

## THE PROBLEM

Environmental justice is the intersection between the fights for civil rights, and for environmental health, ensuring marginalized communities have self-determination and are relieved from being at the face of activity that harms both the environment and public health. Connecticut must not only address its legacy of injustice where communities are already overburdened with inordinate public health and environmental impacts from polluting facilities. It must also support the empowerment of communities in decision-making processes to stop new sources of pollution.

The approval of hazardous facilities, such as power plants, sewage treatment facilities, trash incinerators, and landfills, impacts public health in all communities. These facilities are concentrated in low wealth urban communities and communities of color of all income levels. These toxic sites are directly responsible for ailments such as high rates of asthma, cancer, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and other learning disabilities. These factors dramatically impact quality of life through exposure to odor and noise and limited access to open space.

## A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION

**Strengthen The Environmental Justice Law:** The state's Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, as well as the Siting Council, must be prohibited from granting a permit if it would result in significant cumulative environmental or public health impacts (combined past, present, and foreseeable pollution), in an already distressed community already overburdened with pollution. This would make the existing law much more impactful. This requires that criteria be developed with diverse stakeholders representing environmentally distressed communities to make fair determinations of public health stressors. In developing criteria for a stronger environmental justice law, a culmination of data highlighting racial, language, and tribal inequities would be necessary in expanding the definition of



environmental justice. Current procedure for public participation must be expanded regarding public notice and public informational meetings. Lastly, loopholes within existing Community Environmental Benefit Agreements (CEBA) must be closed; if a town suffers from more than 5 Affecting Facilities, a CEBA must be required.

**Environmental justice is racial justice. A stronger environmental justice law will support stronger public health outcomes, and protect our natural environment.**

## FAST FACTS

In Connecticut there are over 600 potential pollution sources in each of our five major metropolitan towns: Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Stamford and Waterbury. These five towns combined contain:

- ❖ 19% of the state's pollution.
- ❖ 20% of all potential pollution sources.
- ❖ 51% of all the state's population is in poverty.
- ❖ 71% of the state's minority population.

## MORE INFORMATION

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