Vermont Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Members Trey Martin, Mariana Sears, and Victor Davila

Proposed Revision to Draft Environmental Justice Complaint Definition

As of October 5, 2026

Proposed Revised Draft Definition of Environmental Justice Complaint

An environmental justice complaint is a recognition of actions, conditions, or decisions involving an intentional or unintentional disregard to any of the principles of environmental justice. These principles are in place to help protect the stability and health of Vermont's native and endemic eco systems. By endearing to the Vermont Environmental Justice Law we can support the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction for the sake of a sacred mother earth.

Any person or community that has experienced intentional or unintentional:

- Obstruction to fair access to environmental benefits,
- Disproportionate exposure to environmental burdens,
- Lack of meaningful participation, information, services or protection as a result of agency action, inaction, practice or decision-making

may contact a covered agency and request assistance to present a complaint or to present a complaint without assistance.

Covered agencies will direct complaints, wherever possible to existing programs and processes for redress, including the Civil Rights law, Open Meeting Law, or agency decisions governed by the Administrative Procedures Act.

This draft definition should remain flexible and continue to respond to the Vermont Environmental Justice Law implementation needs and community input. This draft definition will be reviewed by the Interagency Committee and the Advisory Council every five year as needed to ensure this definition remains responsive to the needs of the Vermont Environmental Justice Law and Vermont communities.

Examples to be provided to communities:

- Environmental burdens: (e.g. inequitable distribution of public funding for environmental infrastructure, parks, trails)
- Environmental benefits: (e.g. unsafe drinking water or indoor air quality in rentals or public offices)
- Meaningful participation: (e.g. …)