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/ Feb 27, 2020

# BM4F Scores a Major Victory with the Promise of the Environmental Justice for All Act

Today, February 27, 2020 was a DOPE day! Rep. Donald McEachin (D-VA04) Chair Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) officially introduced the

**Environmental Justice for All Act** ([http://icm-tracking.meltwater.com/link.php?DynEngagement=true&H=btYXC68syxnIIvIaW0qBweEUHWPFWuN5EgnqFgPj0oiC10MI9zi1RliH599g1m8ZxjaQ8FJkR%2BZHPSTvF5MH90MCCqXwj%2BYOxzuqvpXGmHuHfImTWZGFaA%3D%3D&G=0&R=http%3A%2F%2Fbit.ly%2F2PvXHFr&I=20200227182121.00000e0260e0%40mail6-113-ussnn1&X=MHwxMDQ2NzU4OjVINTgwODk3ZWVkmGFIMDImNjhmZTMzMTs%3D&S=TJX6Sq-23esVgVK\\_we4SZF6OQNC5yRs6CstirZqqGXo](http://icm-tracking.meltwater.com/link.php?DynEngagement=true&H=btYXC68syxnIIvIaW0qBweEUHWPFWuN5EgnqFgPj0oiC10MI9zi1RliH599g1m8ZxjaQ8FJkR%2BZHPSTvF5MH90MCCqXwj%2BYOxzuqvpXGmHuHfImTWZGFaA%3D%3D&G=0&R=http%3A%2F%2Fbit.ly%2F2PvXHFr&I=20200227182121.00000e0260e0%40mail6-113-ussnn1&X=MHwxMDQ2NzU4OjVINTgwODk3ZWVkmGFIMDImNjhmZTMzMTs%3D&S=TJX6Sq-23esVgVK_we4SZF6OQNC5yRs6CstirZqqGXo))

at a press conference earlier today on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.

“With today’s introduction of the Environmental Justice for All Act, we are taking meaningful action toward ameliorating these wrongs and empowering the low-income communities, communities of color, and Tribal and indigenous communities disproportionately affected by environmental injustice to fiercely participate in the decision-making processes impacting their well-being.” –Rep. McEachin

Here is a bit of context and background on this historical bill. On June 26 2019, Chair Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Rep. A. Donald McEachin (D-Va.) hosted a ground-breaking, all-day environmental justice convening in the U.S. Capitol. The forum brought over 200 ‘national policymakers, environmental leaders and local advocates’ together to foster a dialogue about historical and future challenges of the Environmental Justice movement. From this convening, ‘Chair Grijalva and Rep. McEachin have launched the initiative to listen to all voices in the policymaking process, regardless of income or political status.’ With the feedback from environmental justice stakeholders, Chair Grijalva and Rep. McEachin drafted a community-led, community-driven comprehensive EJ bill that reflects the needs and perspectives of EJ communities.’ [The Statement of Principles for Environmental Justice Legislation](#)

(<https://naturalresources.house.gov/imo/media/doc/Statement%20of%20Principles%20for%20Environmental%20Justice%20Legislation.pdf>).

also serves as a great resource that provides a comprehensive framework that guided the work surrounding The Environmental Justice for All Act.

Black Millennials 4 Flint was honored to have an opportunity to provide public comment on the bill prior to the official introduction where

**100% of our recommendations were incorporated into the bill!**



Black Millennials 4 Flint Recommendations (http://www.blackmillennials4flint.org/)

*Black Millennials 4 Flint's mission is to empower communities to act and advocate against the crisis of lead exposure specifically in African American & Latino communities. This Bill is significant for our continued impact on communities as a grassroots environmental justice and civil rights organization. We have provided the following input to aid in the drafting of this bill.*

### **Rec 1: Use specific and simple language.**

Correct and clear language is critical within environmental justice movements. Historically, ambiguous language within Environmental Justice policy was intentional and harmful for the populations most at risk. Vague language opens the door for interpretation among stakeholders and often becomes the center of discussion. We recommend ensuring that all language is well defined throughout the entire bill. Two specific recommendations in regards to vulnerable communities include:

- Explicitly name and include seniors and the elderly community when applicable
- Ensure prioritizing women and children when needed

### **Rec 2: Ensure initiatives are equitable and community centered.**

All stakeholders involved must do their part to ensure and establish equitable environmental justice practices. Too often, vulnerable communities are not acknowledged and involved in decision making efforts. Furthermore, external stakeholders often lack intersectional approaches to environmental challenges. We must acknowledge the fact that race, class, gender and other social categories are always linked in the experiences of individuals and groups.

We recommended the following actions to ensure equitable practices:

- Include representation from actual residents, grassroots organizations, and other persons impacted by systemic racism and economic disenfranchisement in all phases of the movement
- Focus on the development and assessment of realistic and meaningful community-based impact (including the social determinants of health)
- Be cautious of limited narratives. We must think beyond "access to resources" to include access to skills & workforce development and jobs with livable wages that support a quality life
- Ensure that all legislation is included (ie.) Law and Rules
- Incorporate educational awareness and community outreach programs which should be led by community-based grassroots organizations with people of color

### **Rec 3: Establish stakeholder responsibilities and realistic timelines.**

Environmental challenges within this country can differ vastly by region. Although some common problems include toxicity concerns or aging infrastructure, that does not mean there is one solution for all similar challenges. The roles of local, state, and federal government may differ but all parties should be aligned. Similarly, all non-legislative bodies should be aligned and affected communities should approve of any practices. To eliminate any uncertainty, we recommend the following regarding management:

- Elaborate and clarify the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, by region if applicable
- Indicate a timeline expectation for addressing the issues by way of a long-term plan with clearly defined goals and outcomes

### **Our Call to Action**

1. Call and email your US Representative asking for their support of the Environmental Justice for All Act. You can search for your representative and their contact information here: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/current>

(<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/current>).

Use your own social media power and repost the following template (click on the image and add your own photo/selfie)



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H TODAY'S INTRODUCTION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOR ALL ACT, WE ARE TAKING MEANINGFUL ACTION TOWARD AMELIORATING

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**The founder of Black Millennials 4 Flint discusses what she's heard from the youngest – and often most vulnerable – voters.**

(<http://www.blackmillennials4flint.org/founder-ceo-president-latricea-adams-featured-nationally-by-bet-for-voter-registration-day-2019/>)  
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[\(http://www.blackmillennials4flint.org/black-millennials-4-flint-is-redefining-the-relationship-between-black-activism-and-faith-based-organizations/\)](http://www.blackmillennials4flint.org/black-millennials-4-flint-is-redefining-the-relationship-between-black-activism-and-faith-based-organizations/) July 21, 2019

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(<http://www.blackmillennials4flint.org/jaden-smith-brings-clean-water-to-flint/>) March 11, 2019

Jaden Smith Brings Clean Water to Flint! (<http://www.blackmillennials4flint.org/jaden-smith-brings-clean-water-to-flint/>)



[\(http://www.blackmillennials4flint.org/3rdannualflintweekendofservice/\)](http://www.blackmillennials4flint.org/3rdannualflintweekendofservice/) June 17, 2018

4th Annual Flint Weekend of Service 2019

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**(<http://www.blackmillennials4flint.org/using-social-media-to-advance-policy-the-story-of-black-millennials-4-flint/>)** February 3, 2020

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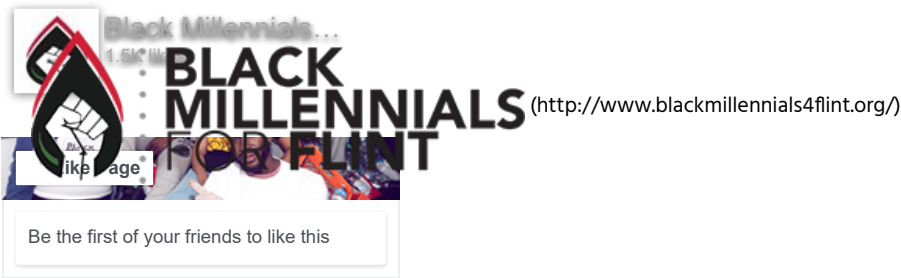
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