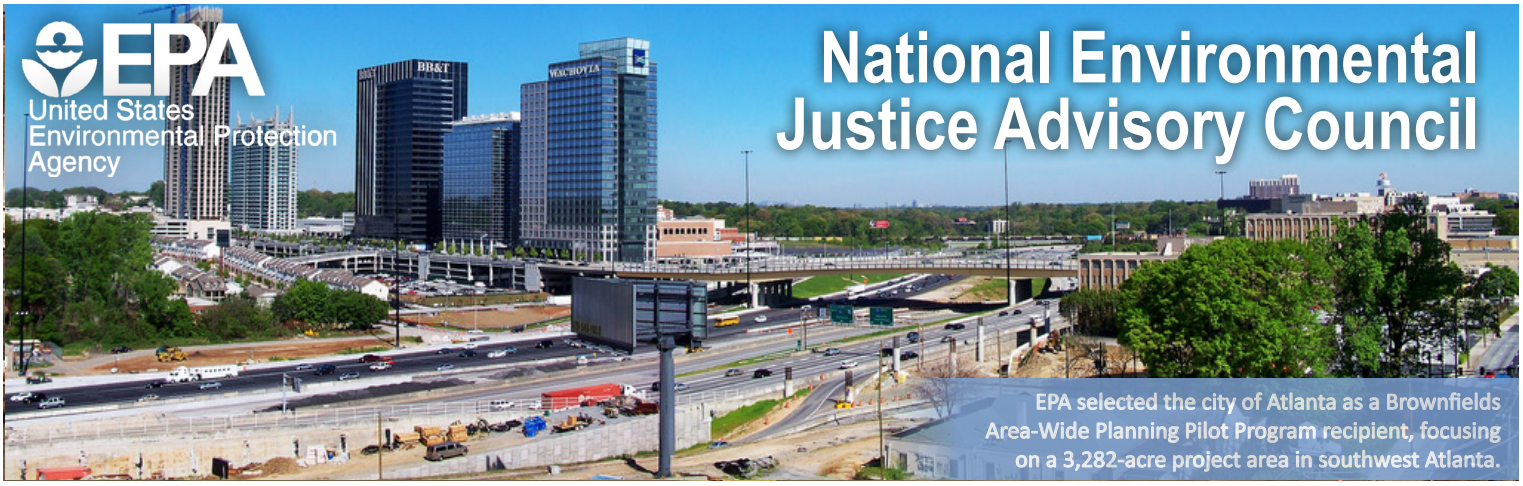



# National Environmental Justice Advisory Council

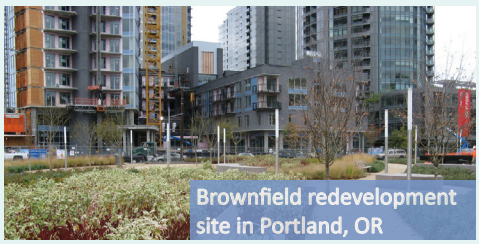
EPA selected the city of Atlanta as a Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilot Program recipient, focusing on a 3,282-acre project area in southwest Atlanta.

## NEJAC Brownfields Recommendations

In 1995, the EPA and NEJAC co-sponsored a series of dialogues across the country that provided an opportunity for environmental justice advocates and residents of impacted communities to provide input on revitalization of abandoned properties called "Brownfields."

The NEJAC formulated an extensive set of advice and recommendations for EPA to consider. A consistent theme throughout the recommendations was the importance of seeking and including communities in decisions and planning. Taking these recommendations into consideration, EPA took a number of actions to improve its Brownfields initiative.

For example, EPA agreed to create a Brownfields Job Training Grants Program targeted toward residents living in close proximity to Brownfield sites. EPA initiated Brownfields pilots with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to focus on an assessment of health risks associated with revitalizing Brownfields sites. The NEJAC recommendations also led to the creation of the EPA National Brownfields Conference and the Brownfields Showcase Communities.



Brownfield redevelopment site in Portland, OR

## About the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council

In 1993, EPA established the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) in order to obtain independent, consensus advice and recommendations from a broad spectrum of stakeholders involved in environmental justice. As a federal advisory committee, the NEJAC was chartered to provide the Administrator with advice and recommendations on integrating environmental justice considerations into the agency's programs, policies, and day-to-day activities.

The NEJAC consists of representatives of community-based groups, business and industry, academic and educational institutions, state and local governments, tribal governments and indigenous organizations, and non-governmental and environmental groups. The council meets publicly approximately two times a year and provides a forum for discussions about integrating environmental justice into EPA priorities and initiatives.

The issues around environmental justice are often complex and involve strongly divergent viewpoints. The NEJAC provides an environment for all parties to express their viewpoints and to formulate independent, clear and timely consensus advice and recommendations to EPA about major public policy issues.

## Incorporating the Voice of Stakeholders in Agency Decisions

EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson made **expanding the conversation on environmentalism and working for environmental justice** one of EPA's top priorities. The Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) supports the agency's environmental justice strategy, Plan EJ 2014, through organizing and coordinating the work of the NEJAC.

By meeting with the public and consolidating advice from members who represent a broad range of viewpoints, the NEJAC provides recommendations to EPA that incorporate communities' voices and help the government to better integrate environmental justice into its programs, policies, and activities.

*Did You Know?*

September 30th, 2013 will mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council.

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Expanding the Conversation

working for environmental justice

NEJAC FACTS

## NEJAC Recommendations

The NEJAC has developed advice and provided recommendations to the agency for creative and collaborative strategies to better address the human health and environmental protection needs of disadvantaged and underserved communities. Below are descriptions of a few major recommendations that have been proposed:

- **Permitting**: At the July 2010 NEJAC meeting, the EPA requested that the council provide advice on how to enhance environmental justice throughout its permitting programs. Following up on its initial recommendations in 2000 about incorporating environmental justice concerns into the permitting process, the council advised EPA on the types of permits the agency should work on. It also identified the types of permits issued pursuant to federal environmental laws that are best suited for addressing the issue of cumulative impacts.

The report also urged EPA to create community involvement plans.

- **School Air Toxics Monitoring**: In 2009, the EPA launched an initiative to investigate air pollutant levels and remediate any potentially high exposure risks posed to schools. To ensure that EPA's communication materials about the effort are accessible to environmental justice communities, the NEJAC advised the agency on how it could most effectively promote strategies that would improve EPA's long-term school and community outreach approaches for school monitoring and future initiatives.

- **Goods Movement and Air Quality**: In 2009, EPA asked the NEJAC to identify the most significant community environmental and/or public health concerns related to air pollution from goods movement activities. The NEJAC report addressed how the Agency could most effectively promote strategies to identify, mitigate, and prevent the disproportionate burden of air pollution impacts on communities from the movement of goods through ports and along highways. The recommendations informed EPA's planning process and influenced EPA's 2010-12 Ports Air Quality Plan.

- **Consultation with Tribal Governments and Indigenous Communities**: In a 2000 report, the NEJAC raised concerns about the lack of effective consultation and collaboration between Federal agencies and the Native American tribal governments and outlined methods of effective consultation. In 2004, NEJAC issued an additional report to guide EPA on working with federally-recognized tribes to incorporate meaningful involvement and fair treatment into their federally-authorized tribal environmental regulatory programs.

Meeting in 2011 of the National Tribal Operations Council

Visit epa.gov/environmentaljustice/nejac/recommendations.html to view the full list of recommendations, and epa.gov/environmentaljustice/nejac/current-charges.html to view the NEJAC's current activities.

## How to Participate

The NEJAC is required to hold open meetings at which members of the public can submit comments, questions, and suggestions for the council to consider as it develops advice for EPA. Each meeting includes a minimum of two hours where the public can make comments.

Public comments may also be provided during public teleconference call meetings. All comments are recorded and maintained as part of the public record of each meeting. To find future meeting dates or obtain meeting minutes, visit epa.gov/environmentaljustice/nejac/meetings.html

## How to Become a Member

The NEJAC is made up of approximately 26 members. The membership rotates to provide the widest participation possible by the greatest number of stakeholders. Organizations or members of the public may nominate qualified persons to be considered for appointment to serve on the NEJAC or one of its subgroups. Individuals may also self-nominate. Nomination packages must include:

- Contact information
- Statement of interest
- Brief bio
- Current resume
- Letter[s] of Recommendation

A list of current members and their biographies, as well as a sample nomination form are available at epa.gov/environmentaljustice/nejac

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## For More Information

To find out more about the NEJAC, call 202-564-2515, or http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/nejac/index.html

## Connect with EPA