



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

September 30, 2022

Ms. Peggy Shepard
Chair, White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Mr. Richard Moore
Chair, White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Dear Ms. Shepard and Mr. Moore,

On behalf of the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), I offer my continued gratitude to you and the members of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council (WHEJAC) for your extensive advice and recommendations. Achieving environmental justice is a top priority for the Biden-Harris Administration, and your recommendations are critical to ensuring we advance policies that result in meaningful, lasting change for communities.

Thank you for the recommendations you submitted in August 2022 on the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, implementation of the Justice40 Initiative, and on air pollution emissions limits for incinerators. In addition to reviewing them at CEQ, I have shared the recommendation related to the work of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with our EPA colleagues. Your recommendations have also been shared with the White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council (IAC), whose members are actively reviewing your advice on these key initiatives. Together, CEQ and the IAC will provide a comprehensive response to the issues and recommendations you shared.

As we continue to review and consider your recommendations, I wanted to provide a few timely updates:

The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool

CEQ has been working diligently to address the robust feedback received on the beta version of Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, which was released in February 2022. CEQ is finalizing updates to the tool with the goal of releasing version 1.0 in the coming weeks. To support government-wide use of version 1.0 of the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, CEQ will provide written guidance to agencies on how to use the tool, along with an updated technical support document describing the tool's methodology and datasets. CEQ will keep the WHEJAC updated on the development and release of version 1.0 of the tool. Moving forward, the tool will be updated and refined based on the availability of new datasets and research, and input from the public. The WHEJAC's August recommendations will inform the ongoing development of the tool as we work to ensure it increasingly reflects the lived realities of communities across our country.

The Justice40 Initiative

Over the last several months, the Biden-Harris Administration has made public, on an ongoing basis, an [initial list](#) of Justice40 programs. I am proud to say that hundreds of programs across the Federal government are included in the Justice40 Initiative. Releasing the list of agency programs included in the Justice40 Initiative is an important step towards meeting our transparency and accountability goals, and ensuring that information about the Justice40 Initiative is publicly accessible. Under the [Justice40 Interim Guidance](#), all Justice40 programs are required to engage in stakeholder consultation and ensure that community stakeholders are meaningfully involved in determining a program's benefits. Knowing the list

of Justice40 programs is critical to that process. The list of Justice40 programs is located at whitehouse.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40, and will be updated periodically.

The Justice40 Initiative has the potential to deliver tangible, positive benefits to communities. Agencies are actively changing their programs to meet the Initiative's goal, including existing and new programs created by the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act. For example, in [March 2022](#), as part of its work to [advance the Justice40 Initiative](#), the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) first-of-its-kind Communities Local Energy Action Program (Communities LEAP) Pilot announced that 24 inaugural communities will receive \$16 million in technical assistance. Communities LEAP is specifically open to low-income, energy-burdened communities that are experiencing either direct environmental justice impacts or direct economic impacts that are resulting from a shift away from historical reliance on fossil fuels. Building on this work, in [September 2022](#), DOE hosted its first-ever Justice Week. In line with the WHEJAC's August 2022 recommendations on public engagement, two days of DOE's Justice Week programming were open to the public and translated into Spanish. This is just one example of the work occurring across the Federal government, and the WHEJAC's August 2022 recommendations on implementation of the Justice40 Initiative will influence and impact our work moving forward.

To ensure that the WHEJAC and members of the public remain up to date on our Justice40 work, the Federal government has organized a series of formal and informal engagements and educational opportunities, including the White House's [monthly Justice40 stakeholder engagement series](#), Federal agency-led webinars on the Justice40 Initiative, and related programming, such as the EPA's [grants webinars](#). These opportunities provide critical ways for the Administration to engage directly with you and other key stakeholders.

The Biden-Harris Administration has made a historic commitment to communities with environmental justice concerns. I am proud of the progress we have made and of the staff across the Federal Government championing this work. At the same time, we have a lot more to do to fulfill the Administration's promise.

Over the past year and half, the recommendations provided by the WHEJAC have directly contributed to the Federal Government's progress toward confronting and addressing environmental injustices and inequities. I look forward to our continued partnership as we work to advance a whole-of-government approach to environmental justice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda Mallory". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brenda Mallory
Chair, White House Council on Environmental Quality