

ADMINISTRATIVE WATCH

ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL, ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES



EPA Releases New Environmental Justice Action Agenda

On October 27, 2016, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released the *Environmental Justice 2020 Action Agenda* (EJ 2020), which outlines the EPA's environmental justice strategic plan for 2016 to 2020. This most recent publication builds off the EPA's previous environmental justice strategic plan for 2010 to 2014 (EJ 2014), which developed basic guidance and tools for integrating environmental justice into EPA's programs and policies. EJ 2020 is the agency's latest effort to focus on environmental and public health issues confronting the country's minority, low-income, tribal, and indigenous populations.

EPA defines "environmental justice" as "the fair and meaningful treatment of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies." The vision of EJ 2020 is to integrate environmental justice into the agency's actions, cultivate partnerships to improve on-the-ground results, and create a path of achieving better environmental outcomes and reducing disparities in overburdened communities.

EJ 2020 has three primary goals. The first goal of EJ 2020 is to deepen environmental justice practices within EPA programs to improve the health and environment of overburdened communities. This will involve further integrating environmental justice into EPA's rulemaking, permitting, compliance and enforcement, and scientific efforts. EJ 2020's second goal is to work with partners to expand its positive impact within overburdened communities. This includes working with state and local governments, collaborating with federal agencies, deploying community-based resources, and partnering with tribes and indigenous peoples. The third goal of EJ 2020 is to demonstrate progress on significant national environmental justice challenges. EPA has identified lead disparities, drinking water, air quality, and hazardous waste sites as the four major national environmental justice challenges to be addressed by EJ 2020.

EPA intends EJ 2020 to be an action document, providing the basis to advance environmental justice for the next five years. EPA will produce annual reports on its EJ 2020 progress starting at the end of 2017.

Babst Calland attorneys will be monitoring EPA's implementation of EJ 2020 and its ongoing environmental justice efforts. If you have any questions regarding EJ 2020 or its potential impact on EPA actions, please contact Angela M. Kilbert at (412) 394-6498 or akilbert@babstcalland.com, Lindsay P. Howard at (412) 394-5444 or lhoward@babstcalland.com, or any of our other environmental attorneys.

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