

Section A: Cover Page

Environmental Justice Task Force

Members:

Robin Collin, Chair (Salem) – Willamette University
Khalid Wahab, Vice-Chair (Portland) – The Commission on Asian Affairs
Sybil Ackerman (Portland) – Executive Director of Lazar Foundation
Will Collin (Salem) – Willamette University
Ben Duncan (Portland) – Multnomah County Health Department
Terry Witt (Salem) – Oregonians for Food and Shelter
Jack Johnson (Cove) – Resident of Union County
Jonathon Ostar (Portland) – Organizing People-Activating Leaders
Julie Samples (Hillsboro) – Oregon Law Center Farmworker Program
Mariahm Stephenson (Beaverton) – The Commission on Black Affairs
Marcela Mendoza (Portland) – The Commission on Hispanic Affairs
Leroy Jackson (Klamath Falls) – The Commission on Indian Services

Milestone (EPA funding, formation of task force, 2 annual reports, community event, your voice document, field burning, CRC HILP work, etc)

The Oregon Governor’s Environmental Justice Task Force since being statutorily established in 2007 has been engaged with the Oregon Natural Resource Agencies to incorporate Environmental Justice into the agencies’ work and to increase Oregon citizen access to decision-making through a public engagement process meant to raise the voice of those communities most impacted by Environmental Justice issues. Of many significant milestones, including unprecedented cooperation and relationship building between the task force and agency representatives, the creation of “Your Voice for Environmental Justice” outlining citizens’ rights to be heard, a community event to introduce the Task Force to the public, and the task force partnering with a community organization to acquire funding to map Environmental Justice Communities throughout the state, perhaps the most significant milestones have been the two annual reports and accomplishments of the agencies in identifying and incorporating EJ into their institutional culture.

Contact:

Robin/Khalid/Will/Ben?

Executive Summary

Environmental justice is equal protection from environmental and health hazards, and meaningful public participation in decisions that affect the environment in which people live, work, learn, practice spirituality and play. “Environmental justice communities” include minority and low-income communities, tribal communities, and other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes.

The Task Force has completed two annual reports, which each highlight the increase in understanding of Natural Resource Agencies of Environmental Justice issues and communities and has allowed agencies, through leadership by agency appointed Citizen Advocates to the task force, to incorporate EJ principles into their agency culture. The Department of Environmental Quality in particular has been involved in several efforts that should be highlights of the accomplishments of this partnership:

1. Launched new internal and external webpages: Internal webpage includes a new electronic reporting form that employees can use to report their work related to EJ issues and community concerns. DEQ expects the reporting form to be more widely used as additional EJ training is provided to employees in 2010.
2. DEQ worked with OPAL (Organizing People, Activating Leaders), the Oregon Public Health Division and the National Policy Consensus Center to apply for a \$160,000, three-year cooperative agreement with the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to address EJ and sustainability issues in East Portland. Unfortunately, the proposal was not funded. EJ Task Force member Jon Ostar was a valuable partner in this project.
3. DEQ worked with OPAL, the Oregon Public Health Division and Portland State University to launch a statewide mapping project of EJ communities in Oregon and how they may be exposed to disproportionate impacts from environmental pollution. The maps will include the location of EJ communities and sensitive facilities (schools, day care facilities, hospitals, elder care facilities), information on cumulative environmental and health impacts, and community education and English proficiency levels. The project produced demonstration maps and sought feedback from the EJ Task Force in September and October 2009 (see Attachment D), and requested and received \$15,000 from EPA to continue map development and conduct initial community involvement activities.
4. July 2009: DEQ worked with the EJ Task Force Interagency Work Group, the Oregon Department of Administrative Services and other Task Force members to develop new language on EJ and cultural competency in position descriptions and performance management materials for DEQ managers.

By showcasing the partnership-based collaboration between community organizations, agencies and the task force, it is evident that this model can be successful despite a lack of funding and voluntary citizen representatives acting in good faith to address Environmental Justice.

1. Partnership and Collaboration is established and implemented to address EJ concerns
 - a. What collaboration occurred with the community to create and implement this partnership
 - b. Provide one or two sentences on the role of each principal member of the partnership

A: The Environmental Justice Task Force was formed by legislative approval, and collaboration occurred at a community level to provide testimony and support for SB 420 as it moved through committee. The Task Force is comprised of voluntary members representing a variety of constituencies and acting on behalf of environmental justice communities. As the Task Force has matured, our relationships with community based organizations and community members who directly interact with the task force via public testimony has been a cornerstone of our involvement in addressing EJ issues in the state of Oregon.

B:

1. EJTF (as a group) The Environmental Justice Task Force's role is to advise the Governor on Environmental Justice and to help the Governor's office and state natural resource agencies identify and address Environmental Justice issues throughout the state. As a public body, the Task Force invites citizen comment and testimony to help us fulfill this responsibility.

2. State Natural Resource Agencies: Each natural resource agency has a designated Citizen Advocate that attends all meetings of the task force, and works closely with task force members through interagency partnerships to identify ways that agencies can incorporate and address environmental justice issues related to their specific statutory authority as an agency, and to better educate and engage both staff and Environmental Justice communities.

2. demonstrated innovation and/or uniqueness of the partnership in addressing ej concerns and/or issues
 - a. what is innovative and/or unique about this partnership when it has come to addressing EJ

This partnership represents the culmination of years of attempts at both state and national levels to engage community representatives, organizations and individuals with state agencies. In the past, there was reluctance of agencies to designate representatives to Task Force activities and the influence and reach of EJ Task Forces were often limited due to buy-in at this level. This task force, starting from a place of trust, building relationships relative to a traditional Environmental Justice approach has allowed this group to celebrate success at both the institutional level and community level. By working in a partnership approach rather than adversarial, the task force and agencies are better able to serve the public and address issues of environmental injustice at a state-wide level. As an unfunded group, the task force has nonetheless been able to work at a community level, partnering with local community based organizations, and utilizing the expertise of the voluntary task force members to leverage action at local levels, respond to public inquiry and testimony, and be influential at the state and local level.

3. demonstrated ej results and community benefits
 - a. provide brief summary of the demonstrated significant reduction in pollution /risk or demonstrated significant improvements to a community
 - b. explain how reductions or improvements were measured.

- a. It's difficult to measure demonstrated significant reduction in pollution/risk or improvements to a specific community in part because the task force and natural resource agencies work at statewide levels to protect all Oregonians, but the work of the task force in partnership with agencies is instrumental in creating the conditions by which all agencies can better identify, assess, and act to promote Environmental Justice. The task force, in response to community testimony, has specifically worked to apply field burning laws statewide instead of the proposed ban only in the most populated areas of the state, which in time will have measurable benefits on low income communities in the eastern part of the state as particulates from burning are reduced. The communities directly affected by the proposed expansion of the Columbia River Crossing, who are directly working with task force members, and whom have been represented by the Task Force in letters to the Governor and advocacy in the community through task force partnerships will benefit from increased access to decision-making. In the development, planning, and discussion of bridge expansion, the work of the task force will help ensure that the low-income and vulnerable population on Hayden Island, a mobile home community, will be protected and their voices included in decisions. The Environmental Justice Task Force is unique in how it creates difference because it is focused at this point in developing better processes and accountability for Natural Resource Agencies, who are charged with addressing issues of Environmental Justice within their scope of work, and who set policies and practices that either better engage and protect citizens, or serve to continue practices that exclude traditionally marginalized communities and lay the burden of environmental hazard on our low income and communities of color.
- b. We can thereby measure success by measuring the changes in agency culture and understanding of Environmental Justice, which is captured in the agency and Task Force yearly reports. We can measure our engagement by the number and context of public testimony we receive and respond to. And we can measure success by seeing how Environmental Justice is incorporated into state processes. A great example recently was the inclusion of Environmental Justice in the Department of Environmental Quality's Portland Air Toxics Solutions Advisory Committee charter which includes EJ considerations as a part of any strategy to reduce regional air pollutants. The "calling out" of Environmental Justice as a specific determinant of success within state processes in and of itself is a measurable win and will result in the reduction of burden relating not only to toxics, but to all state decision-making processes. Recognizing that "a community that speaks for itself can best protect itself," processes that assure engagement from impacted communities and is intentional about giving communities a voice will lead to reduction of harm for these very communities.

4. Leveraged resources/capacity building
 - a. What strategies have proven successful in leveraging resources or capacity building to address environmental justice concerns
 - b. Describe how the partnership got where it is today through a timeline or flowchart in terms of leveraging resources and/or capacity building

- a. Partnerships between Task Force Member organizations and natural resource agencies has been a proven strategy for leveraging resources. DEQ worked with OPAL (Organizing People, Activating Leaders), the Oregon Public Health Division and the National Policy Consensus Center to apply for a \$160,000, three-year cooperative agreement with the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to address EJ and sustainability issues in East Portland. Unfortunately, the proposal was not funded. EJ Task Force member Jon Ostar was a valuable partner in this project. DEQ also worked with OPAL, the Oregon Public Health Division and Portland State University to launch a statewide mapping project of EJ communities in Oregon and how they may be exposed to disproportionate impacts from environmental pollution. The maps will include the location of EJ communities and sensitive facilities (schools, day care facilities, hospitals, elder care facilities), information on cumulative environmental and health impacts, and community education and English proficiency levels. The project produced demonstration maps and sought feedback from the EJ Task Force in September and October 2009 and requested and received \$15,000 from EPA to continue map development and conduct initial community involvement activities. EJ Task Force member Jon Ostar is a leading partner in this project. These proven successes are examples of the potential for the Task Force, while unfunded within the State Budget, to leverage resources that not only directly benefit the community, but also provide state agencies with the tools and information they need to make informed decisions for Environmental Justice.

b. Timeline/flowchart:

5. long term sustainability/model partnerships projects
 - a. what procedures and policies have been put in place to ensure the long-term viability or sustainability of the partnership?
 - b. How can this partnership and/or the successful projects of this partnership be modeled elsewhere

- a. not really sure about this one, though since it's statutory my assumption is that until someone repeals SB 420, the task force will continue on. Important to note that agency participation has been stellar, and that the partnership approach rather than adversarial approach seems to be a model that benefits both the task force and encourages state agencies to feel they are being fairly treated
- b. any group given statutory authority with the right level of leadership and members that are dedicated to the work will be able to see success, but must recognize the small steps that are often needed to begin to learn to walk together towards environmental justice. Recognizing that for some agencies, the connection with their work and EJ is not always clear, which requires data collection, training, etc that can

help make EJ real and tangible for agencies where federal and state laws do not mandate an understanding and application of EJ principles or engagement as part of their work .

Other thoughts: using DEQ as an example of leadership around this issue-and the potential for success: this timeline of their work and accomplishments-direct from agency reporting...

March 2009: DEQ Director Dick Pedersen and Union President Dick DeZeeuw sent an email to all DEQ employees to launch new internal and [external EJ web pages](#) and invite feedback and suggestions related to EJ using an on-line employee survey (see Attachments A, B and C). The internal web site (accessible to DEQ employees) includes a new electronic reporting form that employees can use to report their work related to EJ issues and community concerns. DEQ expects the reporting form to be more widely used as additional EJ training is provided to employees in 2010.

- April 2009: DEQ worked with OPAL (Organizing People, Activating Leaders), the Oregon Public Health Division and the National Policy Consensus Center to apply for a \$160,000, three-year cooperative agreement with the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to address EJ and sustainability issues in East Portland. Unfortunately, the proposal was not funded. EJ Task Force member Jon Ostar was a valuable partner in this project.
- April 2009: DEQ's Citizen Advocate joined local community leaders in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Alaska in a three-day workshop entitled, "Using environmental laws and alternative dispute resolution to address environmental justice," presented by the Environmental Law Institute and EPA. Tools and guidance from the workshop have helped inform DEQ's EJ planning and activities.
- June 2009: DEQ worked with OPAL, the Oregon Public Health Division and Portland State University to launch a statewide mapping project of EJ communities in Oregon and how they may be exposed to disproportionate impacts from environmental pollution. The maps will include the location of EJ communities and sensitive facilities (schools, day care facilities, hospitals, elder care facilities), information on cumulative environmental and health impacts, and community education and English proficiency levels. The project produced demonstration maps and sought feedback from the EJ Task Force in September and October 2009 (see Attachment D), and requested and received \$15,000 from EPA to continue map development and conduct initial community involvement activities. EJ Task Force member Jon Ostar is a leading partner in this project.

- July 2009: DEQ worked with the EJ Task Force Interagency Work Group, the Oregon Department of Administrative Services and other Task Force members to develop new language on EJ and cultural competency in position descriptions and performance management materials for DEQ managers. DEQ anticipates adding the new language to all manager position descriptions and performance management materials in late-2010 in the context of other changes being considered for the templates. EJ Task Force member Khalid Wahab, chair of the Interagency Work Group, has provided valuable assistance and perspective in this project.
- July 2009: DEQ provided a five-hour EJ training to all DEQ managers statewide (see Attachment E for the agenda) that included guest speakers, remarks from DEQ Director Dick Pedersen, and multiple small and large group discussions. The training produced many ideas for how DEQ can help identify and address EJ issues in Oregon and recommendations for EJ training for all DEQ employees. EJ Task Force member Robin Collin delivered inspirational remarks as a guest speaker during the training.
- August 2009: DEQ responded to concerns raised by the EJ Task Force related to statutory field burning restrictions in the Willamette Valley and impacts statewide. DEQ Air Quality Division Administrator Andy Ginsburg provided an update on field burning issues to the EJ Task Force during their January 2010 meeting. EJ Task Force member Jack Johnson is providing valuable leadership and perspective on this issue and Task Force Chair Will Collin and member Robin Collin are serving on DEQ's rulemaking advisory committee for new statutory field burning restrictions.
- December 2009: DEQ's Citizen Advocate provided two three-hour pilot EJ trainings for DEQ employees in Bend and Pendleton (see Attachment F for the agenda), and is currently developing the training on-line to be available to all DEQ employees in spring 2010.

In addition, DEQ employees are working statewide on a wide range of issues to protect and improve Oregon's environment and the health of Oregon communities, including minority, low-income and other traditionally underrepresented communities. A few examples follow.

- DEQ is working in with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, other tribal nations, EPA and others to strengthen protections for people who eat above average amounts of fish from Oregon waters for cultural or subsistence purposes. DEQ anticipates proposing revised rules to increase the "[fish consumption rate](#)" in state water quality standards in late 2010.
- DEQ is working with local communities to improve air quality by [reducing diesel emissions](#), providing protection to those most at risk from air pollution. Reducing particulates from diesel decreases asthma incidence and lowers risk for lung cancer and cardiovascular disease. In 2009, DEQ coordinated and secured financing to retrofit exhaust controls on hundreds of school buses with direct benefits for the health of children. Other DEQ projects focus on assisting private and public partners with information, encouragement and financial assistance to burn less fuel and cleaner fuel to protect communities near transportation corridors. DEQ consulted on or participated in more than 15 grant proposals for federal funding, helping to secure funds to clean up municipal vehicles and local refuse haulers.
- DEQ is developing a statewide [Toxics Reduction Strategy](#) to reduce toxic pollution to Oregon's air, water and land, which may have a disproportionate effect on the most vulnerable communities. In November 2009, DEQ hosted a workshop to openly explore and document opportunities for toxics reduction. Over 150 people participated, including community groups, public health and environmental advocacy organizations, manufacturing

and natural resource industries, municipalities and special districts, tribal governments and many state and federal agencies.

- DEQ is working to [clean up contaminated lands](#) around the state that pose risks to people's health, many of which exist in low-income and minority communities.
- DEQ organized a collaborative partnership to improve the environmental health of [nail salon workers and customers](#), many of whom are Vietnamese and African American, through education and outreach.

Increasing participation of individuals and communities affected by the agency's decisions

DEQ has taken a number of steps in the past year to increase participation of individuals and communities affected by the agency decisions.

- DEQ's new [external EJ web page](#) invites community members to contact DEQ's Citizen Advocate to share information about how DEQ's actions and decisions affect Oregon communities and to raise questions or concerns related to EJ issues. DEQ's Citizen Advocate receives and responds to questions, concerns and information from community members on an ongoing basis and assists the agency in exploring options to address EJ issues.
- DEQ's internal EJ web page (see Attachment C) provides guidance to agency employees on how to identify and reach communities that maybe affected by the agency's decisions, with a focus on at-risk, low-income, minority communities.
- DEQ provided EJ training to agency managers in July 2009 that focused in part on strategies for increasing the participation of individuals and communities affected by agency decisions. DEQ plans to provide on-line EJ training for DEQ staff statewide in 2010 that will also include community involvement as a focus.
- DEQ continues to build [stronger relationships with tribal nations](#) on a government-to-government basis to consult on how potential agency actions may affect tribal interests and to explore opportunities for greater state-tribal partnership. More information about DEQ's work with tribal nations is available in [DEQ's 2009 Annual Government-to-Government Report on Tribal Relations](#).
- DEQ is committed to including Oregonians in all aspects of the agency's decision making, including advisory committees and workgroups that frequently assist in developing state environmental rules. These groups provide vital information and expertise to help DEQ make good decisions and are important links to communities and individuals that may be affected by the agency's actions. DEQ's web page provides a list of current [advisory committees and workgroups](#) and includes opportunities for citizens to apply to volunteer as a committee member.
- [Current DEQ policies](#) require holding public meetings at times and in locations that are convenient for potentially affected community members to attend and this is DEQ's practice for all public information meetings and hearings statewide. For decisions related to environmental permitting, DEQ policies require greater levels of public involvement for more significant permits and DEQ often consults with local leaders in selecting meeting locations familiar to local residents, such as schools and community centers.
- The statewide EJ mapping project that DEQ initiated in 2009 will provide valuable information on how communities and individuals may be affected by the agency's decisions and cumulative environmental impacts. DEQ looks forward to using this information to help prioritize outreach to affected communities and to explore options for providing greater assistance to help community members participate more in DEQ decision-making.

Determining the effect of the agency's decisions on traditionally underrepresented communities

DEQ managers and staff work on a case-by-case basis and with the assistance of DEQ's Citizen Advocate when needed to determine the effect of the agency's decisions on traditionally underrepresented communities. Actions taken in the past year have provided additional tools and guidance for doing this.

- DEQ's internal EJ web page (see Attachment C) provides guidance to agency employees on how to identify and reach communities that maybe affected by the agency's decisions, understand community interests, and facilitate greater involvement in DEQ decision-making.
- DEQ provided EJ training to agency mangers in July 2009 that focused in part on determining the effect of the agency's decisions on traditionally underrepresented communities. DEQ plans to provide on-line EJ training for DEQ staff statewide in 2010 that will also include this as a focus.
- DEQ continues to build [stronger relationships with tribal nations](#) on a government-to-government basis to consult on environmental issues and determine the potential effect of agency decisions on tribal communities. More information about DEQ's work with tribal nations is available in [DEQ's 2009 Annual Government-to-Government Report on Tribal Relations](#).
- The statewide EJ mapping project that DEQ initiated in 2009 is expected to provide initial information on some of the effects of the agency's decisions on traditionally underrepresented communities. This information will be available for use along with current information that DEQ receives from community members to help raise awareness about potential EJ issues.

Improving plans to further the progress of environmental justice in Oregon

In 2010, DEQ will continue efforts to further the progress of EJ in Oregon. This will include:

- developing on-line EJ training for all DEQ employees,
- developing the statewide EJ mapping project,
- incorporating EJ and cultural competency expectations in DEQ manager position descriptions and performance management materials,
- reaching out to communities that may be affected by agency decisions,
- diversifying DEQ's advisory committees and workgroups, and
- evaluating the effect of agency decisions on traditionally underrepresented communities.