



Promote Environmental Justice

Fighting for Change

Solving the climate emergency must include ending racism. As climate advocates, we must work aggressively to reform the existing system and replace it with one that repairs past harms and redistributes power meaningfully in favor of people of color and other marginalized communities. Every one of us who benefits most from how things are right now has a deep ethical responsibility to insist on doing away with laws, cultural norms, and institutions that promote or condone racism.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made clear what the EJ movement has been telling us for decades: low-income and immigrant communities, and people of color and Native American heritage are being hardest hit by the pandemic, in large part because of prolonged exposure to high levels of pollution.

The fight to lessen the effects of climate change is a fight for environmental justice. People everywhere in the world are feeling the impacts, but the people suffering most are the ones who have done the least to cause the problem.

We must build visionary economy that is very different than the one in which we now exist. This requires ending the bad while building the new. We must adopt initiatives that shift from dirty energy to energy democracy, from funding highways to expanding public transit, from building incinerators and landfills to achieving zero waste, from industrialized food systems to food sovereignty, from gentrification to community land rights, from military violence to peaceful resolution, and from rampant destructive development to ecosystem restoration. Workers and communities must have control over the decisions that affect their daily lives.

Progress may be on the way. Early in his Presidency, Joe Biden moved boldly to secure environmental justice and spur economic opportunity for all. He formalized his commitment to make environmental justice a part of the mission of every federal agency. He directed them to develop programs, policies, and activities to address the disproportionate health, environmental, economic, and climate impacts that have disproportionately penalize disadvantaged communities.

For example, Biden created the government-wide Justice40 Initiative with the goal of delivering 40% of the overall benefits of relevant federal investments to disadvantaged communities and tracking performance toward that goal through the establishment of an Environmental Justice Scorecard.

350 Central Mass applauds these long-overdue initiatives, and we intend to keep pressure on the President to fulfill his promises. We work with other climate-action groups in Central Massachusetts and the communities most at risk to address climate injustice wherever it rears its ugly head. Join us in this fight!