UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

November 4, 2005

THE ADMINISTRATOR

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Reaffirming the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Commitment to Environmental Justice

TO: Assistant Administrators
Regional Administrators
Associate Administrators
Office Directors
General Counsel
Chief Financial Officer
Inspector General

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency maintains an ongoing commitment to ensure environmental justice for all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income. In recognizing that minority and/or low-income communities frequently may be exposed disproportionately to environmental harms and risks, EPA works to protect these and other burdened communities from adverse human health and environmental effects of its programs, consistent with existing environmental and civil rights laws, and their implementing regulations, as well as Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations." (Feb. 11, 1994) Ensuring environmental justice means not only protecting human health and the environment for everyone, but also ensuring that all people are treated fairly and are given the opportunity to participate meaningfully in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

This memorandum reaffirms EPA's commitment to environmental justice and directs EPA to more fully and effectively integrate environmental justice considerations into its programs, policies, and activities. Specifically, I am directing the Agency to incorporate environmental justice considerations into its planning and budgeting processes. I have asked the Chief Financial Officer to issue supplemental guidance to incorporate environmental justice considerations through the use of the existing Goal Teams process. In the Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2006-2011, EPA will: (1) establish, as appropriate, measurable environmental justice commitments (such as strategic targets) for eight national environmental priorities and other critical areas of focus; and (2) identify the means and strategies to achieve the commitments and measure outcomes to help ensure that Agency resources reach disproportionately burdened communities, including disproportionately burdened minority and/or low-income communities.

The eight national environmental justice priorities include:

Air
Reduce Asthma Attacks
Reduce Exposure to Air Toxics

Water
Fish and Shellfish Safe to Eat
Water Safe to Drink

Enforcement and Compliance
Ensure Compliance

Land Preservation and Restoration
Revitalization of Brownfields and Contaminated Sites

Toxics
Reduced Incidence of Elevated Blood Lead Levels

Cross-Cutting
Collaborative Problem-Solving

The national environmental justice priorities will create an Agency-wide focus on issues, such as reduction of asthma attacks, that are relevant nationwide and which environmental justice advocates and others have identified as critical environmental justice issues. However, I also encourage the National Program Managers and the Regions to identify additional priorities that address opportunities beyond those identified above.

I also ask for your continued support and commitment to consider environmental justice in every aspect of our work to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law. This includes:

1. Developing and conducting EPA's programs, policies, and activities that substantially affect human health and the environment to ensure the fair treatment of all people, including minority and/or low-income populations;
2. Ensuring fair and equitable enforcement of protective environmental laws for all people, including minority and/or low-income populations;
3. Ensuring greater public participation in the Agency's development and implementation of environmental regulations and policies; and
4. Improving research and data collection for Agency programs relating to the health and environment of all people, including minority and/or low-income populations.

EPA will continue to implement its programs and activities to ensure that they do not adversely affect populations with critical environmental and public health issues, including minority and low-income communities. The Office of Environmental Justice and the Environmental Justice Coordinators in each headquarters program office and region are availabl to assist you. OEJ's Director, Barry E. Hill, can be reached at (202) 564-2515.

Thank you all for your attention to this important environmental and health issue. Together, we can all do our part to ensure that everyone has a safe and healthy environment in which to live, learn, work, and play.

Stephen L. Johnson