



## National Environmental Health Association

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January 25, 2021

The Honorable Ed Markey  
United States Senator for Massachusetts

### **Re: Environmental Justice Mapping and Data Collection Act**

On behalf of the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), we support the Environmental Justice Mapping and Data Collection Act.

NEHA strives to advance the environmental health professional (EHPs) for the purpose of providing a healthful environment for all. This comment is submitted on behalf of our 6,500 members of the environmental health workforce who are employed in the public sector (federal, state, local, tribal and territorial), private sector, and uniformed services.

The act, upon review, meets the intents of NEHA's policies regarding environmental justice. This legislation will result in measurable outcomes for overburdened communities. The bill identifies various environmental burdens, socioeconomic factors related to hardship, health risks and outcomes, and other factors related to environmental injustice. Using these factors to identify, map, and prioritize overburdened and vulnerable communities in the U.S. would prove valuable.

The bill calls for including information directly from impacted communities, including employing qualitative data where quantitative data are lacking and "establishing a mechanism by which communities can self-identify as environmental justice communities", and for comprehensively identifying data gaps and taking steps to fill them. In addition, the proposal connects the effort to identify environmentally disadvantaged communities with policy outcomes, such as taking steps to reduce pollution in overburdened communities.

Another strength of the bill is the call for updating data frequently. This would allow for detecting changes in community conditions relatively quickly, a valuable step in determining whether policies intended to reduce environmental injustices are working. The bill also calls for updating the list of indicators and methodology at least once every three years, another valuable step in continually improving and updating the EJ identification, mapping, and prioritizing process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David T. Dyjack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "T".

David T. Dyjack, Dr.PH, CIH  
Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer