



Media Statement: Biden's Environmental Justice Order Shows Promise of Leadership from Frontlines

WA's leadership echoes in D.C., but state budget and Gov.'s fulfillment of HEAL Act will be the measures of state progress toward environmental justice

April 21, 2023 -- On the eve of Earth Day 2023, President Biden signed a new Executive Order today, [Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All](#), aiming to strengthen and expand interagency coordination around environmental justice.

In response, Front and Centered Community Council Co-Chair Rosalinda Guillen said the following:

“Decades of community organizing in environmental justice communities have resulted in the progress we see today as evidenced by this executive order. **Ultimately, it is frontline communities who will hold state policymakers and agencies accountable.**”

“Washington State was ahead of the nation in developing the [Healthy Environment for All \(HEAL\) Act](#), a whole of government approach to Environmental Justice envisioned and championed by our community of color coalition Front and Centered. Now President Biden is aiming to follow suit by embedding environmental justice considerations into future agency planning and development. The White House is taking these efforts a step further by recognizing all agencies need to be involved in and creating an [Environmental Justice Scorecard](#) to track what federal agencies are doing to advance environmental justice across the country. **This scorecard represents a useful accountability measure that our state should adopt, since frontline communities too often have to fill in where state government fails to deliver.**”

“Last month, Front and Centered issued a [HEAL progress report](#) demonstrating that our state will fall short of its HEAL commitments if state leaders don't course correct and calls on Governor Inslee to expand HEAL's reach to more agencies, including Labor and Industries, that shape how farmworkers survive disproportionate climate impacts like extreme heat.”

Front and Centered Co-Executive Director of Programs and Policy Deric Gruen said the following:

“As the legislative session comes to a close, we await release of the state budget that will reveal if legislators understand that genuine environmental justice requires real accountability to the demands of the frontline communities who are most impacted.”

Front and Centered continues hosting events today as part of the weeklong [Earth Deserves More Than a Day](#) celebration featuring virtual and in-person environmental and climate justice programming in South Seattle in partnership with Columbia City Theater, Rainier Avenue Radio, and the Social Justice Film Institute. The week culminates this evening 5:00-8:00pm with a showing of [The Doctrine of Recovery](#), a powerful film where Indigenous women explore the devastating impacts of the discovery doctrine that the Vatican recently repudiated.

Media Contact: Charlie McAteer, charlie@frontandcentered.org

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