



Introduction to the Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities (CEJSC)

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Goals of the Commission

- ▶ Maryland Environment Article [§1-701](#) created the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities (CEJSC). The goals according to the statute of the Commission are outlined below:
- ▶ (h) The Commission shall:
 - (1) **Advise State government agencies** on environmental justice and related community issues;
 - (2) **Review and analyze the impact of current State laws and policies** on the issue of environmental justice and sustainable communities;
 - (3) **Assess the adequacy of State and local government laws** to address the issue of environmental justice and sustainable communities;
 - (4) **Coordinate with the Children’s Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council on recommendations** related to environmental justice and sustainable communities;
 - (5) **Develop criteria to assess whether communities** in the State may be experiencing environmental justice issues; and
 - (6) **Recommend options to the Governor** for addressing issues, concerns, or problems related to environmental justice that surface after reviewing State laws and policies, including prioritizing areas of the State that need immediate attention.
- (i) On or before October 1 of each year, the Commission shall **report** its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, subject to § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

Definition of Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities

- ▶ Maryland Environment Article [§1-701](#) defines Environmental Justice as the “equal protection from environmental and public health hazards for all people regardless of race, income, culture, and social status.”
 - ▶ **Environmental Justice** - Environmental justice (EJ) is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. (Source: EPA Office of Environmental Justice, <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>)
 - ▶ **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ)** - Note that various organizations have begun using other terms that may encompass various definitions and goals related to EJ. For example, the Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT), the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network (CBFN) and the Choose Clean Water Coalition (CCWC) released their “DEIJ in Action” report in 2020 and created a “Living Glossary,” meaning that the project team acknowledges that definitions may change over time (definitions found on page 6 - https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/CB-Watershed-DEIJ-Guide_May-2019.pdf)
- ▶ Sustainable Communities is **not** defined in statute
 - ▶ Recommended but optional reading: Envisioning a Sustainable World by Donella Meadows from Getting Down to Earth: Practical Applications of Ecological Economics

Next Meeting and Website

- ▶ Meetings will be held virtually
- ▶ Next meeting:
 - ▶ November 24 10 am - 12 pm Meeting will be held virtually on Google Meet:
meet.google.com/pqn-urdq-ebt Join by phone (US) +1 315-801-9406 PIN: 940 492 333#
- ▶ All information regarding past reports, meeting minutes, and additional resources found on the website:
<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/CrossMedia/EnvironmentalJustice/Pages/cejsc.aspx>