



2025

# JUSTICE IN ACTION

*Community-Driven Federal Campaigns & Initiatives*

## 2025 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA



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## FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA *Policy Areas and Initiatives*



### ABOUT WE ACT

WE ACT for Environmental Justice was founded in Harlem, NY in 1988 with the mission of building healthy communities by ensuring that people of color and/or low-income residents participate meaningfully in the creation of sound and fair environmental health and protection policies and practices. It is a community-based organization that has grown to more than 1,100 members and now serves all of the Northern Manhattan section of New York City - including Harlem, Washington Heights, and Inwood.

#### WE ACT envisions a community that has:

- Informed and engaged residents who participate fully in decision-making on key issues that impact their health and community.
- Strong and equal environmental protections.
- Increased environmental health through community-based participatory research and evidence-based campaigns.



**LEARN MORE AT [WEACT.ORG](http://WEACT.ORG)**

#### Federal Policy Office

In 2012, WE ACT established an office in Washington, DC to advance the federal policy needs and interests of the Northern Manhattan communities it serves. Building upon its 37 years of success in New York City and New York State, WE ACT's Federal Policy Office works with lawmakers, agencies, and other organizations to advocate for environmental justice legislation and policies informed by and on behalf of the communities it represents. Still headquartered in Harlem, where it is building an environmental justice center, WE ACT is the only environmental justice organization based outside of DC that maintains a permanent office there.

### FEDERAL POLICY FOCUS AREAS

- **CLEAN AIR**
- **HEALTHY HOMES**
- **ENERGY JUSTICE**
- **FUNDING A JUST & EQUITABLE FUTURE**
- **CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**
- **TRANSPORTATION**
- **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & VOTING RIGHTS**
- **EXTREME HEAT**
- **ACCOUNTABILITY & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- **INTERNATIONAL**



# JUSTICE IN ACTION



## OUR VISION

Over the past four years, Congress and the Biden-Harris administration demonstrated what can be achieved when environmental justice communities are directly involved in shaping federal policy and programs.

Through historic legislation like the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), we made sure policies and practices were informed by real-world perspectives of those most impacted by our transition to a clean and resilient future.

Inspired by the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act that WE ACT helped pass in New York State, the Justice40 initiative prioritized benefits to communities overburdened by pollution with the opportunity for real change, including \$3 billion from the IRA for transformative community-driven projects.

We worked together towards the ambitious strengthening of environmental regulations that will improve public health, including the Environmental Protection Agency's updated soot standard which could prevent 4,500 premature deaths.

These few examples of many represent long-earned progress. They show exactly what is possible through realizing the vision of environmental justice - the valuable effects of which are still unfolding.

Now, as we confront a political landscape that attempts to dismantle crucial investments and protections for environmental justice communities and people across the United States, we resolve to stand strong with you.



Our partnership will be crucial in not just defending our shared priorities, but strategically expanding our work as we plan for the future. In 2025, we dedicate ourselves to uplift the hard-earned wins we collectively fought for and to guard the rights of all people to be protected from environmental harms, to have their voices heard, and to have a safe, healthy life for themselves and their families. Together, we are reshaping the world for the better, and there is no turning back.

Our team of national policy, legal, advocacy, and research experts are proud to carry on the work that our founders - Harlem-based Executive Director Peggy Shepard, Vernice Miller-Travis, and the late Chuck Sutton - began in West Harlem in 1988. To this end, we are excited to share our 2025 Federal Policy Agenda, and look forward to partnering with you in this critical and urgent time.

**— LESLIE FIELDS**

**CHIEF FEDERAL OFFICER**

# 2025



## FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA CAMPAIGNS & INITIATIVES

### FIGHTING LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS AND FALSE SOLUTION INFRASTRUCTURE

Within a decade since Congress lifted the restrictions on the export of liquefied natural gas (LNG), the U.S. has become one of the world's largest exports of the fossil fuel. The buildout of this infrastructure has inflicted extreme pollution on environmental justice communities, already overburdened by petrochemical industries. With the release of the Department of Energy's 2024 analysis, WE ACT will hold the administration accountable in utilizing its updated economic, climate, and environmental justice analysis when considering the approval of proposed LNG export permits. We will also work to move policy away from "false energy solutions" including CCS and dirty hydrogen.

### MULTIPOLLUTANT STANDARDS

The power and transportation sectors are major sources of air pollution in the U.S. Power plants and vehicles continue to emit greenhouse gas emissions and toxic air pollutants that fuel climate change and disproportionately and negatively affect the health of low-income communities, Indigenous populations, and people of color. The Biden-Harris administration finalized ambitious Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) air pollution rules to protect public health. With the **Clean Air for the Long Haul**, a cohort of environmental justice organizations, we will fight to defend and grow this progress.

### PROTECT COMMUNITY INPUT AND PUBLIC HEALTH IN FEDERAL PERMITTING

It is critical that the permitting process protects public health and preserves community input, especially of communities of color and of low-income who bear the brunt of pollution and the disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis. The **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** is an essential tool and bedrock environmental law that has increasingly faced frequent attacks and carveouts. We will continue fighting for a permitting process that meaningfully addresses community impacts for a truly just energy transition.

### EQUITABLE BUILDOUT OF TRANSMISSION FOR RENEWABLES

Transmission line buildout is a critical component of the clean energy transition. However, this expansion cannot continue the inequitable and racist policies of federal infrastructure expansion projects of the past. WE ACT maintains foundational principles that the transmission buildout process must include first, early, and ongoing community engagement; require environmental justice analysis at the onset and throughout the permitting process; and ensure effective communication between regulators, developers, and affected communities. WE ACT will continue to uplift these principles and ensure they are incorporated into policy.





## A. DONALD MCEACHIN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOR ALL ACT

All people have the right to clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment. The EJ for All Act was written by and for communities and enjoys broad support because it charts solutions for the most pressing environmental justice concerns. This legislation includes sections to address **cumulative impacts**, protecting engagement in the **National Environmental Policy Act**, and restoring and expanding **Title 6** protections, among others.

## VOTING RIGHTS FOR EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES

The barriers to achieving a just and equitable society have their roots in democratic erosion in the U.S. WE ACT will continue to defend democracy and advance federal legislation like the **Freedom to Vote Act** and the **John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act**, which expand voting provisions and reverse or stop voter disenfranchisement efforts that disempower people living in environmental justice communities.

## INTERNATIONAL

Environmental and climate justice are global issues. The Federal Policy Office's engagement will expand to ensure climate justice is a central theme of the United State's engagement at United Nations Treaty spaces, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Minamata Convention on Mercury, and more.

## EQUITABLE FEDERAL INVESTMENTS REACH ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES

As the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 2 **Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center (TCTAC)**, we are committed to ensuring that federal investments deliver critical funding to communities of color and areas of low-income. We will fight to protect the transformative environmental justice investments communities fought for through Justice40, the Inflation Reduction Act, and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.



# 2025



## FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA CAMPAIGNS & INITIATIVES



### HEALTHY HOMES

All people deserve to live in healthy environments, free from the dangers of pollution, substandard living conditions, and indoor health hazards such as lead, mold, and toxic emissions from fossil fuel appliances. Americans spend a majority of their lives indoors; however, indoor air quality is not adequately monitored or regulated. WE ACT has long focused on healthy homes, including our *Out of Gas, In with Justice* Pilot Project, which focused on emissions from gas versus induction stoves in affordable housing. Our **Healthy Homes First Campaign** will build public awareness around these critical issues and will advocate for federal policies, legislation, reforms, and investments to ensure communities of low-income and of color can live in cleaner, safer, and more energy-efficient homes. We will continue to leverage data findings to achieve healthy housing policies at every level of government and pursue avenues to prevent exposure to harmful pollutants inside the home.

### HEATING AND COOLING RELIEF

Extreme heat is the deadliest impact of climate change, disproportionately harming communities of color and of low-income. We will work to reintroduce **the Extreme Heat Emergency Act**, to ensure FEMA can directly respond to extreme heat events and to invest in adaptation and mitigation solutions. We will also continue to champion the **Heating and Cooling Relief Act**, to fully fund the **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** and ensure families can pay their energy bills and do not have to choose between life-saving cooling/heating relief and other necessities.



# WHO WE ARE



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## CONTACT US

We are a team dedicated to building strong relationships and coalitions to advance environmental and climate justice and ensure a better life for future generations.

Contact us and connect!

READ THE FULL 2025 WE ACT POLICY AGENDA  
[WEACT.ORG/POLICY](https://weact.org/policy)



## COALITIONS & COMMUNITY

WE ACT for Environmental Justice facilitates the Environmental Justice Leadership Forum (EJLF). The forum is an alliance of 40 environmental justice organizations working together to advance climate justice and impact policy in 23 states. WE ACT also facilitates the Clean Air for the Long Haul (CAFLH) Cohort, composed of environmental justice groups working to move forward campaigns such as 'Dare to Breathe,' centering the experiences of overburdened communities in federal rulemaking related to air pollution from the power and transportation sectors. In addition, WE ACT is an active member in the Equitable and Just National Climate Platform and the Climate Action Campaign.



## CONNECT



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