



February 14, 2022

The Honorable Raul Grijalva  
Chairman  
Natural Resources Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman  
Ranking Member  
Natural Resources Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Westerman:

Toxic Free North Carolina writes to offer our strong support for the Environmental Justice for All Act (H.R. 2021). We urge you and your fellow committee members to advance this important legislation quickly to begin remedying the long history of environmental racism in our nation, and the cumulative, disproportionate health impacts resulting from our institutional injustices.

Since 1986, Toxic Free NC has been advocating for safer and more just policies to protect environmental health in North Carolina. This legislation is aligned with our mission and values as we fight for a toxic-free future in which all individuals and communities across our state have sovereignty over their health and environment. Those who are living on the frontlines of toxic pollution — predominantly Black and Brown and low-income communities — also bear disproportionate impacts from racial injustice, an escalating climate crisis, and a public health emergency. Last week's Winston Weaver fertilizer plant fire in Winston Salem, North Carolina, is only the most recent example in a long history of environmental injustice in our state.

Many, many testimonies of the impacted people and communities, and academic research based on their stories have documented disproportionate chemical hazards and health impacts imposed on communities of color, low-income communities, and Native/Indigenous communities – currently and historically.

These affected peoples and communities have themselves developed and demanded solutions to these injustices and harms for some time. The extensive public input process that informed the Act's creation reflects this history and has produced legislation uniquely influenced by the people and communities it seeks to help.

We strongly support the Act's central elements, which are important steps toward remedying a long legacy of harm, and ensuring the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people - regardless of color, culture, national origin, or income - with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of health and environmental laws, regulations, and policies. These urgently needed policy improvements include:

- Requiring federal agencies to consider cumulative health impacts under the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act in making permitting decisions, and ensuring

that permits are only issued when there is a reasonable certainty of no harm to human health;

- Providing \$75 million in annual grants for research and program development to reduce health disparities; and improve public health in environmental justice communities;
- Strengthening the Civil Rights Act to permit private citizens and organizations facing discrimination to seek legal remedies;
- Creating an energy transition economic development assistance fund – paid for through new fees on oil, gas and coal companies – to support communities and workers as they transition away from greenhouse gas-dependent economies;
- Strengthening the National Environmental Policy Act to ensure that communities have a meaningful opportunity to engage in NEPA processes that will impact them.

The Environmental Justice for All Act is a long overdue correction to our nation's failed chemical management policies, and the cumulative hazards and disproportionate harms that have resulted for communities of color, low-income communities, and Native/Indigenous communities. We urge the Committee, and any other committees with jurisdiction over this legislation, to begin to correct these injustices and address this legacy of harm, by promptly passing the bill out of Committee and sending it on to the full House of Representatives.

Respectfully submitted by:

Connor Kippe  
Policy Advocate, Toxic Free North Carolina