



Environmental Justice Bill Shows How to Confront Climate, Public Health Crises Facing Frontline Communities

Mike Saccone // Feb 27, 2020 //

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The landmark Environmental Justice for All Act, introduced today by House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Congressman Donald McEachin (D-Va.) shows how the nation can transition to a clean-energy future while also investing in frontline communities. The National Wildlife Federation heralded the bill and urged lawmakers to follow its example of authentically engaging communities of color and historically disadvantaged Americans when crafting climate solutions.

“The public health crisis facing communities of color is being caused by the same pollution and polluters driving the global climate crisis. Our communities of color and lower-income communities are literally dying for a breath of fresh air while the planet nears the point of no return on climate. We have to address both crises before it’s too late,” said Mustafa Santiago Ali (/About-Us/Leadership/Mustafa-Santiago-Ali), the National Wildlife Federation's vice president for environmental justice, climate and community revitalization. “This critical legislation shows how we can address public health and economic problems facing frontline communities while also moving forward with a just and equitable transition from fossil fuels, where no one gets left behind. Together we can help our most vulnerable communities move from surviving to thriving.”

“Environmental injustice anywhere is a threat to environmental progress everywhere. For far too long, the conservation community has failed to stand with communities of color and historically disadvantaged communities facing acute pollution threats. We must do better. The escalating challenges we face demand that the pursuit of environmental justice is fully integrated into our work to restore our majestic natural resources and act on climate. This legislation rightly focuses on

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cleaning up the polluted air, water, and soils that continue to prevent frontline communities from thriving,” said Collin O’Mara (/About-Us/Leadership/Collin-OMara), president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation. “Chairman Grijalva and Congressman McEachin’s Environmental Justice for All Act is a critical first step to establishing environmental justice as a top national priority, as part of our march toward revitalizing communities, improving public health, recovering wildlife, and confronting the climate crisis.”

Ali recently testified before the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee (<https://energycommerce.house.gov/committee-activity/hearings/hearing-on-building-a-100-percent-clean-economy-the-challenges-facing>) on the challenges facing frontline communities and the principles that should guide the transition to a “100 percent clean economy.” O’Mara also has been a leading voice for ensuring climate solutions invest in working-class families (<https://www.post-gazette.com/opinion/Op-Ed/2019/05/08/Here-s-how-to-spend-2-trillion-on-improving-our-infrastructure/stories/201905080020>) and do not treat vulnerable communities as an “afterthought.” (<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2019/03/21/fight-climate-change-protect-fossil-fuel-states-murkowski-manchin-column/3212591002/>)

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PO Box 1583, Merrifield, VA 22116-1583

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