

**BILL ANALYSIS >> ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY**

# Bill Analysis: Environmental Justice for All Act (S. 872/H.R. 2021)

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The Environmental Justice for All Act (S. 872/H.R. 2021), reintroduced in the 117th Congress and sponsored by Sen. Tammy Duckworth (IL) and Rep. Raúl Grijalva (AZ-03), addresses the prevalence of toxic waste sites and heavy polluting fossil fuel infrastructure in and near communities of color and low-income communities.

This bill offers a much-needed response to a history of injustice that has burdened marginalized peoples and communities in the United States for far too long.

## Bill Summary

Among its features, the Environmental Justice for All Act will:

### **Strengthen existing laws**

The Environmental Justice for All Act amends the 1964 Civil Rights Act to allow persons to sue for intentional discrimination. In addition, it amends the Clean Air Act to require that those seeking a permit for projects that would generate air pollution provide analysis of the project's anticipated impact on the surrounding area.

### **Define the role of federal agencies**

The bill outlines the federal government's role in ensuring that environmental hazards will not disproportionately burden communities. It directs the President to establish a White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council, which will produce an environmental justice strategy every three years. It directs federal agencies to produce environmental justice strategies, supported by regular reports to the Congress. Codifying these requirements is vital to ensuring that the federal government's commitment to addressing environmental justice is sustained beyond the current Administration—and the current Congress.

### **Improve federal research and data**

Currently, there's not enough data on the scope and impact of environmental harm on low-income and minority citizens. To address this, the bill directs federal agencies to include in their research "diverse segments of the population in epidemiological and clinical studies, including

segments at high risk from environmental hazards.” It further asks federal agencies to collect information on environmental and human health risks borne by populations identified by race, national origin, or income, and to use that information to determine whether the agency’s policies have a negative impact on human or environmental health. Equally important, the bill directs the Environmental Protection Agency Administrator to make the agency’s environmental justice screening tools available to the public.

### **Help local communities and organizations**

A key challenge for many individuals and communities impacted by the degradation of their health and land is access to resources. Many communities have been working to address these injustices for decades, but they need more funding and training to support their efforts. As a response, the Environmental Justice for All Act authorizes funding to help local organizations, states, and Indigenous groups build capacity to address environmental justice concerns. The bill also sets up a training program so that environmental justice groups can better identify and address adverse human health or environmental impacts in their communities.

### **Lay the groundwork for a just transition**

This bill seeks to establish both a Just Transition Advisory Committee and a Federal Energy Transition Economic Development Assistance Fund. Each entity is tasked with promoting economic revitalization, diversification, and development in communities that have depended on fossil fuel mining, extraction, or refining for their economic foundations.

## **In Conclusion**

The Environmental Justice for All Act represents a significant step forward in addressing the harm done by fossil fuel extraction and development. FCNL calls on the Congress to pass this bill to ensure that the that the United States leaves the injustice and degradation of the fossil fuel era behind as we move into a sustainable low carbon future.

**We urge the Congress to support and pass the Environmental Justice for All Act (S. 872/H.R. 2021).**