

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2695

To establish an Office of Environmental Justice in the Environmental Protection Agency and to authorize an environmental justice small grants program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 25, 2017

Ms. JAYAPAL (for herself, Mr. McEACHIN, and Ms. BARRAGÁN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish an Office of Environmental Justice in the Environmental Protection Agency and to authorize an environmental justice small grants program, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Environmental Justice
5 Small Grants Program Act of 2017”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Despite Executive Order 12898 (relating to
4 “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice
5 in Minority Populations and Low-Income Popu-
6 lations”), communities of color, low income commu-
7 nities, people with limited English proficiency, indig-
8 enous peoples, and people living with disabilities ex-
9 perience the impacts of climate change at a dis-
10 proportionate rate.

11 (2) The Environmental Protection Agency
12 formed the Environmental Justice Small Grants
13 Program to support and empower frontline commu-
14 nities that are working on solutions to the dispropor-
15 tionate impacts of climate change.

16 (3) Between 2000 and 2015, the Environmental
17 Protection Agency, through the Environmental Jus-
18 tice Small Grants Program, awarded more than 630
19 small grants to assist with the cost of conducting re-
20 search and education, as well as developing commu-
21 nity-based solutions.

22 **SEC. 3. OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE.**

23 There is established in the Environmental Protection
24 Agency an Office of Environmental Justice, which shall
25 be headed by a Director.

1 **SEC. 4. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SMALL GRANTS PRO-**
2 **GRAM.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Office of En-
4 vironmental Justice shall establish an environmental jus-
5 tice grant program to make grants to eligible entities in
6 accordance with this section.

7 (b) GRANTS.—The Director may make a grant under
8 this section, in an amount not to exceed \$50,000, to an
9 eligible entity to carry out an environmental justice
10 project.

11 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

12 (1) AFFECTED COMMUNITY.—The term “af-
13 fected community” means a community that—

14 (A) may be disproportionately affected by
15 environmental harms and risks; and

16 (B) is affected by a local environmental or
17 public health issue that is identified in an appli-
18 cation for a grant under this section.

19 (2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
20 ty” means—

21 (A) an entity that—

22 (i) is an organization (including an
23 environmental justice network, a faith-
24 based organization, and an organization af-
25 filiated with a religious institution)—

1 (I) described in section 501(c)(3)
2 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986
3 and exempt from taxation under sec-
4 tion 501(a) of such Code; or

5 (II) recognized as a nonprofit or-
6 ganization by the government of the
7 State, territory, commonwealth, or
8 federally recognized Tribe with juris-
9 diction over the area in which it is lo-
10 cated;

11 (ii) demonstrates that it has worked
12 directly with the affected community, as
13 determined by the Director; and

14 (iii) is located in the State, territory,
15 or commonwealth, or area over which a
16 federally recognized Tribe has jurisdiction,
17 in which the proposed environmental jus-
18 tice project is located;

19 (B) a federally recognized Tribal govern-
20 ment with jurisdiction over the area in which
21 the proposed environmental justice project is lo-
22 cated; or

23 (C) a Tribal organization that dem-
24 onstrates that it has worked directly with the

1 affected community, as determined by the Ad-
2 ministrator.

3 (3) ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PROJECT.—The
4 term “environmental justice project” means a
5 project consisting of activities designed to empower
6 and educate an affected community to—

7 (A) understand environmental and public
8 health issues; and

9 (B) identify ways to address those issues
10 at the local level.

11 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
12 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
13 \$16,000,000 for each fiscal year.

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