



NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Lisa P. Jackson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW (MC1101A)
Washington, D.C. 20460

November 16, 2011

Dear Administrator Jackson:

The National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) applauds the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA or Agency) leadership in supporting local, collaborative solutions to achieving environmental health and quality. We urge the Agency's full support and funding of the Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) program to assist our nation's communities in achieving environmental health and quality through local, collaborative problem-solving.

As you know, the NEJAC is a federally chartered, independent advisory committee that provides advice and recommendations to the EPA about broad, crosscutting issues related to environmental justice. The NEJAC's membership includes nationally recognized community-based organizations, leadership from business and industry, academic scholars, and senior State and tribal representatives, among others. In April 2010, we submitted the unanimous recommendation that the EPA expand the CARE program. Recent developments, including the possible defunding of the program in the Fiscal Year 2012 Budget, causes us to unanimously reaffirm and amplify that recommendation for full and expanded support.

CARE achieves the goals of environmental health and quality through local-level, collaborative problem-solving. Since 2005, the CARE program has improved conditions in more than 100 communities, in over 40 states, tribal communities and U.S. territories. Please see the attached map identifying the location of CARE grant communities.

In its recent report on the CARE program, the Congressionally-chartered National Academy of Public Administration described the results achieved by CARE, as follows:

"CARE has already established a functioning, viable partnership that includes federal, regional, county, tribal, local, and neighborhood partners that engage and take action around the promise of improving environmental conditions and health in local communities".¹

CARE is a popular and valued program. Businesses and business groups, as well as community organizations, state and local governments, and others, have praised CARE as a productive program that improves conditions for communities, including opportunities for local businesses.

¹ National Academy of Public Administration. Putting Community First: A Promising Approach to Federal Collaboration for Environmental Improvement – An Evaluation of the Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) Demonstration Project, May 2009

As one measure of its success and the exceptional need that it fills, requests for funding dramatically outstrip available resources. In the 2010 competition, 189 eligible proposals were received and only 14 two-year projects were funded. Continued and expanded support of CARE is needed.

Recommendations:

1. In our April, 2010 letter, **NEJAC recommended that EPA increase the CARE Program's funding** so that more communities could benefit from it. We strongly reiterate that advice.
2. **NEJAC further urges that EPA actively seek the involvement of the other agencies in funding and otherwise supporting CARE and similar projects**, including those agencies participating in the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (EJ IWG).
3. **NEJAC respectfully requests that, through whatever means possible, the Agency enhance and continue to support the CARE program as an example of a program that achieves results and fosters collaborative problem-solving for communities impacted by environmental problems.**

Again, we applaud your leadership in protecting our nation's most vulnerable communities and bringing together stakeholders to achieve the goals of environmental justice and environmental health for all.

Respectfully,



Elizabeth C. Yeampierre
Chair

Cc: NEJAC Members
Cynthia M. Giles, Assistant Administrator, Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
Lisa Garcia, Senior Advisor to the Administrator/Associate Assistant Administrator for
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Mathy Stanislaus, Assistant Administrator, Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response
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Steve Owens, Assistant Administration, Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances
Victoria Robinson, NEJAC DFO
Marva King, CARE Program Co-Chair
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CARE COMMUNITIES 2005-2011

