



# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & POLICY NEWSLETTER

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### EJ Spring 2013 Conference: “Moving Environmental Justice Forward: Assessing Cumulative Impacts and Developing Policy Frameworks”

Members of the Environmental Justice Leadership Forum on Climate Change (EJLFCC) and other regional environmental justice partners met in Washington, DC on April 11-13, 2013 to reassess the coalition priorities and expand the network of potential collaborations to address federal policy solutions to key environmental issues. Expert panel discussions were held on four main topics: climate change, adaptation, health, hydraulic fracturing, clean air, and the National Environmental Policy Act. *Continued on page 2*



Pictured from left to right: Mr. Bill Gallegos, Ms. Donna Branham, Ms. Madeline Stano, Mr. Jose Bravo, Mr. Bang Nguyen, Mr. Richard Moore, Ms. Sharon Lewis, Mr. Nelson Carrasquillo, Ms. Peggy Shepard, Dr. Charlotte Keys, Ms. Sofia Parino, Dr. Cecilia Martinez, Mr. Tom Goldtooth, Dr. Beverly Wright, Ms. Martha Arguello, Dr. Janet Phoenix, Mr. Fred Brown, Mr. Louis Almayehu, Dr. Nicky Sheats, Ms. Liza O’Reilly, Ms. Lauren Boles, Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome. (Not pictured: Mr. Cecil Corbin-Mark)

#### WE ACT for Environmental Justice

##### Washington, D.C. Staff:

Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome, Federal Policy Analyst  
 Ms. Laetitia N’Dri, Federal Policy Intern  
 Ms. Quiana Robinson, Federal Agency Accountability Intern  
 Mr. Bhoj Ayer, Environmental Justice Legal Analysis Intern

##### New York Policy Staff:

Mr. Cecil M. Corbin-Mark, Policy Director  
 Mr. Jacob Carlson, Transportation Policy  
 Ms. Peggy Shepard, Executive Director

WE ACT for Environmental Justice is Northern Manhattan’s proactive community health watchdog, vigilant in identifying conditions that threaten residents’ quality of life and resolute in taking effective long-term action to address and correct these issues.

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Dr. Nicky Sheats, New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance (NEJAC).

Organized in collaboration with the University of Maryland, the American Public Health Association, and the George Washington University School of Public Health, the conference was an opportunity for members of the Forum to reconnect, rebuild and re-define the Forum policy priorities. Each of the expert panel discussions was followed by moderated break out sessions to identify specific next steps and actionable plans for the Forum and other regional environmental justice leaders.

[Click here](#) to access meeting materials and presentations.

The meetings were held on April 11-12 at the George Washington University and at Gallaudet University Kellogg Conference Center on April 13. Approximately 120 guests attended the 3-day conference from various sectors including: local and state agencies, federal government, congressional representatives, NGOs & community-based organizations, the private sector, and academia. A reception was



Pictured from left to right: Mr. Charles Lee, U.S. EPA Office of Environmental Justice; Ms. Peggy Shepard, WE ACT; Ms. Martha Arguello, Physicians for Social Responsibility.



Mr. Bill Gallegos, Communities for a Better Environment (CBE).

hosted on Friday evening at Gallaudet University Kellogg Conference Center to provide EJ stakeholders, partners, and Forum members an opportunity to network and foster future collaborations.

In an effort to continue nurturing these relationships, two follow-up conference calls with all the participants, interested national groups, and Mid-Atlantic partners are scheduled for June 19 & 27, 2013 at 3 pm EST. The goals of these meetings are to build on the conversations that started in April.

To participate in these meetings, please contact:  
Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome at: [jalonne@weact.org](mailto:jalonne@weact.org)

## Special Thanks to Conference Partners & Sponsors:

Cedar Tree Foundation



The Kresge Foundation



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The University of Maryland



The George Washington University School of Public Health



THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
AND HEALTH SERVICES

American Public Health Association



Meridian Institute



**Meridian Institute**  
Connecting People to Solve Problems

Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene





## Participant Reflections:

### ***Expanding the Conversation on Climate Change and Environmental Justice Spring Meeting***

April 30, 2013

"I am here to speak for my people. My community. It's inspiring and feels good to be around people that identify and feel the same hurt of our people, our communities and our environment." Donna Branham, Keeper of the Mountains Foundation, West Virginia.

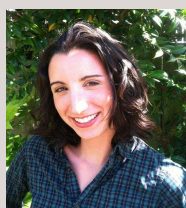
I continue to reflect on the power and wisdom in Donna's words that I recently heard at the Environmental Justice Leadership Forum on Climate Change (EJLFCC) meeting in Washington, D.C.. Donna shared the devastation mountaintop removal continues to wreak on the health and well-being of her home and communities neighboring operations. Rooted in her own experiences in West Virginia, Donna offered her vision of a healthier more equitable future where communities and not corporations control natural resources to representatives of environmental justice organizations from across the country.

After being inspired by national leaders like Donna at the EJLFCC, I knew I wanted to create a space for communities doing incredible work to speak, uplift the successes of our allies, highlight various environmental justice issues largely ignored by more mainstream media sources and share my own reflections on my work through my fellowship. I decided to start this blog that will hopefully serve as an accessible spot to share information.

As the Luke Cole Memorial Fellow it is my tremendous honor and privilege to continue the work of Luke—a pioneer fighting for environmental justice at the national level. Luke's work as an advocate always reflected his complex understanding of the many social, political, racial and economic dimensions of environmental injustices and in his tradition my blog's focus will go beyond individual legal campaigns reaching for the more nuanced truth.

It is my hope that this project will further Luke's legacy and legacies of all the sisters and brothers like Donna working for environmental justice.

Source: <http://bit.ly/10I782j>



**Ms. Madeline Stano is the Inaugural Luke Cole Memorial Fellow at the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment (CRPE). Through her fellowship she works on CRPE's National Campaign in the areas of Civil Rights and on behalf of the Native Village of Kivalina, Alaska. This blog was initiated in order**

**to create a space to share national environmental justice struggles and stories that may be excluded from the mainstream dialogue.**

**Madeline can be reached at [mstano@crpe-ej.org](mailto:mstano@crpe-ej.org).**

## Best aspects of the meeting:

"The diversity of perspectives on each panel."



"The format was great and the interaction with environmental justice leaders. I was also very impressed with the amount of work that the forum got done during their sessions."



"An opportunity to be face-to-face with incredible folks doing great work across the country."

## As a result of this meeting I plan to:

"Continue to work on ways of forging better relationships with partners outside the Agency on issues related to cumulative risk and impacts. These dialogues are necessary, even as they are messy and difficult at times."

"Continue networking with the new groups I met. Take back the knowledge I gained from the conference to my local state, city, and communities."



"Continue to find ways to partner in creative ways and engage in interdisciplinary work. I also learned about some ways that I need to modify the work that I am doing around chemical policy reform."



"Become more engaged and active in sharing my knowledge about 'fracking' and the intersection of social/environmental justice with communities and their allies in the Mid-Atlantic region."

## WE ACT's 25th Anniversary Kick Off



Location: Rooftop Gallery; New York, NY.

On May 22, 2013, over 40 WE ACT supporters along with WE ACT board members and staff celebrated WE ACT's 25th Anniversary and accomplishments at a donor & sponsor reception, held at the Broadway House's Rooftop Gallery. WE ACT's Federal Policy Analyst's presentation on the current federal policy work incited conversations about environmental justice, the landscape in Washington D.C., Congress and how we can better address the opportunities in the environmental health of our communities.

The reception was also organized in an effort to thank WE ACT donors & sponsors and introduce the work of the WE ACT D.C office to new audiences. The D.C. office would like to sincerely thank Cedar Tree Foundation for their financial support, and all that continue to support WE ACT's work.

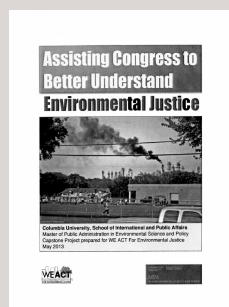
Check out event pictures:

[www.flickr.com/photos/weact4ej](http://www.flickr.com/photos/weact4ej)

Also, donations to support WE ACT's work can be taken on-line:

[www.weact.org/donate](http://www.weact.org/donate)

## "Assisting Congress to Better Understand Environmental Justice"



Graduate students in Columbia University's Master of Public Administration in Environmental Science and Policy at the School of International and Public Affairs worked with WE ACT to develop a prototype for a EJ guidebook that can be used to illuminate the environmental justice concerns for Congressional staffers in their respective districts.

The students used multiple data sources on environmental exposures, geographic mapping tools, in conjunction with a review of the political landscape to develop this educational tool. As this was a pilot project, the goal is to find more funding and resources to expand this guide and develop an online portal that can be used for advocacy and education on Capitol Hill. We want to express

our sincere gratitude to Faculty Advisor Gail Suchman and her students Sara Rummel, Kimberley Rain Miner, Magdalena Dewane, Alfonso Galarce, Karin Kaechele, Jeffrey Irvine, Krystal Lin, Blair Cameron-Beavers Matthews, Monica Pharm, Esq., Kendall Singelton, Katharine Targett, for their efforts.

## RESOLVE Climate Change Meeting: "Coordinating Environmental, Public Health and Emergency Preparedness Strategies"

On May 14, 2013, RESOLVE, an environmental, social and health solutions think tank group, sponsored a meeting with a diverse group of participants. WE ACT's Federal Policy Analyst Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome, who is also a Kendall Fellow at Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), provided some comments on climate change adaptation and extreme heat events, and the importance of forming collaborations to help tackle the challenge of climate change and address the unique concerns of vulnerable populations.

See RESOLVE at [www.resolve.org](http://www.resolve.org).

## 50 States United for Healthy Air: Advocating on the Hill



The 2013 Clean Air Ambassadors lobby the U.S. Senate

On May 13 -15, 2013, 100 clean air ambassadors traveled from 50 states to Washington, D.C. to advocate for the right for clean air. Ambassadors from communities from every state teamed up to educate members of Congress on local air issues, share their personal stories of how their communities are impacted by dirty air, and how greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions exacerbate climate change.

This effort was lead by EarthJustice and many other partners. Advocacy events included lobby trainings, meetings with EPA officials, briefings on Capitol Hill, and a reception on Wednesday held in the Rayburn House Office Building.

For more information on the event: [www.50statesunited.org](http://www.50statesunited.org)

Pictured from left to right: Ms. Sam Beckerman, NRDC; Mr. Robert Harper, Hip Hop Caucus; Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome, WE ACT; Mr. Theodore Carrington, NAACP.

## "Environmental Justice: Building Healthy Communities through Current & Future Policy"

WE ACT, in collaboration with the [Congressional Progressive Caucus](#) and the [Sierra Club Environmental Justice Program](#), held a briefing for House staffers on Capitol Hill on April 9, 2013. The goal of the briefing was to provide an overview of the challenges environmental justice communities endure and to explore potential policy solutions through comprehensive legislation.

A significant focus of the briefing was on the Clean Air Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Presenters shared their concerns about measuring cumulative impacts in EJ communities, the importance of upholding NEPA, the impact of climate change and clean air on the health of the public.



Pictured from left to right: Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome, WE ACT; Dr. Nicky Sheats, New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance; Ms. Leslie Fields, Sierra Club; Mr. Cecil Corbin-Mark, WE ACT.



## Air and Climate Change Policy

### Rep. Lois Capps Introduces Bill to Improve Public Health Preparedness for Climate Change



On May 17, 2013, Rep. Lois Capps (D-Santa Barbara) along with Reps. Ed Markey of Massachusetts, Doris Matsui of California and Jan Schakowsky of Illinois, [introduced](#) the *Climate Change Health Protection and Promotion Act* to improve the nation's public health response to climate change. As now introduced, the bill would address the negative health effects related to climate change by supporting research, surveillance, planning, and interagency coordination to develop a national plan for action, and to assist health professionals in preparing for and responding to the public health effects of climate change. The bill would also authorize the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to research the health effects of climate change and health implications of potential greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction strategies, as well as bolster climate change preparedness planning around the country.

### Letter of Support: SSM Rule



On May 13, 2013, WE ACT for Environmental Justice and other EJ leaders sent a letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to support the implementation of the [Startup, Shutdown, Malfunction \(SSM\) Rule](#).

The rule would ensure states have plans in place that require industrial facilities across the country to follow air pollution rules when the facility is starting up or shutting down, or when a malfunction occurs.

For EJ communities, **the proposed rule will close unlawful regulatory loopholes that industry uses to emit vast quantities of pollution, particularly in communities of color, and/or low income that are disproportionately impacted by industry on a daily basis.**

A copy of the letter can be found [here](#).

### Testimony: Tier III Rule Proposed Standards



On April 24, WE ACT's Jalonne & EJLFCC member Laureen Boles testified at a public hearing in Philadelphia on the [Tier III Rule proposed standards](#).

Pictured from left to right: Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome, WE ACT; Ms. Laureen Boles, E4Progress.

Laureen Boles urged the EPA Office of Air and Radiation to examine the impact that credit trading has had on the success of Tier II standards, because all communi-

ties deserve equal protection and their share of benefits (GHG reductions, fuel savings, energy security, economic growth, and job creation).

Dr. White-Newsome elaborated on how urban air toxics, cumulative impacts and climate change impact the health of the most vulnerable and how the proposed Tier III standards are one step forward to reducing the burden on environmental justice communities.

### National Climate Assessment

Federal Advisory Committee

#### Draft Climate Assessment Report

Released For Public Review



On April 10, 2013, WE ACT and members of the Forum submitted comments on the draft of the [Third National Climate Assessment](#) (NCA). The NCA is an important document that can be used to better understand climate change science and its impacts. This document helps guide research and decision making on climate change at the federal level.

One of the main concerns raised from the chapters they reviewed was that there was no mention of the term 'environmental justice', even though the term 'vulnerability' was mentioned in several places.

[Click here](#) to read the entire review.

### Highlighting the Work of our allies:



Source: [www.crpe-ej.org](http://www.crpe-ej.org)

### Shafter Community Garden Groundbreaking

On April 6, 2013, the Committee for a Better Shafter and the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment (CRPE) celebrated the groundbreaking of a four-acre community garden. The community hopes to use the land to grow healthy organic fruits and vegetables that could eventually be sold at their own farmers market. Part of CRPE's Green and Just Economic Development campaign aims to put the new "green economy" in the hands of the community and also in the communities that need it the most.

Click here to watch the event video: <http://youtu.be/PJipwzXp5rY>

## Climate Change and Clean Air Briefing

On May 20, 2013, WE ACT for Environmental Justice, US Climate Action Network (US CAN), along with several other partners, hosted a briefing on the Hill to educate Congressional staffers on the basics of the Clean Air Act and its connection to climate change. Dr. White-Newsome's comments focused on the environmental justice perspective, specifically honing on three main topics:

1. Quantifying the exposure,
2. Framing the exposure,
3. Finding the best way to best mitigate carbon dioxide without causing further harm to EJ communities.

She also urged staffers and participants to 'take action' and send comments to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to complete the pending update of urban air toxins in our most impacted communities.



Pictured from left to right: Mr. Josh Nassar, UAW; Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome, WE ACT; Ms. Megan Ceronsky, EDF; Ms. Adrianna Quintero, NRDC. Moderator: Rev. Lennox Yearwood, Hip Hop Caucus.

### Update: Report on Urban Air

Under the Clean Air Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is required to control emissions of hazardous air pollutants that cause serious health and environmental effects, and that are known or suspected carcinogens, referred as urban air toxics.

Although the programs in place have substantially reduced toxic air emissions, **data indicate that urban areas still experience a greater health burden from area source emissions.** The Clean Air Act (CAA) requires the **EPA Administrator to submit two Reports to Congress on actions taken under the CAA that reduce the risk to public health posed by the release of hazardous air pollutants (HAP) from area sources.**

The first report released in July 2000 summarizes risks assessments and actions that the EPA is taking to reduce public health risks caused by air pollution in urban areas. **The second report, required by the Clean Air Act, is currently under review at the Office of Management and Budget.**

For more information on the Urban Air Toxics Report:

- National Air Program: The Integrated Urban Air Strategy Report to Congress (July 2000). <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/urban/natprpt.pdf>.

## Health, Air and Environmental Justice: Needed in Detroit and Beyond



I love going home to the "D", as most Native Detroiters affectionately call Detroit, Michigan. It's no better feeling for me like when I'm driving back home, crossing the Ohio border, seeing the blue and white "Welcome to Michigan" sign. Merging quickly onto Interstate 75, passing GM and Chrysler manufacturing facilities (that my grandparents and I have worked in) and crossing over into Detroit, with the preponderance of lights and smokestacks from the oil refinery, and the wastewater treatment plant that adds to the familiar stench of this stretch of the I-75 corridor and the neighborhood, and streets I've walked through many times. Yes, I am home.

Each time I cross over the I75 corridor, I am reminded of the family and friends that are living in these overburdened, over-polluted areas. [...] These communities, sometimes referred to as envi-

ronmental justice communities, are dealing with other physical and social factors that amplify the cumulative burdens that continue to detract from the overall quality of life the residents all deserve, such as unhealthy housing (ridden with Pb based paint, mold), crime, unequal access to fresh foods, inadequate transportation, and inadequate resources to support much needed social services and educational systems...just to name a few. So while local and state leaders are trying to work on a solution to these other concerns, that 'dirty puff of air' that many of us breathe in, every day, is only one piece of the pollution-puzzle that adds to the list of environmental and social stressors that dictate the health of those that live in 48217 and many other zip codes across our country. We can do something about these 'dirty puffs of air'. Simply letting your voice be heard is part of that solution.

[...] When we look at the big picture, our environment – plus all of the other social factors that come into play – dictates our quality of life. [...]

While we know there are many social determinants of health that impact the health of our communities, we all deserve to breathe in clean air and be assured that the facilities that might be located near our homes are taking responsibility for their actions by running a safe process, with proper controls and, hopefully in the near future, will not be allowed to spit out unaccounted for emissions.

In addition to grassroots education and advocacy, we must also support more stringent policies that are being proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – like the upcoming Startup, Shutdown, Malfunction Rule (or SSM rule) that will work to eliminate some of those excess, undocumented emissions from facilities across the county that are allowed to emit, despite their permit limits. These revisions are being proposed and out for public comment until Monday, May 13th.

While we know there are many social determinants of health that impact the health of our communities, we all deserve to breathe in clean air and be assured that the facilities that might be located near our homes are taking responsibility for their actions by running a safe process, with proper controls and, hopefully in the near future, will not be allowed to spit out unaccounted for emissions.

**[Tell the EPA to move ahead with an SSM safeguard that will help protect our communities from some of the toxins they face every day.](#)**

Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome

Read the entire blog post here: [www.ejleadershipforum.org/health-air-and-environmental-justice-needed-in-detroit-and-beyond/](http://www.ejleadershipforum.org/health-air-and-environmental-justice-needed-in-detroit-and-beyond/)



## WE ACT D.C. Office Interns

The WE ACT D.C. office offers internship opportunities for students and recent graduates to increase their knowledge of Environmental Justice and to prepare them for careers in public health, law, policy & advocacy. The office currently has 3 full-time interns for the summer. For more information on internships and volunteer opportunities at WE ACT DC office, please visit: [www.ejleadershipforum.org/get-involved/](http://www.ejleadershipforum.org/get-involved/)



Ms. Quiana Robinson & Ms. Laetitia N'Dri

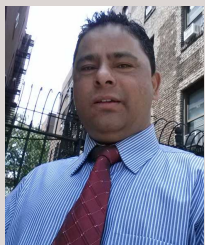
### Ms. Laetitia N'Dri

Laetitia Angéline N'Dri started interning at WE ACT DC office in September 2012 as a **Toxic Chemical Safety Intern**. Since then, her work has expanded to include general support and planning of office events, website development, social media management, and assisting Dr. White-Newsome with the coordination of the EJ Forum. Laetitia is originally from Côte D'Ivoire and immigrated to the U.S. in 2004. She graduated in December 2011 from the University of Maryland with a B.S. in Chemistry and a minor in Spanish. After her graduation, she decided to embark on a public health career; she has gained experience in grassroots organizing, environmental health research, report writing, and health education. Laetitia is interested in working at the intersection of public health & medicine with a focus on reducing health disparities and her goal for the next two years is to obtain a Masters in Toxicology.

### Ms. Quiana Robinson

Quiana Alia Robinson is WE ACT's new **Federal Agency Accountability Intern**, working in the DC office. Quiana is a Maryland native and recently graduated from Mary Baldwin College, where she majored in Philosophy with a minor in African American Studies, while serving in multiple leadership roles on her campus while maintaining her position on the Dean's list every year of her collegiate career. Quiana has keen interest for protecting people, serving society and is committed to serving her community. She will be attending law school at Suffolk Law School in Boston, Massachusetts in the Fall where she will eventually become an administrative law judge.

### Mr. Bhoj Raj Ayer



Bhoj will be working as WE ACT's new **Environmental Justice Legal Analysis Intern**. Bhoj has had over 14 years experience as an environmental and human rights legal professional from Nepal, India. He has an undergraduate degree in law and a master's in political science. Bhoj is currently an LLM (Master in Law) student from Touro Law College, New York, where he will be completing his degree in the Fall of 2013. Bhoj has worked in the areas of law, justice delivery, litigation, legal re-

search, organizing and coordinating programs and managing staff at various non-profit organizations. He is fluent in English, Hindi and Nepali and moderate in Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati and Panjabi and a little Spanish. Bhoj currently resides in Queens, New York and will be working out of WE ACT's Harlem office on D.C. projects. Currently Mr. Ayer is a LLM student at Touro law College and looking forward to continue his carrier as public interest advocate. Mr. Ayer knows how laws and policies affects lives of people and how to use them as effective tools to create a better, equal and just society.



## Environmental Justice Leadership Forum on Climate Change

The Environmental Justice Leadership Forum on Climate Change (EJLFCC) was formally organized in 2008 with the goals of *mobilizing and facilitating a national working group of environmental justice advocates who will interact with identified scientists/ academics and representatives of mainstream environmental groups to catalyze and inform state and federal, political and legislative action that will result in the development of just policies and mechanisms that equitably reduce carbon emissions in all communities.*

Please contact the DC office if you know of organizations working on environmental justice issues and that might be interested in joining in on the work of the EJLFCC. We want to expand our reach and have the opportunity to elevate issues that can be moved forward at a national level. The membership application can be downloaded on our website: [www.ejleadershipforum.org/get-involved](http://www.ejleadershipforum.org/get-involved).

### For more information, please contact:

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Follow us on Twitter: [@EJForum](https://twitter.com/EJForum)



**WE ACT's mission** is to build healthy communities by assuring that people of color and/or low-income participate meaningfully in the creation of sound and fair environmental health and protection policies and practices.



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