



Re: Request for Information To Support the Development of a Federal Environmental Justice Science, Data, and Research Plan

Agency: White House Science and Technology Policy Office

Document: 2023-27632

To whom it may concern:

I am writing on behalf of the National Center for Disability, Equity, and Intersectionality to contribute to the development of a Federal Environmental Justice Science, Data, and Research Plan. Our center represents a diverse group of stakeholders focused on the intersection of disability and other marginalized identities, providing a unique lens on the challenges faced by disabled individuals in environmental justice.

The detrimental impact of climate change, natural disasters, and air pollution on people with disabilities is a critical concern that has not received adequate attention in environmental research and policy-making. Disabled individuals, particularly those with intersecting oppressed identities, face heightened risks and barriers during climate emergencies. For instance, disabled individuals who are also from low-income backgrounds, people of color, LGBT communities, or incarcerated persons, confront compounded vulnerabilities in these crises.

A disability justice approach, as emphasized in Emma Calgaro's work, can leverage the strengths of disabled individuals as resilient change-makers. Their firsthand experiences and expertise are invaluable in shaping inclusive and effective disaster risk reduction policies and practices. It is important for people with disabilities to be on the forefront of planning for environmental justice.



We recommend the following actions to integrate disability justice into environmental justice efforts:

- **Inclusive Policy Development:** Ensure active participation of people with disabilities in formulating environmental policies as part of a federal environmental justice, science, data, and research plan.
- **Research and Data Collection:** Prioritize research that specifically addresses the impact of environmental issues on disabled individuals, considering intersectional identities.
- **Resource Allocation:** Allocate resources and support to address the unique needs of disabled individuals during environmental emergencies.
- **Public Awareness and Education:** Increase awareness about the intersection of disability, climate change, and environmental justice through educational programs and public campaigns.

In conclusion, it is imperative that the voices and experiences of people with disabilities are not only heard but also integrated into the heart of environmental justice efforts. Our center is committed to collaborating with federal agencies to ensure that environmental policies and practices are inclusive, equitable, and effective for all, especially the most vulnerable among us.

Thank you for considering our perspective in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

Kara B. Ayers, PhD

Director

Center for Disability, Equity, and Intersectionality

References: Emma Calgaro; Climate Disaster Risk, Disability, and Resilience. *Current History* 1 November 2021; 120 (829): 320–325. <https://doi.org/10.1525/curh.2021.120.829.320>

Gaskin, C. J., Taylor, D., Kinnear, S., Mann, J., Hillman, W., & Moran, M. (2017). Factors Associated with the Climate Change Vulnerability and the Adaptive Capacity of People with Disability: A Systematic Review. *Weather, Climate, and Society*, 9(4), 801-814. <https://doi.org/10.1175/WCAS-D-16-0126.1>