



COMMUNITY REPORT

ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Communities of color, people with lower incomes, and Indigenous people are on the frontlines of climate and environmental change.

ABOUT FRONT AND CENTERED

Front and Centered is a statewide coalition of organizations and groups rooted in communities of color working for climate justice and a Just Transition. We were formed in 2015 out of a desire by leading racial justice organizations in Washington State to organize and ensure state climate policy was effective and equitable for communities on the frontlines. We see climate as fundamentally an issue of equity.

Front and Centered envisions a future where our communities and the earth are healed and thriving, our people have dignified work and the building blocks of opportunity and prosperity, and our government values, respects, and represents us. We are working for sovereignty, resilience, and self-sufficiency for our communities so that future generations can thrive. We strive to make racial inequities on all issues a thing of the past, and to ensure that people of color and Indigenous people are at the forefront of building equitable, democratic systems and policies that work for their communities.

To realize our vision, we must understand and address the world in all its complexity. Global environmental threats like climate change and local environmental threats like air pollution are woven into our societies, closely linked with other social and economic challenges, and cannot be addressed by drawing boundaries and treating only the symptoms. Ultimately, it's a combination of the wind, the water current, the rudder that steers a sailboat; by deeply understanding broadly the forces at work we can better shift direction toward our vision.



Bullitt Center, 1501 E Madison St #250
Seattle, WA 98122

206-487-4303

info@frontandcentered.org

www.frontandcentered.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| ABOUT FRONT AND CENTERED | 01 |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 03 |
| INTRODUCTION | 10 |
| SECTION 1 - The Story of Front and Centered..... | 15 |
| SECTION 2 - Birth of the Environmental Health Disparities (EHD) Map | 17 |
| SECTION 3 - The HEAL Act by way of Initiative 1631 | 18 |
| SECTION 4 - Formation of the EJ Task Force | 20 |
| SECTION 5 - F&C's Areas of Work | 22 |
| SECTION 6 - Task Force meetings and listening session process | 23 |
| SECTION 7 - Themes from the Community Conversations | 27 |
| SECTION 8 - Uses of the EHD map | 38 |
| SECTION 9 - Mapping and measuring community health | 40 |
| CONCLUSION | 42 |
| APPENDIX | 43 |



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Washington and across the country, a person's race, even more than their income, is the most important factor that determines how their health is impacted by climate change and pollution. Our advocacy at [Front and Centered](#) (F&C) drove the creation of Washington's [Environmental Justice Task Force](#) (Task Force) with the aim to recalibrate the work of state agencies to eliminate such gross health disparities. As highlighted by the frontline voices in this report, environmental justice (EJ) can be achieved by expanding the focus of state agencies to hone in on the social dimensions of public health. Such an approach would provide adequate health protections for communities more vulnerable to environmental threats by virtue of discrimination, poverty, and poor health.

The findings of this report offer a firsthand account of how human health is impacted by adverse risk factors, and how it can be improved by government policies. These shared experiences were foundational to our work supporting the mission of Washington's 16-member Task Force, co-chaired by F&C representative David Mendoza. Task Force members included state agencies and organizations representing the interests of agricultural and business communities, environmental justice, and workers.

The creation of the Task Force was a key provision of the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act legislation that F&C led the push to pass in 2019. The HEAL Act would have required Washington's state agencies to work towards achieving a universal standard of environmental health quality across every community in Washington. Rather than pass it in whole, the State Legislature appropriated \$390,000 to fund the provision establishing the Task Force and directed it to develop policy recommendations on how to embed EJ into the responsibilities carried out by state agencies. Essentially, the goal was to provide ways to incorporate EJ in all aspects of agency work, spanning human resources, strategic planning, policy implementation, and enforcement.

The Task Force was required to host public meetings to gather community feedback on its work plans and proposals. In order to prepare Washington's communities of color - among those most impacted by pollution and climate change - to provide robust feedback, we hosted a series of nine events called 'community conversations' attended by 196 people representing F&C coalition members statewide. Held between November 2019 - September 2020, the stories and ideas that took shape at these events informed the creation of the Task Force's recommendations. Submitted in [a report to Governor Inslee and the Legislature in November 2020](#), we plan to advocate for the passage of these recommendations in the form of a reintroduced HEAL Act in 2021.



Original HEAL Act author,
Senator Rebecca Saldaña delivers
opening remarks at a hearing on
the HEAL Act 2019

Determined to be essential to understand how state agencies could adopt an EJ lens, the recommendations provided guidance in the four areas given below:

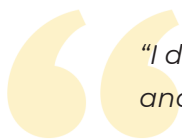
- 1)** How to create meaningful opportunities for all residents of Washington to engage their government and participate in public processes, taking into account existing barriers to do so.
- 2)** How to use [Washington's Environmental Health Disparities \(EHD\) Map](#) which provides a cumulative impacts analysis to rank the overall environmental health of a community with respect to risk factors and how to identify communities most impacted by pollution and climate change according to best practices and current demographic data.
- 3)** How to create measurable goals to reduce environmental health disparities in each community in Washington and ways that state agencies can focus their work to achieve those goals.
- 4)** Model policies that prioritize the needs of communities most at risk by pollution and climate change for the purpose of creating a healthy environment for all residents.

The community conversations were designed to draw from the knowledge of frontline communities on how state agencies should proceed in the four above areas. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, these conversations took place in-person. From April 2020 onward, we held them over Zoom and, in a few cases, in small gatherings with farm workers who lived in remote areas. Separated into three categories, given below are six themes and additional findings that emerged from these conversations, along with context and supporting quotes from participants with their locations.

ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL NEEDS AND SERVICES

Theme #1:

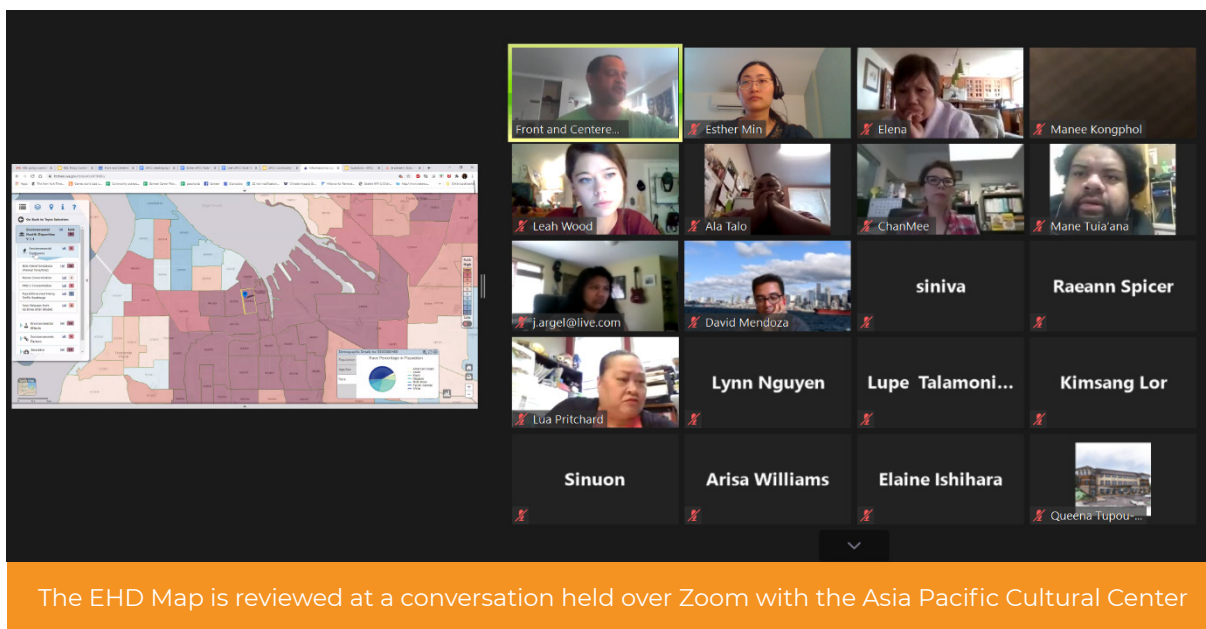
The denial of basic needs heightens the risk of environmental threats in our communities.



"I don't qualify for insurance and have never had it my life. I just have to stay healthy and be thankful I haven't got sick." - Tacoma participant



"A lot of convenient stores in Seattle's Black communities do not have fresh produce." - King County participant



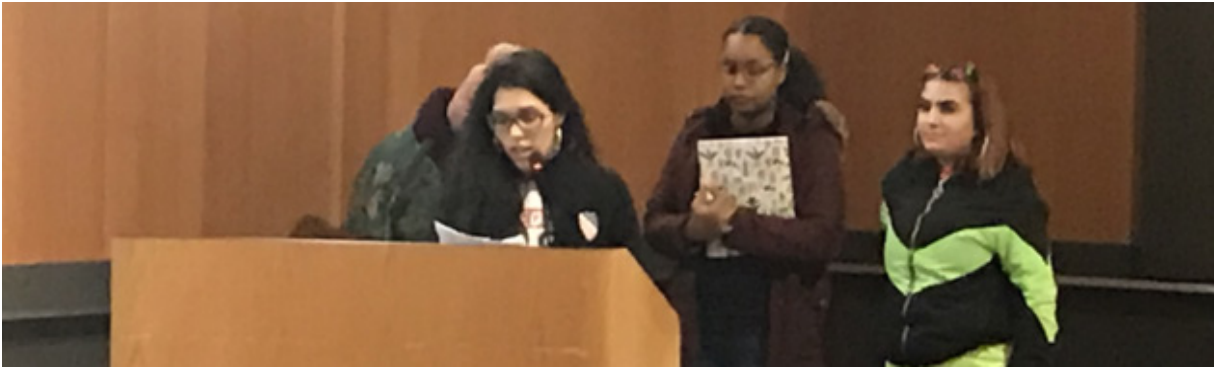
Theme #2:

Unjust land use policies have forced Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities to reside in close proximity to pollution and be disadvantaged in accessing the amenities that are necessary to achieve health equity.

Environmental injustices from land use policy include the infringement of Tribal sovereignty, the legacy of segregated housing from the Jim Crow era, and zoning permits that place people near pollution. Housing policies once restricted people of color in Washington to live in neighborhoods near industrial and high traffic zones, and the furthest away from healthy green space.

“Originally, native people gathered on the banks of the river in the downtown Spokane area where the city exists. Groups gathered there to barter and share and partake in salmon in all the richness of the rivers...But at the time our tribe was colonized, three bands were pulled together, and put on reservation lands which are more mountainous than the surrounding area...In the 1930's, the Grand Coulee Dam was erected which was devastating. That was our stronghold as far as subsistence. The river was our lifeblood. We lost our salmon, river eels and mollusk that sustained our people. Then came the Uranium Mines in the 1950's. Many in the workforce have died of cancer and associated diseases. Unfortunately our healthcare provider is the federal government and a very reluctant player to address our disparities. We are calling out for better healthcare.”

- Spokane participant, and member of many Northwest Tribes



Youth leaders offer public comments at the Vancouver Task Force meeting in January 2020

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS THAT DEMAND ACTION

Theme #3:

Policy intervention is needed to protect our communities from hazardous conditions and promote a healthy thriving community.

“There is an overflow of trash that makes its way to the water and our beaches and parks. Plastics in the water is an overwhelming amount. If we don’t recycle, everything will end up in the landfill and we, or our kids, will be dealing with effects.”
- King County participant

“I am worried about the toxins in the air we breathe due to industrial agriculture because of the chemicals we use in our food, the homes we live in that may have toxins, and quality of water we have access to.” - NW WA participant

Theme #4:

Frontline workers endure occupational health hazards due to poor industry human resources management practices and a culture of fear among workers for reporting violations.

“At the paperas (potato company) we work from 6am to 7pm. Why can’t they hire more people to create two shifts or divide us into two shifts? If they are making us work the job of two people the least they can do is pay us more...Undocumented people are scared of retaliation. I can’t organize my coworkers. When it’s time to create an action they get scared...If we are cold working in the snow we stay quiet.”
- NW WA participants

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Theme #5:

Many environmental regulations are designed and enforced in ways that harm frontline communities.

“

“I feel the Yakima Clean Air Agency hasn’t been doing its job of equally enforcing clean air laws.” - Yakima participant

“

“Our current system works like plantation capitalism. What companies or industries in environmentally hazardous zones are exploiting Black and brown people? They are not hazardous zones by the oppressed, but by oppressors.” - King county participant

“

“I’m concerned about the lack of oversight with water pollution. Right now we have no idea what’s happening with corporations because nobody’s watching, they police themselves.” - Spokane participant



Task Force Community Engagement Coordinator Esmael Lopez translates a poignant message delivered by an agricultural worker who survived cancer from pesticide exposure at the Yakima Task Force meeting in November 2019

Theme #6:

There is significant room for improvement in government accountability and the practices by which state agencies engage underserved communities.

The general sentiment of views was that state agencies must take proactive steps to establish a meaningful relationship with underserved communities to facilitate their participation in public processes. Participants identified language, time, cultural differences, and a lack of faith in the system as reasons for the current lackluster engagement between state agency staff and their communities. The value of improved engagement was seen as greater transparency and public confidence in agency work that would increase levels of public involvement in agency decisions. This in turn would enable agency actions to be more informed by specific community needs and thus more effectively reduce health disparities.

“Dropping public comments feels like a black box; only ask for people’s time when it will have a meaningful impact. Recommendations cannot be routinely disregarded.”
- Tacoma participant

“Hire from within impacted communities -- oftentimes we see [state agencies] bring in experts and we end up training them again and again and again. A lot of time could be saved by hiring from within communities instead of training outsiders on how to work with us.” - Spokane participant



EJ legend Dolores Huerta and former F&C Youth Organizer, Melissa Banales at Latino Lobby Day 2019

In addition, participants shared their perspective on how state agencies could offer meaningful opportunities for engagement in frontline communities. Summarized in two categories, they were:

Access to government processes:

- ✓ Provide childcare and food at public meetings
- ✓ Hold meetings at times that work for everyone, recognizing that many communities do not adhere to conventional work schedules
- ✓ Compensate community members for participating in meetings, especially Tribes
- ✓ Ensure sign language interpreters are available

Outreach and education:

- ✓ Diversify the staff at state agencies by hiring from frontline communities
- ✓ Utilize high volume public venues to provide environmental educational materials. Specifically recommended were places where people gather within a community such as churches, libraries, public schools, community centers, and healthcare facilities
- ✓ Identify and engage trusted community groups to disseminate information and provide funding to conduct this outreach
- ✓ Communicate via the radio and media outlets, and ensure communication is in languages spoken by diverse public audiences such as Spanish, Mandarin, and Vietnamese

The following tables categorize a broad range of ideas participants shared on ways state agencies could effectively benchmark their progress towards EJ goals.

SIGNS OF COMMUNITY VITALITY

Participants were asked to name the signs of a healthy community as a way to provide benchmarks for achieving environmental justice. Across ten listening sessions, we heard the following suggestions, provided in six categories:

| Environmental Health Data | Civic Engagement | High Quality Infrastructure Presence | Essential Needs | Civil Rights | Regulations |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Healthy air, water, and soil | Rate of voter participation | Electric vehicle charging stations | Access to greenspace, including by public transit | High % of women and people of color in the workforce earning a living wage | Recycling requirements |
| Indoor air quality and presence of lead based paint and asbestos in public schools | | High quality sidewalks | Availability of fresh produce at neighborhood stores | Renter protection laws | Strict standards for property owners to provide safe rental housing |
| Indoor air quality in homes | | Microgrids | Broadband Clean Water Healthcare Safe low-income housing | | |
| Presence of air pollution monitors Number of environmental cleanups performed relative to outstanding need | | Solar power generation systems | Offering of healthy meals in public schools | | |

The urgency of our work was underscored by the hardship and tragedies endured by communities of color in 2020. It is nothing short of dismantling the oppressive systems of our society that manifest in a 14-year difference in the average lifespans of people who reside in different Seattle zip codes. Indeed, today's racially disparate impacts of climate change, COVID-19, and police brutality reflect how the government views and performs its duties to protect public health and safety. It calls for remaking the foundation of our government institutions to uphold justice. It is the enduring legacy of a Nation that was founded on the idea that all people were not created to be equal. Laws like the HEAL Act are crucially needed to repair this foundation and truly uphold the ideal that everyone in our nation deserves the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It can ensure all residents of Washington equally enjoy the protections offered by our state laws and programs and provide an EJ model for other states and the federal government to adopt.



F&C Staff Sameer Ranade and EJ Task Force member Emily Pinckney share a smile during a hearing of the HEAL Act

INTRODUCTION

Conceived in the policy laboratory of Front and Centered (F&C), the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act of 2019 marked a milestone in the movement to embed environmental justice (EJ) in the mission of the Washington State government. In Washington and across the country, a person's race, even more than their income, is the most important factor that determines how their health is impacted by climate change and pollution. Our advocacy that drove the creation of Washington's Environmental Justice Task Force (Task Force) - proposed in the HEAL Act - aimed to recalibrate the environmental work of state agencies to eliminate such gross health disparities. As highlighted by the frontline voices in this report, environmental justice can be achieved by expanding the focus of state agencies to hone in on the social dimensions of public health. Such an approach would provide adequate health protections for communities more vulnerable to environmental threats by virtue of discrimination, poverty, and poor health.

Compelled by the poignant and insightful legislative testimony of F&C members from frontline communities, the State Legislature appropriated \$390,000 to establish the HEAL Act's 16-member Environmental Justice Task Force in the 2019-2021 operating budget. The Task Force was established to recommend policy strategies for how to embed EJ into all aspects of work carried out by state agencies, spanning human resources, strategic planning, policy implementation, and enforcement. The Task Force was required to host regional public meetings to gather community feedback on its work plan and draft recommendations. This report shares the results of our 'community conversations,' which were events F&C held to prepare our members to provide that vital feedback.

From November 2019 to September 2020, F&C co-hosted nine community conversations that engaged 196 participants from across the state. These events are where many of the stories that served as the basis of the Task Force's recommendations took shape and the groundwork was laid to enact them into law in 2021 as a new enhanced HEAL Act. The timing and selection of members who participated in these events was synchronized with [the Task Force's schedule of regional public meetings](#). About a week in advance of each official regional public meeting the Task Force held, F&C reached out to its members from each region to host a community conversation.



In the locations marked with stars over the summer of 2017, Front and Centered organized eleven listening sessions among our members across Washington on pollution, climate impacts, and the Puget Sound. This report shares what we heard.

Appointed by Governor Jay Inslee as a Task Force co-chair, F&C was in a unique position to guide the group's work and develop its recommendations. These official recommendations from the Task Force were released as a [report to Governor Inslee and relevant Legislative committees](#) in November 2020. Our report builds on those recommendations by exploring and presenting the themes that shaped the thinking of the Task Force. For decision-makers, this is a resource to gain a deeper understanding of Washington's environmental health disparities and their causes. For our community members, this report documents your voice and is part of our mission to make it heard loud and clear in our State Capitol.

We encourage fellow social justice and environmental advocates who read this report to amplify its themes and incorporate them into your work. Core to our approach is the notion that measuring the quality of a community's health is a function of exposure and proximity to physical environmental threats, socio-demographic and health factors, and the ability to participate meaningfully in government decision-making processes. No matter where on the spectrum of issues you work on to create a just society, the progress you make can positively impact environmental health.



In the next sections, this report describes the origins of F&C and the long journey behind the research that led to creation of the HEAL Act, as an offshoot of Initiative 1631. It then describes the creation and work of the Task Force, where it fits into F&C's areas of work, and how and where F&C organized its community conversations. After this, it turns to the results of those conversations, provided in categories, themes, and two data tables, then wraps up with a summary. **Before moving on to these parts, here is a definition of key terms in the report and a brief background on the history of EJ:**

Underserved communities – Communities where public dollars have been systematically underinvested for infrastructure and services, such as schools, libraries, hospitals, fire stations, and healthy food outlets - in comparison to similarly dense communities.

Frontline communities – Communities that experience the impacts of climate change first, such as wildfires, sea-level rise, floods, and heat waves. This also applies to communities on the frontlines of the extractive polluting economy and the workers on the frontlines of those industries.

Just Transition – The transformative shift from an extractive, exploitive, inequitable, fossil-fuel-based economy to one that is regenerative of people and place and makes clean renewable resources universally available. In the process, a Just Transition builds a strong participatory democracy, community controlled and cooperative enterprises, and a healthy environment for all people. To explore further, see our 2020 report [Accelerating a Just Transition in Washington State: Climate Justice Strategies from the Frontlines](#).

Task Force definition of Environmental Justice developed with input from F&C members

“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. This includes using an intersectional lens to address disproportionate environmental and health impacts by prioritizing highly impacted populations, equitably distributing resources and benefits, and eliminating harm.”



Billy Frank Jr.,
one of the original EJ warriors

History of the EJ movement

In its purest form, the origins of the EJ movement in the North American continent began with the resistance to colonization and slavery and endured in the post-Civil War Reconstruction Era. In the first half of the 20th Century, the movement included leaders like Nisqually tribal member Billy Frank Jr., who relentlessly advocated to protect fish populations crucial to tribal sovereignty and sustenance. The role of organized labor in protecting the health and safety of workers while on the job also played a role in the movement. These were exemplified in 1960, when César Chávez and Dolores Huerta created the United Farm Workers Union, in part to ensure farm workers received protections from exposure to toxic chemicals. And in the final days before his tragic assassination, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. marched in protest of the unfair treatment of Black sanitation workers in Memphis, TN.

In contrast to their white counterparts, Black workers were relegated to assignments with the most unsanitary conditions and offered less pay.



Protests against the placement of the landfill in Warren County that would have exposed residents to harmful human made chemicals called PCBs.

The modern EJ movement began in 1982 by the brave demonstrations organized to prevent the location of a landfill of toxic industrial chemical waste in Warren County, NC. This location was chosen by North Carolina's government because it was a poor, rural, and overwhelmingly Black community. Although unsuccessful in the battle to block the landfill, the demonstrations elevated EJ in the national discourse. It led to a report in 1983 by the U.S. Government Accountability Office that found the siting of waste landfills in the U.S. correlated with racial and economic status.

Evidence of race-based environmental discrimination continued to mount with the release of a 1987 report by the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice. It identified race as the single greatest factor that determined proximity to toxic waste facilities. Its publication was guided by Reverend Benjamin Chavis, who protested the Warren County landfill. These events and findings led to a greater national awakening of the EJ movement. In 1991, the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit was held in Washington, D.C. This conglomeration of people of color of different races and ethnicities resembled an early version of F&C. The advocacy of those Summit participants spurred the signing of the first Federal Executive Order on Environmental Justice in 1994.



At the behest of EJ advocates, in 1994 President Bill Clinton signed Executive Order 12898 requiring federal agencies to address EJ. The order has withstood the test of time and remains on the books, but its ongoing implementation has not been consistently strong.

Pictured immediately to the President's left is former Congressman John Lewis of Georgia (R.I.P.), an icon of the Civil Rights movement.

Building on the battles fought by Billy Frank Jr., the EJ movement in Washington State in the 1990's and early 2000's fought against uranium mining in Spokane, the improper disposal of dairy farm waste and nuclear waste in Central Washington, and the siting of toxic facilities in South Seattle and along the Duwamish River. In 2007, organizations like Got Green and Puget Sound Sage were created to merge labor and environmental rights. These organizations were among the founders of F&C a few years later.

SECTION 1

The Story of Front and Centered



F&C members and staff at the Clean Energy Transformation Act celebration. This 2019 law requires utilities to eliminate fossil fuels from their electricity supply by 2045, as well as provide low-income energy assistance and to incorporate a cumulative impacts analysis on frontline communities in their planning decisions.

Front and Centered was founded in the spring of 2014 as a cohort of nearly a dozen community of color led organizations in Washington State joined forces. They established the [Principles for Climate Justice](#) and discussed how their collective strength could shape climate policy in the State Capitol. These were organizations that led and won campaigns on critical issues such as immigrant rights and anti-poverty measures in addition to local EJ fights. The populations represented by these organizations spanned Washington's Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

Systemic racism has prevented these populations from equal access to the institutions and resources that provide the basic human needs of healthy air, water, soil, and food. The Principles of Climate Justice provided a guidepost for how to approach climate policy in a way that removed these obstacles. Given below, they are:

1) Racial and economic analysis should drive decisions

2) Follow the knowledge of the communities disproportionately impacted

3) Use targeted strategies that create net benefits for communities of color and indigenous people

Absent these principles, climate policies would not be guaranteed to lift the disproportionate environmental health burdens borne by people of color and those with fewer resources. This means extractive industries would still have somewhere to continue degrading our environment. This would perpetuate environmental injustice, and contradict the notion of creating a pollution free society that is necessary to prevent climate change.

Once it formed, F&C quickly began to shape the climate conversation and policy proposals to include effective strategies to mitigate climate change and address the disproportionate environmental burdens borne by BIPOC communities. As part of the effort to make its Climate Justice Principles attain mainstream support, F&C joined traditional environmental groups and organized labor to establish a uniquely broad and diverse coalition. Honed in on state level action, the coalition was called the [Climate Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy](#) (CAJCE). This marked a turning point, as proposals designed to address systemic social inequities became an essential component of the climate policies under consideration. CAJCE met many unifying objectives, like achieving Washington's legally binding greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets, achieving the same measurable standard of environmental health in every community, and making high quality green jobs available for workers - especially from underserved communities.



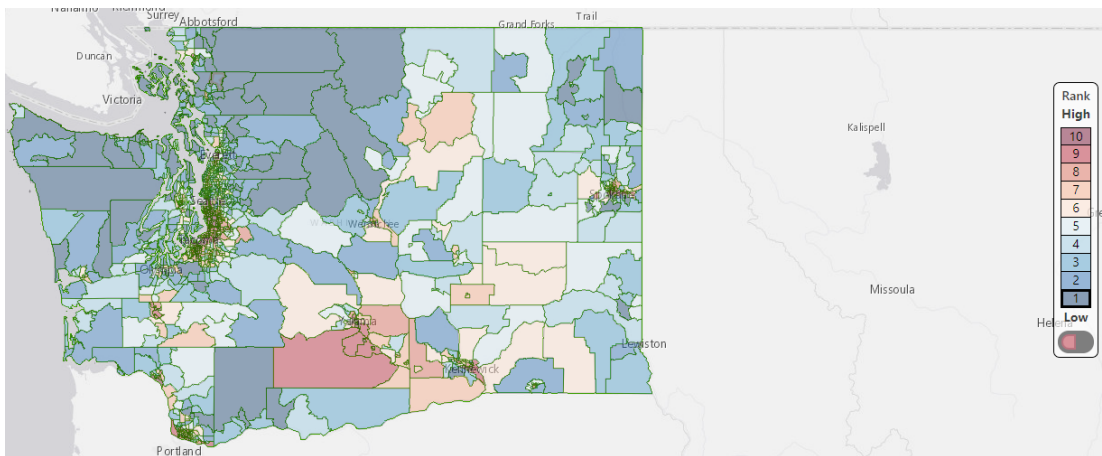
F&C members share a smile
at a summer steering
committee retreat, 2019

Since its inception, F&C has grown into a flourishing statewide coalition of over 70 members. As part of CAJCE, other coalitions, and independently, F&C has made a significant impact in state level efforts to enact effective and equitable climate mitigation and environmental protection policies. One of the most meaningful contributions we have made is the creation of the Environmental Health Disparities topic on the Washington Tracking Network, described in the subsequent section.

SECTION 2

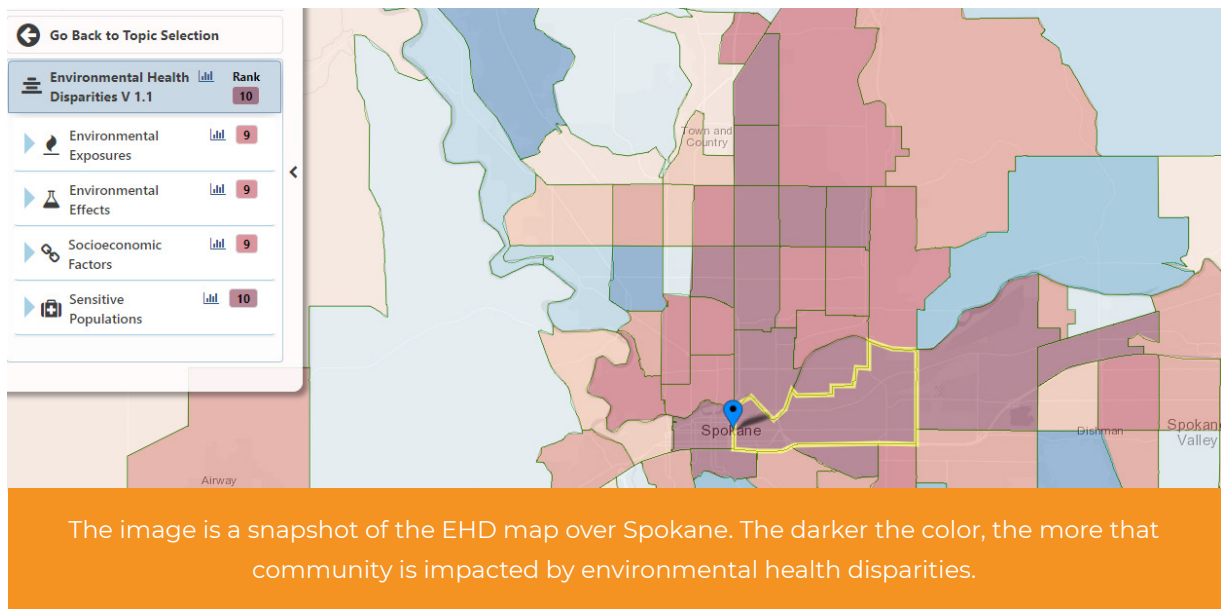
Birth of the Environmental Health Disparities (EHD) Map

In 2017, F&C embarked on a research initiative in partnership with the [University of Washington Dept. of Occupational and Environmental Health](#) (UW) to demonstrate the human dimension of pollution impacts and disparities between Washington communities and incorporate it in the design of policy. Our research showed that designing climate policy solely based on analyses of the physical and ecological dimensions of the issue was insufficient to protect human health and safety. As vividly demonstrated in the federal government's inequitable response to Hurricanes Katrina and Maria, it is clear that social dimensions like racism and income inequality impact one's level of risk to environmental threats.



In a partnership with UW, [F&C sought to understand how climate change can impact people in Washington State](#), and who those impacts fall disproportionately on. We conducted 11 listening sessions across the state with representatives of these communities and asked questions to understand the health risks they faced. The responses to these sessions validated the notion that communities experience cumulative impacts consisting of the number of hazardous climate change driven events. The exposure people face to these hazards is based on where they live and work, and their vulnerability to that exposure is based on socio-demographic factors like wealth, race, unemployment rate, health status, and linguistic isolation.

The combination of these multiple factors represents a cumulative impacts analysis and allows for a holistic assessment of health risks. The findings from these listening sessions contributed to the creation of the 'Environmental Health Disparities' topic on the Washington State Department of Health's Information by Location mapping tool. This category included 19 different factors that painted the fullest picture yet of the environmental health factors each community faced, scaled at the census tract level. The map ranks every census tract by the product of these hazards and vulnerabilities and allows for a visual comparison of the disparities by community. F&C's research recognizing the link between socio-demographic factors and healthy quality was the precursor to the effort that eventually spurred the creation of Washington's Environmental Justice Task Force.



SECTION 3

The HEAL Act by way of Initiative 1631

The map serves a valuable purpose by identifying those areas in the state that rank higher on the total number of health risk factors. It gives legislators and public agencies a guide for where resources should be prioritized. The map was proposed as the way to identify the 'Pollution and Health Action' areas in Carbon Fee Initiative 1631 that CAJCE placed on the statewide ballot in 2018. If it passed, Initiative 1631 would have generated revenue for investment by placing a GHG fee on the fossil fuels sold for consumption in Washington. The revenue was dedicated to fund projects across all sectors of the economy that reduced and sequestered GHGs, contributed to climate resilience - including relocation assistance for Tribes experiencing sea-level rise, and climate education in K-12 schools. F&C played a significant role in writing a requirement in I-1631 that a minimum 35% of the project investments in each category be designated for Pollution Health Action Areas.

I-1631 was defeated at the ballot due to over \$30 million in opposition spending by the oil and gas industry. However, its impact was not limited to the ballot. As the fall of 2018 turned to winter and the new year, another legislative session began in Olympia. Determined to get the critical provision in I-1631 requiring public resources to be focused on the communities most in need of environmental health benefits, F&C advocated for a new bill in the 2019 legislative session that was introduced in each chamber of the Legislature by Senator Rebecca Saldaña and Representative Kristine Reeves, respectively. It was called the HEAL Act and would have mandated state agencies to use the cumulative impacts analysis displayed by the EHD map to guide their environmental work. This would help agencies focus their environmental program spending, enforcement, and public involvement work in communities carrying the greatest number of health risk factors. In this manner, the work of state agencies would be focused on creating a universal standard of health quality across every Washington community.



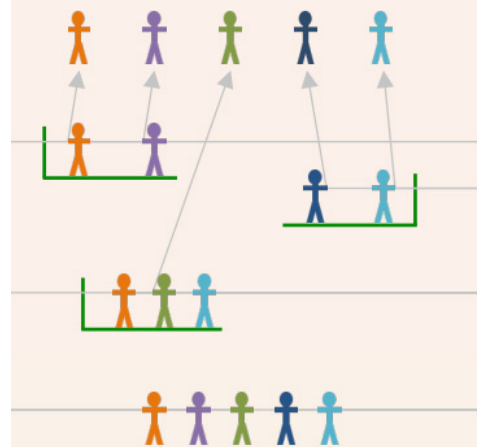
Advocates for the HEAL Act
testifying in the Legislature

Targeted universalism - a key guiding principle:

The concept of targeted universalism is the backbone of the HEAL Act. This is a strategy that aims to achieve universal goals, such as healthy air in every neighborhood for example, by targeting resources to neighborhoods with the worst air quality. The benefits of using a cumulative impacts analysis to conduct this work is that it allows for precise targeting.

It is important to note the HEAL Act did not create new environmental compliance requirements. Rather it was a new framework for how to implement existing environmental laws to reduce health disparities. This would mean prioritizing government resources to raise environmental quality standards in underserved communities to the same standard as those measured to be the healthiest. To guide the implementation work, the HEAL Act would have established a 16 member Task Force consisting of state agency heads, Tribes, and groups

Targeted universalism directs attention to pathways different groups face & suggests structural changes to make those paths smoother.



representing the interests of business, organized labor, conservation, and EJ interests, each on a statewide basis. Also included would have been four representatives from geographically distinct communities with a disproportionately high number environmental health risk factors.

F&C put forth a valiant effort to advocate for the HEAL Act's passage, securing endorsements from 89 different organizations and getting it passed out of both chambers of the Legislature. Unfortunately, this was not enough to overcome opposition from powerful corporate agricultural and big business interests. Their alarming concern for a law that did not establish any new compliance requirements but only made existing ones operate with a lens of equity spoke to the validity of the HEAL Act's intent. Simply re-orienting the focus of state agencies to implement environmental laws to reduce health disparities would require industry to reduce more pollution. In the bill's final version, the mandate that state agencies discharge their duties with EJ principles was removed. Only the Task Force remained in the bill and was funded by the Legislature in the 2019-21 operating budget to complete a vital task over the coming year.

SECTION 4 Formation of the EJ Task Force

The membership of the EJ Task Force was designed to include a relevant cross section of stakeholders, including the agencies responsible for implementing its recommendations, and others that would be meaningfully impacted by them.



Task Force members at a September meeting in Lakewood

The final list of members included:

- 1) The Chair of [Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities](#) - this body was charged with developing recommendations on the social dimensions of health
- 2) An EJ group representing statewide environmental interests: F&C, appointed by Governor Inslee

Together, the co-chairs were given the authority to appoint three more Task Force members from community organizations that met certain demographic diversity requirements, including representing a census tract that ranked eight or higher on the EHD map. The three appointed members represented Community to Community Development, the Spokane chapter of the Asian Pacific Islander Coalition, and the Tacoma Urban League of Young Professionals.

Additional Task Force members required to be appointed by Governor Inslee included:

Eight State Agencies: Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Ecology, Health, and Transportation, the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council, the Puget Sound Partnership, and the Commissioner of Public Lands.

A group representing statewide business interests: The Association of Washington Business

A group representing statewide agricultural interests: The Washington Farm Bureau (it only chose to participate in the first meeting)

A Tribal leader (unfortunately this position remained vacant)

An organized labor union: United Auto Workers Local 4121

In its report, the Task Force was charged with submitting recommendations to provide guidance covering the four areas below at a minimum:

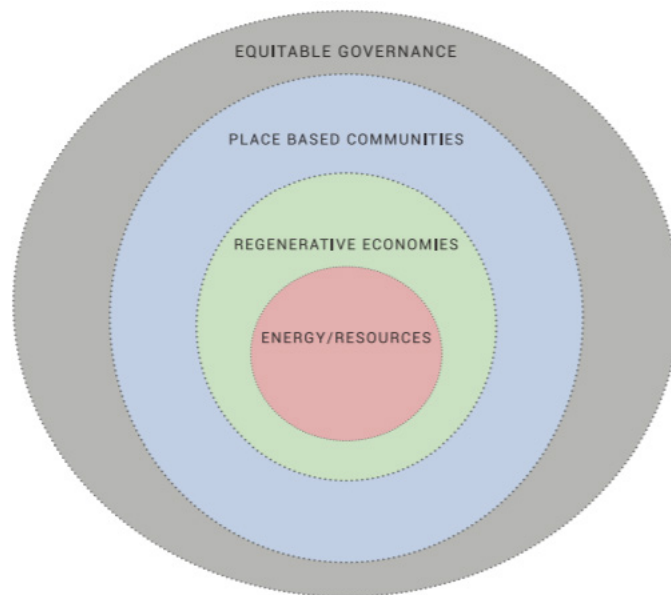
- 1) How state agencies should use the cumulative impacts analysis tool offered by the EHD map, including how impacted communities should be identified according to best practices and current demographic data.
- 2) Best practices for improving public participation and engagement by providing meaningful opportunities for all people to be involved in government processes, taking into existing account barriers to participation.
- 3) Recommendations for establishing measurable goals for reducing environmental health disparities for each community and ways agencies can focus their work to achieve those goals.

4) Model policies for prioritizing highly-impacted and vulnerable populations to create a healthy environment for all residents.

Before transitioning to the content of the community conversations that ensured the Task Force received feedback to answer these questions, it is important to review F&C's four core areas of work that guide our approach to community engagement and policy creation.

SECTION 5 F&C's Areas of Work

The notion that we are only as strong as the weakest among us guided us to creating the HEAL Act, and falls under our area of work in Equitable Governance. This empowers every person to have an equal voice in their government and makes the transition to a sustainable, healthy, and happy future for everyone possible. In the U.S., frontline communities have begun developing a framework to this approach, called a 'Just Transition.' The diagram below illustrates its core elements, described in four work areas.



Beginning at the center circle, we seek to transition to an economy that is powered by 100% renewable energy and materials. Renewable energy and materials must be consumed in the context of a regenerative economy. A regenerative economy exists because of the stewardship and connection to the places where people live. Finally, communities may only be empowered to determine how to take care of themselves and the places where they live if they are empowered to have a voice in the decisions that govern their society. Frontline communities who are the worst impacted by environmental harm presently lack an equitable voice in government policy. Our work in this area ensures they can most directly influence government decisions that impact the health and quality of the air, water, and soil that surrounds them. Fundamentally, this is what environmental justice is.

(To explore these areas of work further, see our 2020 report [Accelerating a Just Transition in Washington State: Climate Justice Strategies from the Frontlines.](#))

SECTION 6

Task Force meetings and listening session process

Shortly after the 2019 Legislative session adjourned, Governor Inslee appointed David Mendoza to co-chair the Task Force and represent F&C. We were deeply involved in both managing the policy development process and ensuring our members actively participated. Getting the recommendations right had the potential to embed the goals of protecting human health and advancing racial equity in the mission of state government. It was an awesome and enormous burden to shoulder.

The first official Task Force meeting took place at Lakewood Technical College on September 29, 2019. This was an introductory meeting for members to get to know one another and establish their principles for communication and the process for conducting the work.



Senator Rebecca Saldaña, a primary author of the HEAL Act, reminded us that our goal is not to overcome our differences, but appreciate them and recognize the reasons why they exist. Through opening our eyes to reality, we can create transformative policy that focuses on improving the quality of life for the least well and thus makes us all better off.



"If you want to know how to reach the Black community with resources, information, or funding you need to go directly through the African-American church instead of 2nd and 3rd hand agencies that have not been effective in reaching the Black community with necessary resources for the environment." - Pastor Anthony Steele, Allen AME Church

THE BUSINESS OF THE TASK FORCE OFFICIALLY BEGINS IN YAKIMA

The November 21 meeting in Yakima was the first where the Task Force conducted official business and where, about a week in advance, we held our first community conversation hosted by the Yakima NAACP chapter and supported by recruitment from Nuestra Casa and the Community Health Workers Coalition for Migrants and Refugees.



Task Force members at a September meeting in Lakewood

F&C Members representing every region where the Task Force had a meeting scheduled co-hosted community conversations. Our process for setting them up involved issuing requests for proposals to our membership, targeted to those who served the regions where the Task Force would meet. These proposals asked members to describe their interest in working on this project and their capacity to support us in designing and running the session, recruiting their membership and networks to attend, and managing logistics. Depending on the number of members involved and their role in planning and executing the sessions, we issued grants between \$2500 to \$4000. In some cases, our members used these funds to give out stipends to the participants they recruited.



Participants in the Yakima conversation gather after community conversation

THE EMERGENCE OF A PUBLIC HEALTH THREAT: COVID-19

After Yakima, the Task Force held an early January meeting in Vancouver, WA and then took a break for the three month 2020 legislative session with plans to resume meetings in early April. Then, the pandemic struck. From that point forward, all official Task Force meetings and our community conversations shifted from in person to virtual via Zoom. Despite the significant added burden our members carried, they were resilient and persistent. In fact, the glaring racial inequalities exposed by the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 underscored the urgency of the Task Force's mission.



"The color of your skin and what neighborhood you live in shouldn't determine whether you have clean air to breathe and healthy water to drink" - Pastor Gregory Christopher - 11/2/18, Tacoma True Citizen

Welcome to this vital community conversation on environmental justice!

Guests may be muted during presentations but can share questions/comments in the chat and unmute yourself anytime to speak

Shiloh Baptist CHURCH

*Please take the poll that is being circulated. Results will be shared at the end

FRONT AND CENTERED

The introductory slide of the community conversation over Zoom we hosted with Shiloh Baptist Church

As we shifted to Zoom after Vancouver, our member co-hosts recruited participants from the regions where the in-person meeting was originally scheduled to take place. This meant the Task Force still received a flow of regionally-focused feedback while holding meetings virtually, which enabled all state residents with access to Zoom and wi-fi to participate.

PROS AND CONS OF VIRTUAL ONLY CONTACT

There was certainly a downside to ending in-person engagement. In Spokane, for example, the Task Force had scheduled a trip to the Spokane River after the public meeting to observe environmental concerns firsthand. We also missed the crucial human connection afforded by in-person meetings. On the positive side, the use of Zoom made the planning and logistics of the events easier, and likely enabled more participants to attend. Data capturing also became easier as Zoom allowed for the

events to be recorded and comments in the chat box to be saved. In addition, Zoom enabled the use of polls in which we posed questions to participants to understand local environmental concerns and the issues that impacted their health. The results of these are shared in the appendix section.

Description of Community Conversations

| Location | Date | Member participants | # of participants |
|--|---|---|-------------------|
| Yakima, Henry Beauchamp Center | November 13, 2019 | Yakima NAACP (host) Community Health Workers Coalition for Migrants and Refugees (CHWCMR) - led recruitment Nuestra Casa | 19 |
| Vancouver, Vancouver Public Library | December 21, 2019 | The Noble Foundation (TNF) | 16 |
| Vancouver | January 11, 2020 | Vancouver NAACP and SW WA LULAC Chapters | 40 |
| Spokane Region (Zoom) | May 16, 2020 | Spokane APIC Chapter and Spokane NAACP Chapter | 33 |
| Tacoma Region (Zoom) | June 6, 2020 | Shiloh Baptist Church | 19 |
| Tacoma Region (Zoom) | June 30, 2020 | Asia Pacific Cultural Center | 13 |
| King County Region (Zoom) | August 1, 2020 | Community Development Outreach Service Ministries (CDOSM) | 21 |
| King County Region (Zoom) | August 5, 2020 | Entre Hermanos | 17 |
| Northwest (NW) Washington region (in the homes of farm workers) | Information gathered over August and September 2020 | Community to Community Development (C2C) | 18 |

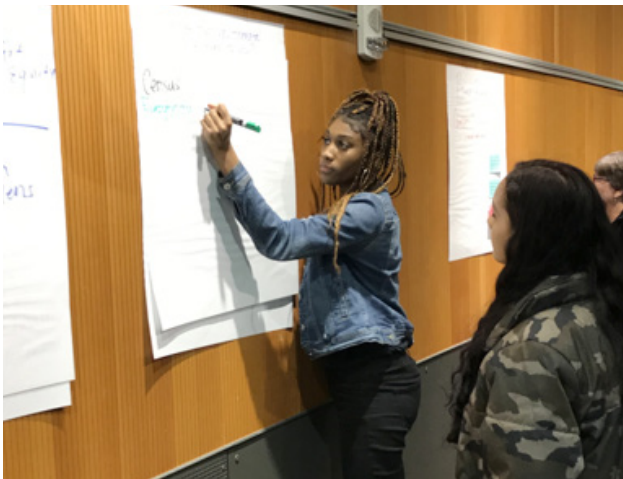
Possible limitations to our data: We did not collect data from Pacific Northwest Tribal members, with the exception of the Spokane event. This was due to a few reasons. Attendees at most of our conversations belonged to the affinity group of the member co-host. And although F&C worked to fill the vacancy for the Tribal representative on the Task Force, it was unsuccessful. Had that member been appointed, it would have made Tribal outreach more conducive. In addition, our conversations could have included a more diverse geographic mix of participants from North Central and Southeastern Washington and parts of Northwestern and Southwestern Washington.

SECTION 7

Themes from the Community Conversations

This section highlights the main themes and ideas that arose from the community conversations.

Our community conversations began with an introduction on the history of EJ advocacy in the United States, followed by remarks from an area guest speaker to ground attendees in local issues, and then we turned to describing the Task Force's creation and its purpose. After that, F&C staff and hosts from the member organizations divided the audience into groups and facilitated conversations where participants shared their stories, ideas, and concerns around EJ issues. The questions facilitators asked in this portion were designed to match the four areas of guidance the Task Force had to issue recommendations on. Our objective was to mold those recommendations in the form of participants' perspectives. Participants' responses at in-person meetings were typically recorded on butcher paper. The Zoom meetings were recorded and the responses were later transcribed.



A participant with The Noble Foundation at the Vancouver conservation records her thoughts

Responses were both broad and specific, and cut across multiple questions. Given below are six themes, separated into three categories. Each theme is contextualized with select participant quotes and additional necessary background information. Note: The quotes shown here are representative of other many similar responses.

Theme #1:

There is significant room for improvement in government accountability and the practices by which state agencies engage underserved communities

The general sentiment of views was that state agencies must take proactive steps to establish a meaningful relationship with underserved communities to facilitate their participation in public processes. Participants identified language, time, cultural differences, and a lack of faith in the system as reasons for the current lackluster engagement between state agency staff and their communities. The value of improved engagement was seen as greater transparency and public confidence in agency work that would increase levels of public involvement in agency decisions. This, in turn, would enable agency actions to be more informed by specific community needs and thus more effectively reduce health disparities.

“Wealthier neighborhoods are given more educational resources by the city with clean streets and better lighting and the city is prioritising these neighborhoods. Why isn’t EJ education being provided to POC and low income communities?”

- King County participant, Entre Hermanos

“Hire from within impacted communities -- oftentimes we see [state agencies] bring in experts and we end up training them again and again and again. A lot of time could be saved by hiring from within communities instead of training outsiders on how to work with us.” - Spokane participant

There was a perception that goals set by state agencies are Puget Sound centric. In Vancouver, a participant urged the state agency staff to ‘travel outside of the Puget Sound region.’ It should be noted that state agencies have field offices. In part, this perception may be due to insufficient engagement between these field staff and the communities they serve. Participants also wondered about the degree of influence their feedback and concerns shared during public comment processes ultimately had on government decisions. Ensuring it had an effect was tantamount to achieving the meaningful involvement of all people in the environmental policy process, a tenant of environmental justice.

“Dropping public comments feels like a black box; only ask for people’s time when it will have a meaningful impact. Recommendations cannot be routinely disregarded.”
- Tacoma participant, Shiloh Baptist Church

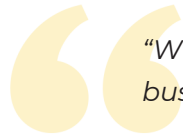
“Once the community’s spoken, agencies disappear. Regarding the pollutants and environment, these are great words because the impact on people and animals, everything will be harmed by this. But what are the actions? What is the word of faith that all of the wisdom from these elders will go somewhere? Where will it lead? It won’t lead anywhere.” - Tacoma participant, APCC



Participants of the Noble Foundation conversation in Vancouver

Theme #2:

Many environmental regulations are designed and enforced
in ways that harm frontline communities

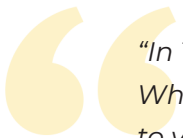


"Why is it left to private property owners to test or have soil tested from the same business that poisoned the soil?" - Tacoma participant, Shiloh Baptist Church

A few specific examples given of poorly-enforced laws include:

- ✔ Permits granted for composting dead cattle frozen to death during the 2019 winter storm, in possible violation of health standards.
- ✔ Manure and effluent from dairy and animal feedlot operations contaminating drinking water supplies without immediate recourse. When this poisoned water is mixed in baby formulas, it creates a tragic infant health condition called Blue Baby Syndrome that impairs still developing organs.
- ✔ Ongoing gravel mining operations in Clark County created noise, dust, water pollution, and dangerous traffic congestion in violation of codes. Note: The referenced mine was eventually ordered closed but is indicative of the type of problems communities face.

Profits made by skirting laws or poor oversight was often called out as a key concern.



"In 1997 I worked at the Yakima Hops extraction facility as an extraction technician. While employed I found that the lead technicians had the decision making power to vent the carbon dioxide rather than reclaim it, to speed up the total extraction cycle time. When inquiring, I was told it was illegal to vent emissions at particular times, yet operators often did knowing that it wouldn't be reported, and that the local EPA agency was aware because of the high levels of carbon dioxide and hydrogen that were being monitored and emitted by the industrial process. Today, venting of carbon dioxide occurs on windy days, inclement weather such as rain can create strong odors that blanket residential neighborhoods as far away as 1.5 miles, where I currently reside today, before dissipating. I feel the Yakima Clean Air Agency hasn't been doing its job of equally enforcing clean air laws." - Yakima participant



"Our current system works like plantation capitalism. What companies or industries in environmentally hazardous zones are exploiting black and brown people? They are not hazardous zones by the oppressed, but by oppressors."
- King county participant, CDOSM

“I’m concerned about the lack of oversight with water pollution. Right now we have no idea what’s happening with corporations because nobody’s watching, they police themselves.” - Spokane participant



The listening session portion of the Task Force meeting in Vancouver

“Clark County isn’t implementing the Growth Management Act.”
- Vancouver participant, TNF

This landmark legislation was established to ensure the stewardship of Washington’s environment for all people through wise local land use practices that encouraged inclusion and resource conservation. Unheeded, cities and towns have increased sprawl, pollution, and barriers to housing and employment for disadvantaged communities.

ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL NEEDS AND SERVICES

Theme #3:

The denial of basic needs heightens the risk of environmental threats in our communities.

In the polls we conducted, participants cited needs like healthcare, stable jobs, safe housing, and healthy food as key to their health. For example, healthcare allows asthma victims to receive inhalers. Stable jobs allow workers to earn disposable income and afford safety devices such as air purifiers and powerwall units to keep their lights on when a storm causes power outages. Healthy foods such as nuts, produce, and fish contain natural substances that protect our bodies from pollution. Safe housing provides clean tap water, healthy indoor air, and shelter from harsh outdoor environments.

“

“Being African American means we are on the worst end of the totem pole. We have low paying jobs and inadequate healthcare and all of that impacts our community. Black women are having babies that die because they don't have the proper resources.” - Tacoma participant, Shiloh Baptist Church

“

“A lot of convenient stores in Seattle's Black communities do not have fresh produce” - King County participant, CDOSM

“

“I don't qualify for insurance and have never had it my life. I just have to stay healthy and be thankful I haven't got sick.” - Tacoma participant, Shiloh Baptist Church

“

“Curb homelessness by providing safe housing. Burdensome rent increases should be banned.” - Vancouver participant, TNF

“

“State agencies must consider homelessness to be an environmental issue and take steps to provide (safe, not lead or asbestos filled) housing immediately.” - NW WA participant

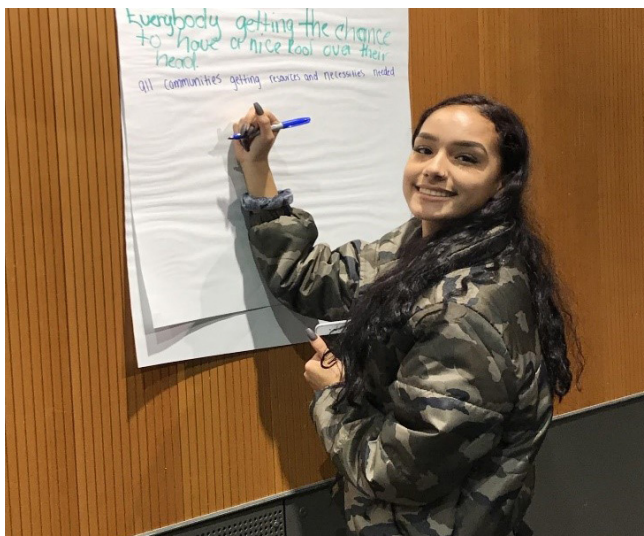
“

“We need affordable housing career opportunities. Lift people up and some disparities will go away. When you get asthma you are much better at dealing with it because you already have health insurance. These are paramount to a successful and healthy community/race.” - Tacoma participant, Shiloh Baptist Church

“

“My biggest worry is running out of clean water” - Spokane participant, APIC/NAACP Chapters

This theme makes it clear the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy must provide adequate housing, jobs, and healthcare. Absent these conditions, progress will be uneven, unsteady, and insufficient. Environmental threats will continue to persist and emerge in the communities struggling to survive with the least political clout to attract the green investments and protections.



A participant at the Vancouver Community Conversation offers feedback

Theme #4:

Unjust land use policies have forced BIPOC communities to reside in close proximity to pollution and be disadvantaged in accessing the amenities that are necessary to achieve health equity.

“Children play in dirt in places in Pierce County where it is advised to not allow children to play. What is Pierce County doing for children/young people affected by this? This contamination makes it much more difficult to grow food in the soil. Makes access to food security and the bridge to justice longer.” - Tacoma participant, Shiloh Baptist Church

Environmental injustices from land use policy include the infringement of Tribal sovereignty, the legacy of segregated housing from the Jim Crow era, and zoning permits that place people near pollution. Housing policies once restricted people of color in Washington to live in neighborhoods near industrial and high traffic zones, and the furthest away from healthy green space. Although now barred, these practices have left an enduring legacy of communities of color being disproportionately exposed to toxic pollution and having limited remedies.

“There are certainly greater health risks and harms for Black and Indigenous people around housing, because they (the government) placed housing strategically where there are environmental impacts.” - King County participant, CDOSM

“

“I notice more trucks and cars on main roadways since I live close to a busy intersection. I realize after the presentation that I am exposed to a lot of pollution because of traffic. I like to take walks with my children because it is one of the “free” things to do in our community where there are not a lot of parks for recreation.”

- NW WA participant

Over the centuries, the colonization of Indigenous lands has created enduring hardship and dramatically altered the natural environment to the detriment of Tribal health.



Deb Abrahamson was the guest speaker at the Spokane zoom conversation. She is a member of the Spokane, Couer d'Alene, and Navajo Nations, longtime activist, and SHAWL (Sovereignty, Health, Air, Water and Land) Society founder.

“

“Originally, native people gathered on the banks of the river in the downtown Spokane area where the city exists. Groups gathered there to barter and share and parktake in salmon in all the richness of the rivers...But at the time our tribe was colonized, three bands were pulled together, and put on reservation lands which are more mountainous than the surrounding area...In the 1930's, the Grand Coulee Dam was erected which was devastating. That was our stronghold as far as subsistence. The river was our lifeblood. We lost our salmon, river eels and mollusk that sustained our people. Then came the Uranium Mines in the 1950's. Many in the workforce have died of cancer and associated diseases. Unfortunately our healthcare provider is the federal government and a very reluctant player to address our disparities. We are calling out for better healthcare.” - Deb Abrahamson, Spokane participant and member of many NW Tribes

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS THAT DEMAND ACTION

Theme #5:

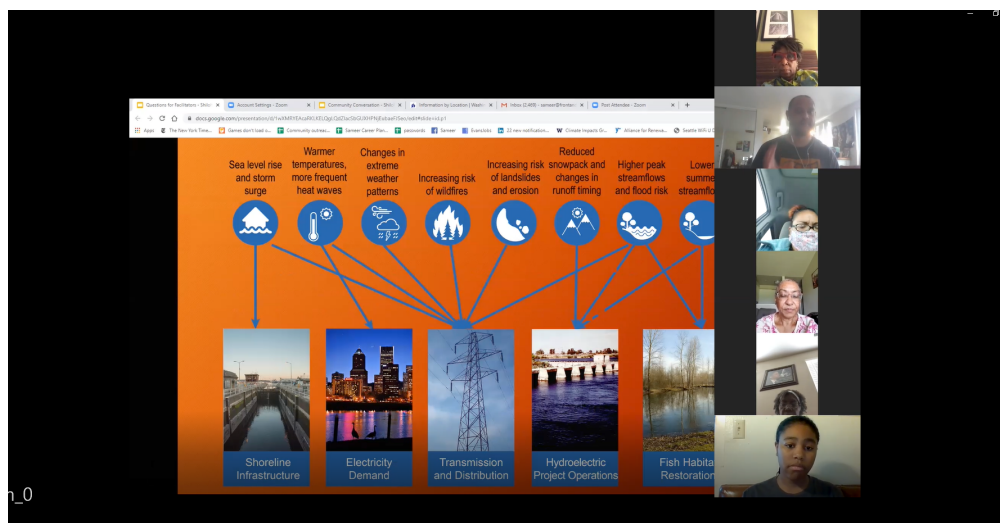
Policy intervention is needed to protect our communities from hazardous conditions and promote a healthy, thriving community.

“There is an overflow of trash that makes its way to the water and our beaches and parks. Plastics in the water is an overwhelming amount. If we don't recycle, everything will end up in the landfill and we, or our kids, will be dealing with effects.”
- King County participant, Entre Hermanos

“Polluted air has created asthma, and these increased wildfires are breaking down our respiratory systems. I'm especially concerned about this happening in the era of COVID.” - Spokane participant

“Local Gonzaga students are looking into microplastics contamination in the river. I don't know if I would eat the fish with these microplastics. My family bbqs and plays around the river, and we don't know how unsafe it is.” - Spokane participant

“EJ laws must include an increase in protections for farm workers – decrease use of pesticides, increase use of PPE, guaranteed access to health services – State agencies can calculate projected costs of said protections for the farms and require that farms report yearly expenses of improving worker conditions. Large farms could be held accountable to following labor guidelines through fines.” - NW WA participant



Theme #6:

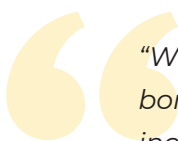
Frontline workers endure occupational health hazards due to poor industry human resources management practices and a culture of fear among workers for reporting violations

The participants we spoke with worked in the food industry, and provided clear evidence of carrying an unfair burden for society. Examples were given of workers in Yakima, Wenatchee, and NW Washington enduring unsafe conditions such as pesticide exposure, hazardous working conditions, low wages and long hours. These unsafe environments led to injuries, illnesses, and other health issues in the community.



A retired farm worker in Yakima shares his experience battling cancer contracted from exposure to pesticides

THE FOUR QUOTES BELOW ARE FROM FIELD INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH WORKERS BY C2C

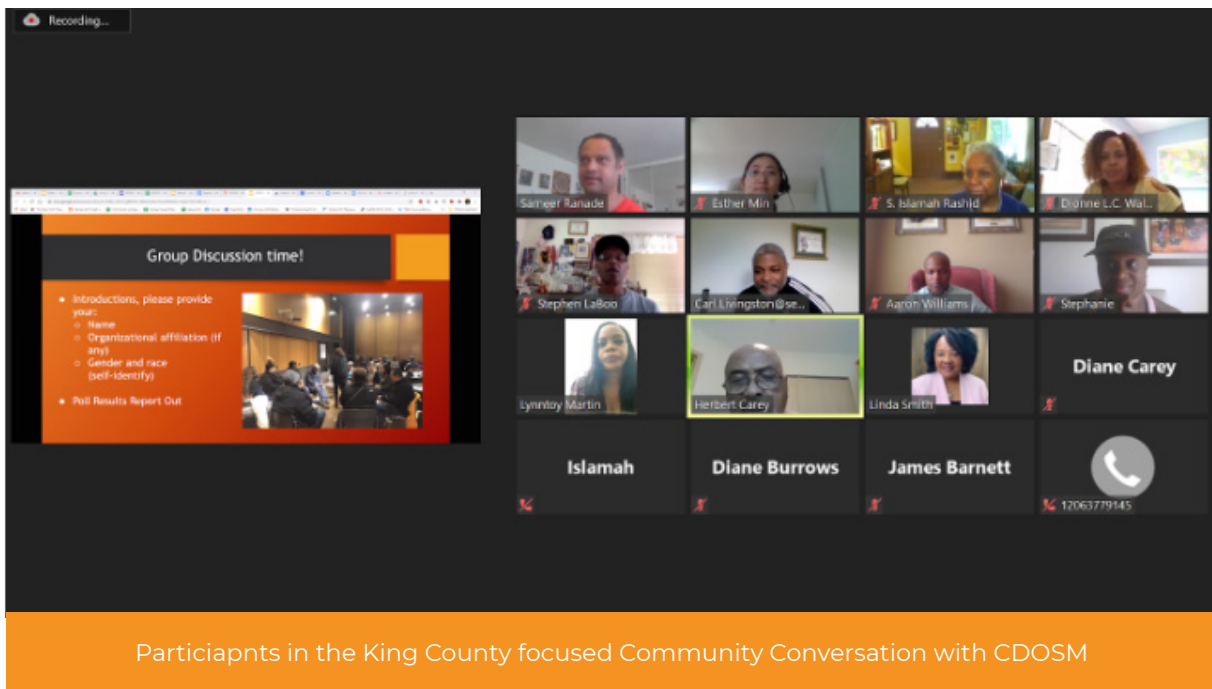


“Within the Latino/campesino community there is a high population of children born with different medical conditions that parents think are due to work conditions, including the use of pesticide and other chemicals. I used to work at a child development center for agriculture workers. I remember some of the mothers would work all their pregnancy term because they couldn’t afford time off or wouldn’t qualify for family/sick time off. Mothers would also be worried about their children hugging them when they would pick them up because they were covered in pesticides. Some mothers would ask us for wipes to clean their breast so they could feed their babies and tell us that wasn’t enough, that they wished they had a way to disinfect themselves at work so they wouldn’t bring the chemicals back home to their children.”

“At the paperas (potato company) we work from 6am to 7pm. Why can't they hire more people to create two shifts or divide us into two shifts? If they are making us work the job of two people the least they can do is pay us more...Undocumented people are scared of retaliation. I can't organize my coworkers. When it's time to create an action they get scared...If we are cold working in the snow we stay quiet.”

“When I got injured, they didn't care. I cared about my work but as soon as I got hurt I was disposable for them.”

“It [pollution] has impacted my community by bringing health issues, sun exposure has led to heat strokes and exposure to pesticides. Within my family it has brought us back problems. Farm workers have cataract. I wonder if that is due to pesticides?”



SECTION 8

Uses of the EHD map

This section summarizes the ideas participants shared in response to questions on how state agencies and the community could use the EHD map.



A student at WSU Vancouver shares the results of a breakout session she led on uses of the EHD Map at the Vancouver NAACP/LULAC conversation.

State Agencies and the Legislature should use the map to:

- ✓ Overlay expenditures and agency deliverables to track progress in reducing health disparities
- ✓ Rewrite zoning codes to avoid allowing uses of land that increase health disparities
- ✓ Prioritize resources to areas that rank the highest on the map
- ✓ Conduct public presentations to educate community members on the data and utilize online communications mediums to do so

It was noted they ***should not*** use the map as substitute for qualitative information obtained through direct community engagement.

Community uses of the map

EJ advocacy groups should use the map to motivate their communities to hold their elected leaders accountable.

Areas identified for state agencies to improve public participation



A Vancouver NAACP member offers public comments at the Vancouver conversation

Access to government processes:

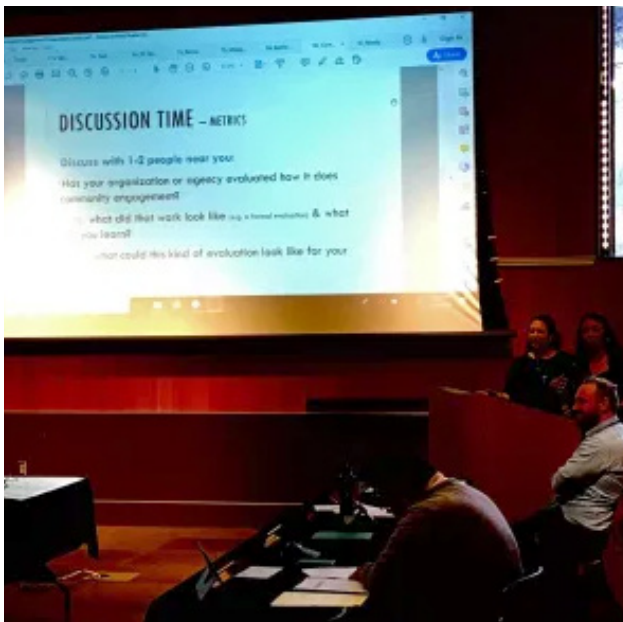
- ✓ Provide childcare and food at public meetings
- ✓ Hold meetings at times that work for everyone, recognizing that many communities do not adhere to conventional work schedules
- ✓ Compensate community members for participating in meetings, especially Tribes
- ✓ Ensure sign language interpreters are available

Outreach and education:

- ✓ Diversify the staff at state agencies by hiring from frontline communities
- ✓ Utilize high-volume public venues to provide environmental educational materials. Specifically recommended were places where people gather within a community such as churches, libraries, public schools, community centers, and healthcare facilities
- ✓ Identify and engage trusted community groups to disseminate information and provide funding to conduct this outreach
- ✓ Communicate via the radio and media outlets, and ensure it is in languages spoken by diverse public audiences such as Spanish, Mandarin, and Vietnamese

Enforcement:

- ✓ In industries where workplace safety is at risk such as agriculture, state agencies should aim to develop direct relationships with workers to make them feel comfortable reporting violations



Ask Task Force member facilitates a discussion during the meeting in Vancouver

SECTION 9

Mapping and measuring community health

The following tables categorize a broad range of ideas participants shared on ways agencies could effectively benchmark progress and identify health risks.

SIGNS OF COMMUNITY VITALITY

Participants were asked to name the signs of a healthy community as a way to provide benchmarks for achieving environmental justice. Across ten listening sessions, we heard the following suggestions, provided in six categories:

| Environmental Health Data | Civic Engagement | High Quality Infrastructure Presence | Essential Needs | Civil Rights | Regulations |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Healthy air, water, and soil | Rate of voter participation | Electric vehicle charging stations | Access to greenspace, including by public transit | High % of women and people of color in the workforce earning a living wage | Recycling requirements |
| Indoor air quality and presence of lead based paint and asbestos in public schools | | High quality sidewalks | Availability of fresh produce at neighborhood stores | Renter protection laws | Strict standards for property owners to provide safe rental housing |
| Indoor air quality in homes | | Microgrids | Broadband Clean Water Healthcare Safe low-income housing | | |
| Presence of air pollution monitors Number of environmental cleanups performed relative to outstanding need | | Solar power generation systems | Offering of healthy meals in public schools | | |

RISK FACTORS THAT COULD BE ADDED TO THE MAP

Participants were asked to identify what additional health risk factors they would like to see added to the EHD map. Suggestions were categorized according to the map's categories of risk factors.

| Environmental Effects | Environmental Exposures | Socioeconomic Factors | Sensitive Populations |
|----------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------|
| Dams | Air quality near fruit production and hop extraction facilities | Availability of transportation services for high need communities | Asthma rates |
| Nuclear waste storage facilities | Litter rates | Lack of participation in voting among eligible voters | Cancer rates |
| | % of homes deemed unsafe because of mold | Food deserts | Recycling rates |
| | Pesticide volume | Rate of average rent increases | |
| | Runoff from industrial agricultural operations | % of users that most rely on transit | |
| | Water quality in shallow wells | | |

Certainly, the signs of a healthy community and the risk factors that influence environmental health could be used interchangeably. In many cases, participants mentioned them as answers to both questions, such as healthy food access and measurements of various pollutants.

A key consideration for state agencies in utilizing any of this data is how it can be gathered. In order to provide a relative comparison of the health of each census tract, the data for the indicator must be available in every census tract. For data that is only available on a local basis, we encourage local governments to create a cumulative impacts analysis with that information within their jurisdictions.



Vancouver NAACP members including the Director of the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program (right)

CONCLUSION

The hardship and tragedies endured by communities of color in 2020 underscore the urgency of our work. It is nothing short of dismantling the oppressive systems of our society that manifest in a 14-year difference in the average lifespans of people who reside in different Seattle zip codes. Indeed, today's racially disparate impacts of climate change, COVID-19, and police brutality reflect how the government views and performs its duties to protect public health and safety. It is the enduring legacy of a Nation that was founded on the idea that all people were not created to be equal. Laws like the HEAL Act are crucially needed to repair this foundation and truly uphold the ideal that everyone in our nation deserves the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It can ensure all residents of Washington equally enjoy the protections offered by our state laws and programs and provide an EJ model for other states and the federal government to adopt.

In our fight for justice, the EHD map is a vital tool. The idea behind a cumulative impacts analysis is that we must identify and address social issues, such as education, employment, and housing, to protect environmental health. And so the next version of the HEAL Act must eliminate disparities in all key indicators of health, whether measured by rates of exposure to pollution or incarceration rates. Consequently, our work in the area of Equitable Governance is paramount to make progress on in 2021. We are using the Task Force recommendations and findings in this report to create and pass an enhanced version of the HEAL Act in the State Legislature. This is the next phase of our journey to achieve a healthy environment for all.

Innumerable leaders made it possible for us to reach this stage of progress with the HEAL Act. Those notable include its esteemed legislative authors, 63 previous HEAL Act endorsers, and F&C's members whose wisdom, perseverance, and commitment to serving their communities formed the purpose and direction of our journey. In its last leg, we hope every Washington resident and business joins us in recognizing the tremendous reciprocal benefits of making our environment universally clean, healthy, and safe.

APPENDIX

✓ Community Conversation Zoom Poll Results

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ZOOM POLL RESULTS

| Poll questions → Location of poll participants and event hosts ↓ | Top 3 local environmental health threats | Top three responses factors that affect the vulnerability of your community to environmental threats | Cancer rates |
|---|--|--|--|
| Spokane, May 16: Hosts - Spokane NAACP and APIC Chapters | #1 Abandoned mines (tied) #1 Wildfire (tied) #3 Exhaust fumes from cars and trucks | #1 Healthcare access #2 Safe and affordable housing (tied) #2 Livable wages and stable employment (tied) | #1 Dirtier air due to wild-fire smoke and presence of ground level ozone #2 Diminished water quality and quantity #3 Food scarcity and drought |
| Tacoma, June 6: Host - Shiloh Baptist Church | #1 Pollution of water in Puget Sound #2 Exhaust fumes from major roadways such as I-5 corridor (tied) #2 Hazardous waste from toxic materials and dump sites (tied) | #1 Safe and affordable housing (tied) #1 Healthcare access (tied) #3 Livable wages and stable employment | #1 Two-way tie -Damage of homes, schools, and other community assets -Diminished water quality and quantity #2 Two-way tie -Dirtier air -Lack of food access |
| Tacoma, June 30: Host - APCC | #1 Industrial activity at the Port of Tacoma #2 Three Way Tie -Hazardous waste from toxic materials and dump sites -Exhaust fumes from major roadways such as I-5 -Pollution of water at Puget Sound | #1 Healthcare access #2 Safe and affordable housing #3 Two Way Tie -Livable wages and stable employment -Poverty | #1 Dirtier air #2 Four Way Tie -Declining fish and wildlife populations -Damage of homes schools, and other community assets -Lack of healthy food access -Job loss in natural resources industries |
| King County, August 1: Host - Community Development and Outreach Services Ministries | #1 Hazardous waste from toxic materials and dump sites #2 Pollution of water in Puget Sound #3 Emissions from the I-5 corridor | #1 Healthcare Access #2 Livable Wages and Stable Employment #3 Safe and affordable Housing | #1 Three Way Tie -Lack of Healthy food access -Diminished water quality and quantity -Job losses |
| King County, August 5: Host - Entre Hermanos | #1 Pollution of water in Puget Sound #2 Hazardous waste from toxic materials and dump sites #3 Industrial activity at the Port of Seattle | #1 Four Way Tie -Healthcare Access -Livable Wages and Stable Employment -Safe and affordable Housing -Access to Healthy Food | #1 Three Way Tie -Lack of healthy food access -Diminished water quality and quantity -Job losses |