

The background of the entire page is a light gray gradient. Scattered across this background are numerous water droplets of various sizes. Some are large and prominent, while others are small and subtle. The droplets have a realistic, three-dimensional appearance with highlights and shadows, suggesting they are on a smooth surface.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MATTERS

LWV-VA-ENVIRONMENT ISSUE GROUP

2021

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?

ACCORDING TO THE USEPA, “**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE** IS THE FAIR TREATMENT AND MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT OF ALL PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, OR INCOME, WITH RESPECT TO THE **DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, AND ENFORCEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS, REGULATION, AND POLICES.**”

THIS GOAL WILL BE ACHIEVED WHEN EVERYONE ENJOYS:

- THE SAME DEGREE OF PROTECTION FROM ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH HAZARDS, AND
- EQUAL ACCESS TO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS TO HAVE A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO LIVE, LEARN, AND WORK.

WHAT IS DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION?

ACCORDING TO THE LWV-US:

- “**DIVERSITY** REFERS TO POPULATION GROUPS THAT HAVE BEEN HISTORICALLY UNDERREPRESENTED IN SOCIALLY, POLITICALLY, OR ECONOMICALLY POWERFUL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS.
- **EQUITY** IS AN APPROACH BASED IN FAIRNESS TO ENSURING EVERYONE IS GIVEN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY; THIS MEANS THAT RESOURCES MAY BE DIVIDED AND SHARED UNEQUALLY TO MAKE SURE THAT EACH PERSON HAS A FAIR CHANCE TO SUCCEED.
- **INCLUSION** REFERS TO THE DEGREE TO WHICH DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS ARE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES WITHIN AN ORGANIZATION OR GROUP”.

AREN'T EJ AND DEI THE SAME THING?

- NO, NOT REALLY.
- BOTH RECOGNIZE THAT HISTORICALLY, BECAUSE OF RACIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES, PEOPLE OF COLOR AND THE IMPOVERISHED HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO THE MOST ENVIRONMENTAL HARM.
- DEI STRIVES TO ENSURE THAT ALL PEOPLE HAVE A PLACE AT THE TABLE **WITHIN OUR ORGANIZATION** AT THE FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL LEAGUES.
- EJ STRIVES TO ENSURE THAT ALL PEOPLE HAVE A PLACE AT THE TABLE **WITHIN ALL ORGANIZATIONS** AS **ENVIRONMENTAL DECISIONS** ARE BEING MADE AT THE FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL LEVELS.

WHY DOES ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MATTER FEDERALLY?

- THE **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOR ALL ACT** (H.R. 5986) WAS INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE ON 27 FEBRUARY 2020 WHEN IT WAS **REFERRED TO COMMITTEE AND DIED WITH THE SEATING OF THE 117TH CONGRESS.**
- THE SENATE INTRODUCED S. 4401 ON 03 AUGUST 2020 AND **REFERRED IT TO COMMITTEE WHERE IT ALSO DIED.** THE BILL WAS **REINTRODUCED AS S. 872** ON 18 MARCH 2021 AND **REFERRED TO COMMITTEE.**
- ON 9 APRIL 2021 THE WHITE HOUSE SUBMITTED ITS REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022 DISCRETIONARY FUNDING TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS THAT:

REQUESTS MORE THAN \$1.4 BILLION TO “SUPPORT MARGINALIZED AND OVERBURDENED COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE NATION” INCLUDING ESTABLISHING A \$936-MILLION “ACCELERATING ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE INITIATIVE” AT THE USEPA.

WHY DOES ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MATTER IN VIRGINIA?

- THE **VIRGINIA ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ACT (VEJA)** IS CODIFIED IN TITLE 2.2, CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE 12 BASIC POLICY OF SUPPORT FOR EJ.

*BUDGET AMENDMENT ITEM 372#1C ESTABLISHED THE **INTERAGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE WORKING GROUP** TO ENSURE MEANINGFUL EJ ENGAGEMENT WITH IMPACTED COMMUNITIES.*

- THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (VDEQ) COMPLETED AN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STUDY IN THE FALL OF 2020 THAT RECOMMENDED IMPROVING COMMUNITY RELATIONS, ENGAGEMENT, AND CAPACITY.
- ON 21 APRIL 2021, VDEQ ANNOUNCED THE CREATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE OFFICE.

WHY DOES ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MATTER TO THE LWV-VA?

2019 NATURAL RESOURCES POSITIONS FOR ACTION:

- **AIR QUALITY** – ACHIEVING AND MAINTAINING ACCEPTABLE AIR QUALITY.
- **HYDRAULIC FRACTURING** – SUPPORTING A MORATORIUM.
- **LAND USE** – CREATING LONG-RANGE COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLANS.
- **WATER SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION** – PROTECTING WATER SUPPLIES.
- **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE** - ????????????

WHY IS LWV-VA SUPPORT NEEDED?

- WHILE NOT A NEW CONCEPT, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IS BECOMING A PRIORITY AT ALL LEVELS: FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL.
- IN VIRGINIA, THE VEJA IS NOT IDEAL. IMPLEMENTATION IS EVOLVING AND REQUIRES TRANSPARENCY. THERE IS OPPORTUNITY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT BUT ALSO ENVIRONMENTAL HARM.
- COLLECTIVE MEMORY IS SHORT. PROMISES MADE ARE NOT PROMISES KEPT UNLESS THERE IS A CONSISTENT VOICE STANDING WITH THE PEOPLE MOST IMPACTED BY ENVIRONMENTAL HARM AND LEAST ABLE TO AFFECT CHANGE.
- LWV-VA VOICES MUST BE HEARD. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT LEAGUE POSITIONS ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IS A PRIORITY AT ALL LEVELS.

WE ENVISION A DEMOCRACY WHERE EVERY PERSON HAS THE DESIRE, THE RIGHT, THE KNOWLEDGE AND THE CONFIDENCE TO PARTICIPATE. ~LWV-VA

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