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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

JUN 9 2008

THE ADMINISTRATOR

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Strengthening EPA's Environmental Justice Program

TO: Assistant Administrators
General Counsel
Inspector General
Chief Financial Officer
Chief of Staff
Associate Administrators
Regional Administrators

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has made significant strides to protect human health and the environment for everyone and ensure that all people are treated fairly and given the opportunity to participate meaningfully in EPA's decision-making processes. In recognizing that minority and/or low-income communities frequently may be exposed disproportionately to environmental harms and risks, EPA remains committed to protecting these and other burdened communities from adverse human health and environmental effects of its programs, consistent with existing environmental and civil rights laws and their implementing regulations, as well as Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (February 11, 1994)." During the past three years, we have accelerated our efforts to strengthen the Environmental Justice Program thanks to the strong leadership and commitment of the Agency's program and regional offices.

In 2005, I directed the Agency's managers and staff to integrate EJ considerations into EPA's core planning and budgeting processes and identified eight national EJ priorities. I am pleased to see that these EJ priorities are reflected in the Agency's Strategic Plan and the annual National Program Manager guidance documents. In addition, we are developing mechanisms for rule writers to incorporate EJ considerations as a part of the Action Development Process. Finally, we have made steady progress in creating a sound basis for reviewing the EJ impacts of our programs, policies, and activities. We will continue to refine this process for future EJ reviews.

By instituting these types of actions, we are building a stronger foundation to successfully integrate EJ into our programs for the long term. In the coming year, it is important to build on these successes and begin conducting EJ reviews of our programs, policies, and activities.

Therefore, I am directing the Agency's NPMs and regions to conduct the first round of EJ reviews in FY 2009.

The Office of Environmental Justice will continue to work with the Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation to use these EJ reviews as an opportunity to foster a robust program evaluation capacity. The results of these reviews will also help us to continuously learn and improve the ways we consider EJ in our decision-making processes.

Much of our recent progress has been due to the combined leadership and diligent efforts of the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, the NPMs, and the regions. It signifies that all levels of the Agency have a role in ensuring the successful integration of EJ considerations through a coherent and cohesive EJ program. Our continued progress requires a management and implementation infrastructure that utilizes internal staff and expertise as well as external advice and recommendations. This infrastructure includes the following organizational elements:

- Administrator, Deputy Administrator, Assistant Administrators and Regional Administrators;
- OECA (as the NPM for environmental justice);
- EJ Executive Steering Committee;
- Office of Environmental Justice;
- EJ Coordinators and other program and regional managers and staff; and
- National Environmental Justice Advisory Council.

With these accomplishments, your commitment to conduct EJ reviews, and an infrastructure for leading and managing EPA's EJ program, I foresee a future in which we can achieve measurable results that will improve the environment and public health for all people, especially those who are most vulnerable or disproportionately bearing the burden of negative human health or environmental impacts.

Stephen L. Johnson

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