

State of New Jersey Environmental Justice Advisory Council 2025 Work Plan

The projects listed below highlight the priority issues that New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP or DEP) Environmental Justice Advisory Council (EJAC) and its working groups (WG) plan to focus on during 2025. However, EJAC remains available to provide feedback and advice on issues, policies, and decision points as requested by DEP and other state agencies through the Environmental Justice Interagency Council (EJIC).

Air

The Air Working Group is committed to addressing the unhealthy, cumulative, and disproportionate air pollution exposures faced by minority and low-income communities in New Jersey.

Community Air Monitoring

Continue implementation of a statewide project to increase the ability of overburdened communities (OBCs) to request community air monitoring from their local transportation management associations (TMAs). The North Jersey Transportation Authority is using Federal Transportation Block Grant funds to enable TMAs to provide air monitoring at the request of municipalities, community groups or residents, similar to their current provision of traffic speed studies. EJAC will continue to advise the development of the program. NJ's eight TMAs will be trained by DEP in the use of low-cost, handheld air monitors in January and two TMAs will implement a pilot project in the following months. After incorporating lessons learned from the pilot project, EJAC will publicize the service to OBCs and also advise DEP in the development of a suite of resources for interested TMAs and OBCs including a recording of the initial DEP training and a community air monitoring factsheet to be included in NJDEP Office of Environmental Justice's (OEJ) resource library.

- Audience: Community groups, municipalities; OBCs prioritized
- Timeline: Training - Jan 2025; Pilot - Quarter 1 2025; Full rollout - starting mid-2025
- Lead volunteer: Jeffrey Perlman
- DEP Contact: Luis Lim, Bureau of Air Monitoring

Statewide Community Air Monitoring Dashboard

Discuss the potential for expanding Groundwork Elizabeth's Community Air Monitoring dashboard, [Breathe Elizabeth](#), into a statewide platform to host data from various community air monitoring projects around the state. Such a portal will continue to have a public component to display data in a way that is accessible and meaningful for community members. It should also have a component for researchers and project managers to share data and collaborate. Such a portal should be particularly helpful for the TMAs to display data from their community air monitoring projects as well as for multiple academic and DEP supported projects around the state, such as in Elizabeth, Newark, and Trenton. DEP will additionally have data from an EPA funded Urban Heat Island study in multiple OBCs around the state. A centralized resource can help everyone involved see a more holistic picture of air quality in NJ and build on the findings of various projects and studies around the state.

- Audience: General public, community air monitoring researchers and project managers
- Timeline: 2025

- Lead volunteer: Jackie Park Albaum
- DEP Contact: Nadia Akbar, Office of Environmental Justice

Addressing Ongoing Air Quality Concerns

The Air Working Group will continue discussions to better understand and brainstorm potential solutions for issues related to air quality that have been of ongoing concern to EJ communities. OEJ may facilitate presentations from DEP programs and other state or local entities to help EJAC understand existing regulations and processes related to the following issues:

- Scrap Yards: Scrap metal yards are not currently regulated under solid waste regulations. EJAC will discuss and understand potential solutions for this regulatory gap.
- Cumulative Impacts of Air Emissions: Andy Kricun will periodically update the group about National Environmental Justice Advisory Council discussions to build approaches for studying the cumulative impacts of air emissions. One suggestion has been to develop an air equivalent for a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for a given geographic area.
- Audience: Andy Kricun and Micheal Morgan
- Timeline: 2025

Water

The Water Working Group is committed to making certain that everyone in the State of New Jersey, regardless of where they live or what they look like, has safe and affordable drinking water and access to clean waterways.

Adopt A Catch Basin Guide

Create a guide for municipalities on how to conduct an Adopt-a-Catch basin program. Some municipalities in New Jersey have created “Adopt a Catch Basin” Programs, including Newark, Jersey City, Westfield, and West Milford. These programs help to alleviate street flooding by preventing litter and other debris from clogging catch basins and improve water quality by preventing litter from polluting waterways during heavy precipitation.

- Audience: NJ Municipalities
- Timeline: 2025

Lead Service Line Notification Letters

Review the Known and Unknown Lead Service Line Notification Templates written by the Division of Water Supply and Geoscience. These templates are used by water providers to notify residents of lead and unknown service lines in accordance with EPA’s Lead and Copper Rule Revisions. Recommend revisions to the templates to improve readability and ensure the completeness of information.

- Audience: DEP Water Resources Management and NJ Residents Potentially Impacted by Lead
- Timeline: 2025
- DEP Contact: Brandon Carreno and Patricia Ingelido, Office of Water Quality and Geoscience

Water Quality Awareness and Education

Increase OBCs' awareness of DEP's programming, policies, and upcoming initiatives to improve water quality in New Jersey by creating and promoting educational content, including: .

- Factsheets in collaboration with the EEC Working Group.
- Improved Lead and PFAS guidance.
- Improved fish advisory signage in collaboration with the Land Working Group.

Land

The Land Working Group is committed to addressing land use decisions and their effects on overburdened communities in New Jersey

Urban and Community Forestry

Assist in outreach to OBCs that are not currently participating in the NJ Urban and Community Forestry Accreditation program which provides municipalities with access to state grants for the active planning and management of trees and forests in their communities. Help identify barriers to capacity for sustaining local proactive tree and forest management programs and provide recommendations to the NJ Urban and Community Forestry Program to improve programming to address identified barriers.

- Audience: Municipalities with overburdened communities who are eligible to participate in the Urban and Community Forestry Accreditation program
- Timeline: Q1 2025
- Lead volunteer: Jackie Park Albaum or Tyrese Gould Jacinto
- DEP Contact: Todd Wyckoff, Bureau of Forest Management

Brownfield Revitalization

Work with the Office of Brownfield & Community Revitalization (OBCR) and the Contaminated Site Remediation & Redevelopment Program (CSRR) to address items in EJAC's brownfield redevelopment recommendation letter including Brownfield Development Area (BDA) designations, BDA Steering Committee requirements, and brownfield information dissemination. Communicate strategies to facilitate creative and adaptive uses for brownfields to increase the public health and quality of life in EJ communities. Continue to amplify existing guidance on brownfield clean up and adaptation.

- Audience: Overburdened community members with presence of brownfield properties
- Timeline: 2025
- Lead volunteer: Jackie Park Albaum or Tyrese Gould Jacinto
- DEP Contact: Frank McLaughlin, Office of Brownfield and Community Revitalization

Fish Advisory Signage

Collaborate with the DEP's Division of Science & Research (DSR) and other relevant DEP programs to identify gaps in fish advisory communication. Improve language on existing fish advisory signage and distribution material. Develop a pilot program to test effectiveness of fish advisory communication in targeted OBC areas that rely heavily on subsistence fishing.

- Audience: Overburdened communities near popular bodies of water for recreational and subsistence fishing
- Timeline: 2025

- Lead volunteer: Jackie Park Albaum (Elizabeth as pilot municipality) or Tyrese Gould Jacinto (Bridgeton as pilot municipality)
- DEP Contact: Dan Millemann, Division of Science and Research

Environmental Education & Communication (EEC)

The Environmental Education and Communication working group assists the DEP and state departments and agencies with increasing outreach to and engagement with EJ communities.

Annual Environmental Seminar Series for EJ Communities

Work with DEP to plan for a series of environmental seminars for EJ advocates, residents, and community-based organizations to learn how to navigate DEP systems and processes. Topics could include education on nuisance odors at polluting facilities and DEP's enforcement responsibilities

- Audience: Community organizations and EJ advocates representing OBCs
- Timeline:
 - March – Launch Odors 101 Seminar
 - May – Seminar 2
 - September – Seminar 3
 - December – Seminar 4
 - Lead volunteer: Chloe Desir

NJDEP Organizational Chart for Environmental Justice Communities

Create a comprehensive organizational chart of the NJDEP, outlining the various offices within the department and detailing their roles and responsibilities. The chart will serve as a resource for residents with environmental questions or concerns, helping them identify the appropriate contacts within NJDEP. Additionally, it will clarify the department's scope of authority and functions, empowering communities to better understand and navigate NJDEP processes.

- Audience: New Jersey residents, especially those in Overburdened Communities (OBCs), and environmental justice advocates
- Timeline: May

Emergency Communications

- Understand and propose improvements to the public communication protocols following emergency incidents, primarily those that have air quality impacts to OBCs, such as fires at industrial facilities.
- Audience: New Jersey residents, especially those in Overburdened Communities (OBCs), and environmental justice advocates
- Timeline: TBD