

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2695

To establish an Office of Environmental Justice in the Environmental Protection Agency and to authorize an environmental justice small grants program, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 25, 2017

Ms. JAYAPAL (for herself, Mr. McEACHIN, and Ms. BARRAGÁN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To establish an Office of Environmental Justice in the Environmental Protection Agency and to authorize an environmental justice small grants program, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Environmental Justice  
5 Small Grants Program Act of 2017”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Despite Executive Order 12898 (relating to  
4 “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice  
5 in Minority Populations and Low-Income Popu-  
6 lations”), communities of color, low income commu-  
7 nities, people with limited English proficiency, indig-  
8 enous peoples, and people living with disabilities ex-  
9 perience the impacts of climate change at a dis-  
10 proportionate rate.

11 (2) The Environmental Protection Agency  
12 formed the Environmental Justice Small Grants  
13 Program to support and empower frontline commu-  
14 nities that are working on solutions to the dispropor-  
15 tionate impacts of climate change.

16 (3) Between 2000 and 2015, the Environmental  
17 Protection Agency, through the Environmental Jus-  
18 tice Small Grants Program, awarded more than 630  
19 small grants to assist with the cost of conducting re-  
20 search and education, as well as developing commu-  
21 nity-based solutions.

22 **SEC. 3. OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE.**

23 There is established in the Environmental Protection  
24 Agency an Office of Environmental Justice, which shall  
25 be headed by a Director.

1 **SEC. 4. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SMALL GRANTS PRO-**  
2 **GRAM.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Office of En-  
4 vironmental Justice shall establish an environmental jus-  
5 tice grant program to make grants to eligible entities in  
6 accordance with this section.

7 (b) GRANTS.—The Director may make a grant under  
8 this section, in an amount not to exceed \$50,000, to an  
9 eligible entity to carry out an environmental justice  
10 project.

11 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

12 (1) AFFECTED COMMUNITY.—The term “af-  
13 fected community” means a community that—

14 (A) may be disproportionately affected by  
15 environmental harms and risks; and

16 (B) is affected by a local environmental or  
17 public health issue that is identified in an appli-  
18 cation for a grant under this section.

19 (2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-  
20 ty” means—

21 (A) an entity that—

22 (i) is an organization (including an  
23 environmental justice network, a faith-  
24 based organization, and an organization af-  
25 filiated with a religious institution)—

1 (I) described in section 501(c)(3)  
2 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986  
3 and exempt from taxation under sec-  
4 tion 501(a) of such Code; or

5 (II) recognized as a nonprofit or-  
6 ganization by the government of the  
7 State, territory, commonwealth, or  
8 federally recognized Tribe with juris-  
9 diction over the area in which it is lo-  
10 cated;

11 (ii) demonstrates that it has worked  
12 directly with the affected community, as  
13 determined by the Director; and

14 (iii) is located in the State, territory,  
15 or commonwealth, or area over which a  
16 federally recognized Tribe has jurisdiction,  
17 in which the proposed environmental jus-  
18 tice project is located;

19 (B) a federally recognized Tribal govern-  
20 ment with jurisdiction over the area in which  
21 the proposed environmental justice project is lo-  
22 cated; or

23 (C) a Tribal organization that dem-  
24 onstrates that it has worked directly with the

1 affected community, as determined by the Ad-  
2 ministrator.

3 (3) ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PROJECT.—The  
4 term “environmental justice project” means a  
5 project consisting of activities designed to empower  
6 and educate an affected community to—

7 (A) understand environmental and public  
8 health issues; and

9 (B) identify ways to address those issues  
10 at the local level.

11 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
12 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section  
13 \$16,000,000 for each fiscal year.

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