



Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act

Where you live, your income, race, or language ability should not determine how healthy and safe you are. But we know that in our communities, health and well-being varies significantly according to who you are and where you live. People across Washington who are suffering worst from pollution — often low-income people, communities of color, and linguistically-isolated people — pay with their well-being and shortened lives.

The HEAL Act aims to center those most affected by pollution as Washington transitions to a greener and fairer economy. The HEAL Act does this by defining 'environmental justice' in state law, outlining how agencies should consider community needs and environmental justice in their work, establishing a permanent Environmental Justice Council to work with these agencies and help create environmental justice legislation, and expanding equitable community engagement and participation.

The HEAL Act does this by defining 'environmental justice' in state law, centering new investments in frontline communities, increasing public engagement, and dedicating staff at state agencies to focus on environmental justice work.

KEY PRIORITIES IN THE PROPOSED BILL

1. Define environmental justice (EJ) in state law and require its application, using a racial justice lens, in agency strategic plans, goals, and metric setting, program implementation, enforcement, and reporting affecting the environment.
2. Direct funding with environmental benefits toward investments in and determined by communities highly impacted by pollution or climate impacts.
3. Ensure Tribal sovereignty and rights in Environmental Justice.
4. Advance equitable community participation in planning, resource allocation, programs, and enforcement. This includes: agency community engagement planning, targeted outreach and language accessibility, screening tools like the Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map, reducing barriers to funding and facilitating agency contracting with community based organizations for community engagement, compliance reviews, and consultation with Washington Tribes.
5. Create and fund an Environmental Justice Council that will support integrating EJ into state government and report progress to the Governor.
6. Require EJ assessment of proposed and historic environment bills, rulemakings, and budgets using the Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map and other tools.
7. Fund and apply the Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map to identify cumulative impacts and overburdened communities and develop additional tools to measure the link between environmental quality and human health, disaggregated by race.

For questions, contact:

Guillermo Rogel Jr., Legislative Advocate
360-359-5696 | grogelstrategies@gmail.com

Front and Centered is a statewide coalition of more than 60 organizations and groups rooted in communities of color and people with lower incomes who are on the frontlines of economic and environmental change. We build power and capacity to create healthy environments for all and for a Just Transition that centers equity and is led by people of color.