

To: Assembly Bill 32 Environmental Justice Advisory Committee
From: Radhika Majhail, Chief, Environmental Justice and Equity Branch
Through: Chanell Fletcher, Deputy Executive Officer, Environmental Justice
Date: October 9, 2023
Subject: CARB's Ongoing Efforts to Operationalize Elements of the 2001 Environmental Justice Policy

Purpose

At the August 25th Assembly Bill 32 Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (EJAC) meeting, [CARB's Environmental Justice Policy \(EJ Policy\)](#), approved in 2001, was discussed. EJAC suggested that the California Air Resources Board (CARB) hold a sub-quorum discussion to update the EJ Policy. We have scheduled this discussion for mid-October. In the interim, we would like to provide more information to all EJAC members about CARB's ongoing efforts to operationalize key elements of the EJ Policy.

Meaningful Engagement

CARB's EJ Policy commits CARB to engage community members in a meaningful way as we carry out our activities (page 2). [CARB Board resolution 20-33: A Commitment to Racial Equity and Social Justice](#) adopted on October 22, 2020, reaffirms, in part, our commitment to meaningful engagement. CARB has directed an internal workgroup consisting of CARB's divisions and coordinated by the Office of Environmental Justice Tribal Affairs and Border Relations (OEJTB), to co-develop a [Community Engagement Model](#) with 20 community experts. These community experts were selected through a solicitation process which you can view [here](#). The CARB team is having its first meeting with the community experts on October 10 from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm, with additional meetings throughout the state to gather recommendations from members of the public on the draft Community Engagement Model from November 2023 through February 2024.

CARB has developed and is currently piloting the Racial Equity Lens tool. This tool provides a series of questions designed for CARB staff to consider and embed racial equity analysis into their work. Addressing these questions helps staff understand the racial equity-specific outcomes and impacts of the policy, program, or action under development. The Racial Equity Lens works in concert with the [Community Engagement Model](#) to create an engagement plan for internal and external partners, leading to more equitable and just decisions.

Build Internal Capacity

The EJ Policy calls for CARB to develop and incorporate environmental justice training (page 3) as part of CARB employee trainings. CARB has been training its employees, management, and Board members on racial equity and environmental justice and building internal capacity through the *Advancing Racial Equity at CalEPA* training. The training is a foundational training

on structural racism, the history of government and race, why we lead with race when we talk about equity, and the connections between structural racism and environmental justice. The training also includes discussions on partnering with communities using a racial equity lens, using data to advance racial equity, and identifying ways that we can use racial equity tools in our work. So far, CARB has trained over 30 percent of its workforce, including over 60% of CARB managers and continues to roll out new training sessions. As a follow-up to this training, CARB has developed racial equity tools workshops to equip staff to use racial equity tools in their work. Additionally, CARB began conducting workshops on implicit bias and cultural competency awareness for staff in Fall 2020 and will repeat these trainings on a periodic basis.

CARB created the Diversity and Racial Equity (DaRE) Task Force, an internal-facing workgroup, in Summer 2020. DaRE is tasked with evaluating the diversity, racial equity, inclusion, and belonging needs at CARB, and developing recommendations for the Executive Office on how to meet those needs. A core part of DaRE's work is creating opportunities for ongoing training and education for staff. DaRE is currently developing a training on how to identify, address, and interrupt microaggressions in the workplace.

Enhance Public Participation

The EJ Policy asks CARB to work closely with all stakeholders and provide opportunities to participate in decision-making (page 3). CARB hired a full-time Tribal Liaison to meaningfully engage, receive input, improve communications, and strengthen working relationships with the California Native American tribes. The Tribal Liaison continues to confirm and maintain appropriate tribal contacts, build relationships, and engage with tribes in their areas of interest. Each division within CARB has a designated Tribal Coordinator who works with the Tribal Liaison to ensure the tribes get up-to-date information and have the opportunity to consult with CARB as appropriate.

The OEJTB is currently developing a process to work directly with communities across the state to conduct community tours and/or listening sessions with CARB staff and executive leadership. These tours and listening sessions will be an opportunity for communities to inform CARB's policies, programs, and actions as well as offer an opportunity for CARB staff and executive leadership to build deeper relationships with community residents most impacted by localized disparities.

Enhance Access to Information

The EJ Policy commits CARB to strengthen outreach and education efforts in low-income and minority communities. The list of actions on page 5 of the EJ Policy mentions developing and maintaining websites to inform communities, enhancing community access to available data, and utilizing the K-12 education system to increase awareness.

CARB has created a [Racial Equity Webpage](#) that hosts CARB's [Racial Equity Framework](#). This conceptual framework and model of organizational change serve as the foundation for CARB's work to advance equity. The webpage works in tandem with CARB's [Environmental](#)

[Justice Webpage](#), which highlights CARB's [Environmental Justice blog](#) as well as other CARB programs and efforts focused on environmental justice. These webpages continue to promote public awareness and access to information about CARB's racial equity and environmental justice efforts.

CARB has signed [memorandums of understanding \(MOUs\) with seven southern California academic institutions, spanning kindergarten to university level](#). These partnerships aim to expand knowledge in air quality and climate change program areas. As part of these MOUs, CARB is committed to creating a formal student internship program, fostering collaboration between academia and CARB. CARB's Academic and Public Partnership section is working on building a long-term and competitive internship program that aligns with the parameters of the MOUs, particularly for CARB's Southern California Riverside facility.

Integrate Environmental Justice

CARB is committed to integrating environmental justice and operationalizing racial equity in its programs, policies, and regulations (page 12). The EJ Policy lifts up effective enforcement of air pollution control requirements as critical to achieving environmental justice (page 3), and it commits CARB to conduct air monitoring in communities where environmental justice or other air-quality concerns exist (page 4).

CARB's Enforcement Division works, in part, to implement a community-focused enforcement approach. CARB staff heard from environmental justice communities that they continue to be impacted by emissions sources operating in their communities and that more enforcement is needed. As a result, staff began working with several communities to develop a geographic area-focused investigation strategy that concentrates investigations and enforcement in the areas identified by the community, some of which would not have been enforced traditionally. CARB sees community-focused enforcement as a tool to bring enforcement actions and emissions reduction solutions more directly to meet community priorities.

CARB is committed to improving air quality in the border region by conducting air monitoring in Imperial County, Mexicali, and Tijuana by deploying low-cost sensors, providing ongoing technical assistance to Mexican air monitoring networks, implementing emissions reduction projects in Mexico, and participating in binational Air Quality Task Forces. The Border Coordinator within OEJTB collaborates with our Mexican counterparts and the California Environmental Protection Agency to strengthen relationships and improve air quality outcomes.

By establishing the Environmental Justice and Equity Branch, building up the Office of Racial Equity (ORE) alongside OEJTB, and implementing the racial equity lens tool, CARB has deepened its commitment to the goals contained in the EJ Policy. ORE serves as a catalyst and resource for CARB to become an anti-racist organization and ensures CARB promotes equity in all forms while developing and implementing programs, policies, and regulations. OEJTB is committed to addressing environmental justice as a fundamental part of all CARB policies, programs, regulations, and actions. OEJTB works collaboratively throughout the

agency to ensure CARB's actions improve the quality of life in California communities facing environmental injustices.

Both OEJTB and ORE operationalizes CARB's commitment to a just social change by internally working at all levels and externally addressing environmental injustices and advancing racial equity.

Effective Complaint Investigation Process

CARB is committed to updating its [2016 civil rights policy and external discrimination complaints process](#). This policy provides a complaint process for CARB staff as well as any member of the public who believes they have experienced discrimination during the implementation of CARB programs. This policy reaffirms CARB's commitment to promptly investigate any complaints it receives to ensure fair and equitable implementation of its programs. It aligns with the goals and principles set out in the EJ Policy on page 8.

Conclusion

These initiatives demonstrate CARB's dedication to operationalize the elements detailed within the EJ Policy. As CARB continues to prioritize racial equity and environmental justice in all its effort, CARB will continue to review the EJ policy and other guiding documents as needed.

For further information on CARB's efforts to operationalize the EJ Policy, please feel free to contact Radhika.Majhail@arb.ca.gov .

Cc: Deldi Reyes, Chief, Office of Community Air Protection