

# ESTABLISHING AN ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD

The "Establishing An Environmental Advisory Board" model law establishes a statewide Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) to advocate for equity and justice in historically marginalized and overburdened communities and as a platform for government officials and policymakers to advance collective solutions to environmental injustice.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

This model bill tackles various environmental justice issues, focusing on cumulative impacts. Cumulative impacts refer to the potential harm caused by multiple sources of pollution and other environmental stressors existing in and affecting a community. These impacts can adversely affect residents' health and well-being in ways that may not be readily discernible when examining the effects of a single stressor or source of pollution.

Even exposure to common pollutants can result in severe health problems, such as cancer, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, infertility, asthma, and neurological and developmental disorders. These problems become even more prevalent when multiple sources and types of environmental pollution compound a person's exposure. Unfortunately, these overlapping burdens prevail more in low-income communities and communities of color.



## STATISTICS

In 2021, the EPA published **Climate Change and Social Vulnerability in the United States** to illustrate how climate change will impact different populations across the country.



Black Americans are **40% MORE AT RISK** in high-mortality climate areas, like Cancer Alley.

**48% OF INDIGENOUS** Americans live along coasts that are succumbing to rising sea levels



The EAB established by this bill will provide insight and accountability as the state moves to incorporate environmental justice into its decision-making processes. The Board is designed to center impacted communities in relevant state processes and programs, create pathways for communities to share expertise and perspective with government decision-makers, identify opportunities for improvement in public processes, and prioritize identification and mitigation of environmental justice concerns throughout the state.



## EAB MEMBERSHIP



Membership on the EAB includes residents of environmental justice areas, advocates and community groups dedicated to environmental justice, representatives of industries and organizations regulated by the state's environmental laws, academics specializing in environmental and public health, and representatives of local and tribal governments within the state. This allocation of membership is intended to ensure that the EAB is well-connected to and representative of the communities that it advocates for, while also having technical expertise and experience with relevant regulatory processes to be able to craft community-centric, just, and pragmatic solutions.

## EAB FUNCTIONS



The EAB's duties and powers cover a variety of forms of research and advocacy aimed at:

- Identifying and centering the voices of impacted residents.
- Cultivate opportunities for residents to participate in public discussion by holding public meetings.
- Advocate for policies that support public awareness, engagement, and advocacy within the impacted community.

The EAB also serves as a resource to government officials and decision-makers who lack the place-based knowledge, lived experiences, and expertise in environmental justice issues that affected community members possess. By providing informal guidance to policymakers and formal comments in

ongoing proceedings, the Board can leverage the on-the-ground experience of community members and perspective of academics and government officials to thoroughly incorporate environmental justice considerations into decision-making processes. Ultimately, the EAB is empowered to develop and advocate for its own policy and project recommendations.

