July 8, 2026 AC Meeting:

Draft EJ Complaint Definition Overview & Discussion Slides

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How are CR + EJ complaints different?

Civil Rights complaints

- Federal government:
  - provides clear legal framework
  - establishes requirements for management and resolution
- Elements for compliance are clearly outlined

Environmental Justice complaints

- Framework requires development
- No pre-existing requirements for management and resolution
- No pre-determined elements for compliance

Advisory Council Recommendations (2024)

Applicable to EJ, not to Civil Rights

Components of a Unified EJ Complaint Response System

• Agency points of contact for Environmental Justice complaint intake and coordination

•Accessible interagency complaint intake, referral, and tracking process

•Shared standards for complaint review, response, coordination, and resolution

•Centralized interagency system for recordkeeping, trend analysis, and reporting

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Proposed Definition of an Environmental Justice Complaint

- Developed by 3 AC members. **Further AC review and approval needed.**
- An EJ complaint alleges:
  - A **disregard** or **neglect** to any of the principles of environmental justice
- People or communities that can file a complaint include people who have allegedly experienced:
  - Obstruction to **fair access to environmental benefits**
  - Disproportionate **exposure to environmental burdens**
  - Lack of **meaningful participation, information, services, or protections** related to the EJ Law

Draft Definition of an EJ Complaint

“An environmental justice complaint is a recognition of actions, conditions, or decisions involving a disregard or neglect to any of the principles of environmental justice, including any lack of care against the sacredness of Mother Earth, the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.

Any person or community that has experienced obstruction to fair access to environmental benefits and/or disproportionate exposure to environmental burdens, as well as lack of meaningful participation, information, services, or protection as it relates to environmental justice law and / or as a result of agency action, inaction, practice, or decision-making can present a complaint.

This draft definition should remain flexible and continue to respond to EJ Law implementation needs and community input.” **Read Mariana, Rich and Matthew’s full response here**

Questions to answer by the end of the meeting:

- Does the full Council agree with this definition as-is?
- What additional work and discussion is needed to finalize this definition?
- Does the Council require any discussion, collaboration or insights from the IAC or covered agencies to make progress?
- What are next steps and immediate goals?

Icebreaker:

How would you explain the draft Definition to your neighbor?