. First, a small senior manager group, with some staff support, to coordinate overall environmental justice policy and activities with EPA. This Environmental Justice Steering Team will track program activity information and provide lateral communication and coordination with EPA and internal MPCA staff. Second, program lead managers, with assistance from the Steering Team, will decide how to deploy the Agency’s environmental justice policy in their respective programs and share information with the Steering Team and relevant program managers.

2. The question of equitable risk and benefit distribution remains a significant policy issue. For many years, several communities have tied concerns about cumulative risks to individual permit actions; often the facility has not represented a significant portion of the cumulative risk. The MPCA Commissioner will begin discussion with the Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Human Rights and Metropolitan Council regarding these issues and possible future actions. Discussions will focus on MPCA’s strategic focus areas; ambient air quality and ambient water quality.
Implementation

The MPCA has identified the following initial environmental justice implementation plan:

- **Completed:** The Commissioner has assigned specific Senior Management and supporting staff and leadership from the Agency Rules Unit to the Environmental Justice Steering Team. Environmental Justice Steering Team members include: John Stine, Dave Thornton, Kathy Sather, Jeff Smith, Shannon Lotthammer, Ned Brooks, and William Wilde.

- **Completed:** The Environmental Justice Steering Team has identified four pilot projects to enable development of environmental justice principals. The Pilot Projects included: Fridley Citizen Cancer Concern, Wild Rice Protection, Unsewered Communities, and Urban Air Quality.

- **Completed:** The Environmental Justice Steering Team chartered a team that designed and presented internal training for all leaders regarding environmental justice policy and deployment. This training was presented on January 31, 2013.

- **Within 90 days,** the Environmental Justice Steering Team, in consultation with the Tactical Communications Improvement Group, will develop an external stakeholder communication and coordination plan to include discussions with interested entities such as: the Governor's Office, Legislature, Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Human Rights, Metropolitan Council, Housing and Finance, Bureau of Indian Affairs and local government, Minnesota business representatives and Minnesota environmental justice entities and Minnesota environmental advocates.

- **Within 90 days,** the Environmental Justice Steering Team will clarify the role of the Agency’s Public Information Office, Tactical Communications Improvement Group and Environmental Assessment and Outcomes Division Risk Assessors in supporting deployment of environmental justice initiatives.

- **Ongoing:** Staff of the Environmental Justice Steering will continue to communicate and coordinate with their counterparts at EPA on federal policy and provide assistance to MPCA management to deploy state environmental justice policy.

- **Within 120 days,** the Commissioner will initiate a discussion regarding Minnesota’s health risk management and cumulative risk as it relates to environmental justice with Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Human Rights and Metropolitan Council. The discussion should result in a shared understanding of human health and environmental risks and a shared plan to identify and implement actions to lessen risks. The discussion and plan should recognize that some unfair inequitable distribution of risk may have already occurred due to past actions. Follow-up and ongoing actions will be identified in the external communication plan described above.