



California establishes a Bureau of Environmental Justice

- *To protect communities that endure disproportionate share of environmental pollution*
- *“The harsh reality is that some communities ... continue to bear the brunt of pollution”*

Californians are getting a “Bureau of Environmental Justice” that will part of the Environment Section at the California Department of Justice, says state Attorney General Xavier Becerra.

The Bureau’s mission will be to protect people and communities that endure a disproportionate share of environmental pollution

and public health hazards. This will be accomplished through oversight, investigation, and enforcement of the law.

The Bureau's attorneys will work primarily with attorneys in the Environment Section handling environmental enforcement matters on behalf of the Attorney General. They will also coordinate with and utilize the expertise of other sections within the Attorney General's Office, as needed.

“The harsh reality is that some communities in California – particularly low-income communities and communities of color – continue to bear the brunt of pollution from industrial development, poor land use decisions, transportation, and trade corridors,” Mr. Becerra says. “Meeting the needs of these communities requires our focused attention. We have a moral and legal responsibility to do so.”

The Bureau will use the law enforcement powers of the Attorney General's Office to identify and pursue matters affecting communities on the frontlines of the pollution battle. In addition,

it will work with stakeholders from all sides, along with local and state agencies, to address enforcement objectives.

The Bureau's oversight and enforcement work will focus on:

- Ensuring compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and land use planning laws;
- Remediating contaminated drinking water;
- Eliminating or reducing exposure to lead and other toxins in the environment and consumer products;
- Challenging the federal government's actions that repeal or reduce public health and environmental protections; and
- Penalizing and preventing illegal discharges to air and water from facilities located in communities already burdened disproportionately with pollution.