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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Energy Programs Office

# Climate Action for Environmental Justice Communities

Environmental Justice Advisory Board

February 14, 2023

Josh Shapiro, Governor

Richard Negrin, Acting Secretary

# Background on DEP's Energy Programs Office

- EPO is the Pennsylvania State Energy Office.
- EPO's mission is to protect the environment, improve public health, and ensure access to affordable energy options for all Pennsylvanians.
- Focuses on:
  - Energy conservation and efficiency
  - Advanced energy technologies
  - Energy security and resiliency
  - Education and outreach
  - Climate change

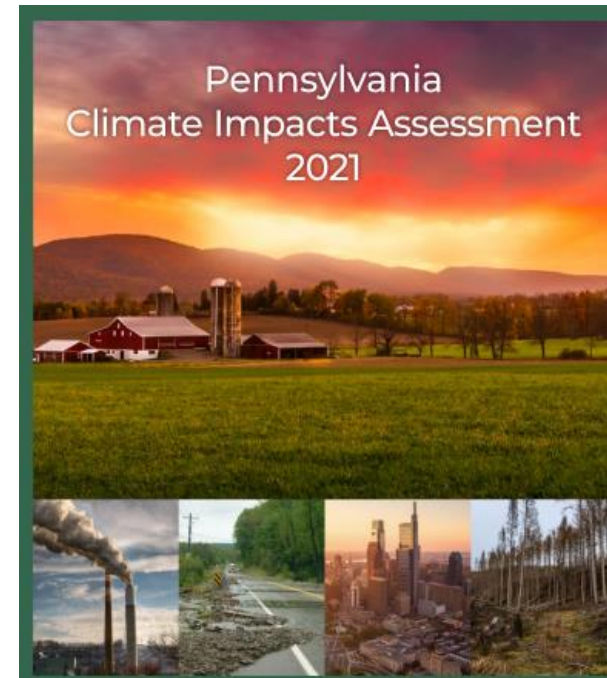
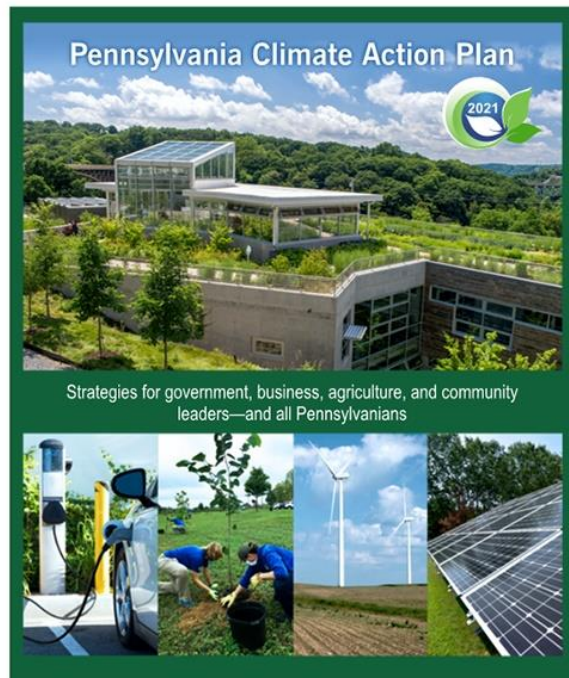
- EPO strives to incorporate EJ in all its work and will engage directly with EJ communities to provide support, assess challenges, and capture opportunities.
- The federal government is prioritizing funding EJ projects through initiatives including:
  - Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA/BIL)
  - Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)
  - Justice40

# Climate Action for EJ Communities: Background

- EPO must understand EJ Communities' biggest obstacles to climate resilience.
- Climate Action for Environmental Justice Communities (CAEJC) Program will:
  - Develop a plan for community engagement.
  - Facilitate engagement.
  - Solicit and coordinate input from EJ communities and experts on diversity, equity and inclusion.
  - **Develop a guide for implementation of climate strategies to maximally benefit EJ communities and measure success.**

# Climate Action for Disadvantaged Communities: Background

- DEP's [2021 Climate Action Plan](#) (CAP) recommends strategies PA can take to combat climate change and improve resilience.
- DEP's [2021 Impacts Assessment](#) (IA) describes the greatest anticipated climate change hazards and suggests adaptation pathways to improve community and statewide resilience.



# Where CAEJC Makes a Difference

- Addressing climate change and reducing emissions requires an "all hands on deck" approach, but climate change impacts do not affect all Pennsylvanians equally.
- Some may be more vulnerable to impacts due to their location, income, housing, or other hazard-specific factors.
- Disproportionate impacts result from historical discriminatory practices, such as redlining and disinvestment.

# Where CAEJC Makes a Difference

- **This program aims to address and correct these inequities while advancing Pennsylvania's climate goals by:**
  - Engaging with and listening to EJ communities to better address their needs by prioritizing these needs in future climate adaptation and planning.
  - Ensuring greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction strategies produce meaningful health, welfare, and community benefits.
  - Prioritizing state and federal funding to ensure assistance is available where it is needed most.

## Big Picture Question:

**How can EPO use this project to address the most significant adaptation needs and impactful GHG reduction opportunities for EJ communities?**



# Preservation Design Partnership

- EPO is partnering with [Preservation Design Partnership](#) (PDP).
- PDP focuses on the protection and preservation of historic resources in older communities throughout the United States.



# Project Milestones

- Conduct literature review.
- Develop plan for engagement.
- Develop preliminary Action List.
- Engage with public on preliminary actions. ← Next step
- Synthesize public recommendations into report and refine actions to maximize impact.
- Develop Guide for Climate Action for Environmental Justice Communities.

# Preliminary Action List

- Includes the following components:
  - Literature review
  - Existing CAP
  - Strategies from Local Climate Action Plans
  - DEP priorities
  - Justice40 requirements
  - Known best practices
- Strategies can reduce GHG emissions while providing meaningful environmental and resiliency benefits.
- Feedback will ensure climate strategies are implemented to benefit EJ Communities and avoid/eliminate unintended negative impacts.

# Preliminary Action List

- The action guide will be a menu of climate resilience strategies that benefit EJ Communities.
  - For government and community leaders.
  - Not a policy document or regulation.
  - Will provide options and perspectives to assist in future decision making.

# Engagement Plan

- EPO is developing a list of six (6) proposed locations for in-person meetings with communities.
- Locations will be selected based on:
  - DEP EJ Area status
  - U.S. Department of Energy Disadvantaged Community (DAC) Status
  - Local Climate Action Plan participation
  - Ability to act as a “model” for other communities in Pennsylvania
  - Additional feedback from project contributors and advisory board members

# Engagement Plan: Before In-Person Meetings

- DEP/PDP will work with representative local “ambassador” organizations to site and promote meetings.
  - Municipal governments
  - Local non-profits
  - Community action groups
- DEP/PDP will conduct outreach to local organizations interested in climate, sustainability, and community services.

# Engagement Plan: In-Person Meetings

- Meetings will introduce the project, provide a short primer on climate change, and outline the most serious climate impacts in PA.
- PDP will facilitate discussion of community needs, risks, and opportunities to improve resiliency.
- DEP/PDP will review proposed strategies and solicit input.
- Online surveys will gather additional participant input and feedback from those unable to attend.

# Finalizing the Action Guide

- DEP/PDP will use feedback to refine the preliminary action list and develop a final Guide to Climate Action for Environmental Justice Communities.
- **Anticipated publication: Summer 2023**



- EPO can better support EJ Communities through existing programs including:
  - PA Climate Action Plan 2024
  - Energy Assurance Outreach
  - Shared Energy Manager
- As DEP receives additional federal funding, these recommendations can guide new program development to target funding for EJ Communities.



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# Thank you!

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