



U.S. CONGRESSMAN ALCEE L. HASTINGS

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December 13, 2007: U.S. Representative Alcee L. Hastings Reintroduces Critical Environmental Justice Legislation

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Representative Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) and a coalition of 24 colleagues today reintroduced legislation to require that federal agencies establish and integrate environmental justice programs into their everyday activities. The Environmental Justice Access and Implementation Act of 2007 establishes offices of environmental justice in almost two dozen federal departments and agencies, promotes agency integration of environmental justice objectives, and increases public access to information about environmental hazards.

"This legislation will require federal agencies to put their money where there mouth is to meet the expectations of Executive Order 12898," remarked Representative Hastings. **"Our communities deserve access to information about the hazards of their immediate environment and have waited well over a decade for the goals set forth by the Executive Order to be met."**

Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, was signed by former President Clinton on February 11, 1994. This policy statement requires that all appropriate federal agencies collect data on the health and environmental impact of their programs and activities on minority populations and low-income populations and to develop policies to ensure that minority and underserved communities are not adversely impacted by poor environmental, energy, and health policy decisions.

Specifically, the Environmental Justice Access and Implementation Act:

- ▶ *Establishes Offices of Environmental Justice in agencies which make and implement policy that could disproportionately impact underserved communities;*
- ▶ *Integrates environmental justice commitments into the core missions of relevant federal agencies;*
- ▶ *Formally establishes the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice and increase its role in ensuring the environmental and health protection of all communities;*
- ▶ *Formalizes public participation in federal environmental justice initiatives; and*
- ▶ *Establishes Community Technology Centers to increase public access to information about environmental toxins and contaminants in their communities.*

Additionally, several important updates to this legislation include: