



REIMAGINING THE
FEDERAL AND STATE ROLE
IN CLIMATE AND
ENVIRONMENTAL
JUSTICE: ONE-PAGE
SUMMARY

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This one-page summary is accompanied by a report titled *Reimagining the Federal and State Role in Climate and Environmental Justice: Full Report.*

FOUR RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE GOVERNANCE IN THE US

Addressing longstanding and deep-rooted challenges posed by the climate crisis and environmental injustice requires programmatic, legal, interagency collaboration, and political representation reform in ways that empower affected communities and enhance the capacity of governmental institutions and organizations. We propose four recommendations that support such reform and address the call to action in Executive Orders 13990 and 14008 recently signed by President Biden:

1. ***Programmatic reform: Redesigning the Civilian Climate Corps (CCC):*** In its current form, the recently proposed CCC follows a pattern of top-down governance and action which fails to include affected communities in its design and implementation. Furthermore, this program misses an opportunity to build community capacity to address climate change. Our CCC proposal strategically embeds public participation, recruiting, and knowledge sharing in ways that enhance community capacity, climate resilience, and environmental justice over the long-term. Resources necessary include funding for climate capacity building projects, training, and the time and expertise from state environmental agency members. Impact could be measured using new tools to track and evaluate participation, and state-specific climate capacity.
2. ***Legal reform: Creation of special environmental divisions within state courts:*** The current court system does not provide the knowledge and technical expertise required to make fully-informed decisions on the environment. We recommend creating specialized environmental divisions within state trial courts that employ judges with expertise in environmental science, technology, and law. This will provide improved decisions in environmental litigation and provide more direct access to legal recourse on environmental injustice, especially for those in overburdened communities. Impacts would be in reduced costs and increased efficiency, with impact measured based on claim and decision evaluation, process clarity and responsiveness to need.
3. ***Interagency collaboration reform: Revitalizing the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (EJ IWG):*** The 16 member agencies of the federal EJ IWG have not met their obligations to improve their program policies and activities. We propose revitalizing this program by stronger coordination with clear, specific, actionable goals, new accountability to House and Senate committees, and the development of robust reporting and measurement best practices. Resources necessary would include larger budgets for dedicated EJ staff, administrative support, and program development and implementation.
4. ***Political representation reform: Establishing formal representation for future generations:*** Policy and legal decisions made today can impact the environment and climate over many, many decades. We recommend creating a designated role for a future generations advocate within the Office of Management and Budget and Council on Environmental Quality in the Executive Office of the President, as well as a seat for a non-voting delegate to the House of Representatives. With funding necessary only for staff, impact could be measured using new frameworks of futures thinking, natural resource availability for future generations, and the integrity of ecosystems over long time horizons.

Further details on the motivation behind each of these recommendations, the challenges they help address, how impact can be measured, and the resources necessary for them can be found in the accompanying report, titled *Reimagining the Federal and State Role in Climate and Environmental Justice: Full Report*.