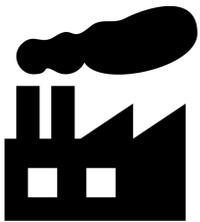




The Environmental Justice Act (H2913/S426)

All people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment—but low-income communities and communities of color are most likely to be in the shadows of a dirty power plant or next to a busy polluting highway. **Environmental Justice (EJ)** is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws.

Mass Power Forward supports efforts to codify environmental justice into law and to secure strong enforcement of the state's EJ policy, which was first created in 2002 under Acting Gov. Jane Swift. California, Oregon, Illinois and other states have legislated Environmental Justice protections while Massachusetts has yet to codify EJ issues at all. The Massachusetts Environmental Justice Act would ensure:



PROTECTION FROM POLLUTION

Modifies Chapter 21 of MGL to ensure pollution limits are enforced in Environmental Justice communities and to create a plan for brownfield remediation in or near Environmental Justice Population neighborhoods. The legislation also directs the Department of Public Health to create guidelines and assessment tools to evaluate which communities will be most adversely affected by pollution, and modifies the requirements for state agency “environmental impact reports” to include consideration of public health impact.



ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT

Ensures multi-lingual outreach and consultation when projects undergoing environmental review are proposed in EJ communities. It also would create a Massachusetts Environmental Justice Advisory Council, with guaranteed representation from EJ communities.



SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

Creates a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) bank, which maintains an inventory of environmentally beneficial projects in communities with environmental justice populations that may be funded by violators in lieu of paying penalties associated with the settlement of enforcement actions.



PREVENTION OF HARM

Directs state agencies that oversee permitting of any Toxics Release Inventory Facility to issue recommendations for ways to decrease the further siting or expansion of polluting facilities within Environmental Justice areas.