



# BOLD PROMISES REAL RESULTS

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN · INVESTING IN AMERICA



## Prioritizing Environmental Justice

The Biden-Harris Administration has elevated environmental justice and external civil rights to the highest levels of the EPA, placing this critical work on equal structural footing with EPA's other national program offices. The Administration established the Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights to allocate more than 200 dedicated EPA staff and billions of dollars in resources toward solving environmental challenges in communities that have been underserved for far too long.

In 2021, EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan launched the Journey to Justice Tour to meet with people in their communities and hear directly about their unique and persistent environmental justice challenges. EPA also leveraged the power of the media to bring national and international attention to environmental challenges that have plagued communities for far too long.

EPA leaders visited communities across the country where too many residents have been impacted and sickened by pollution for decades, with the purpose of taking action to make sure decisions in Washington are informed by the needs and experiences of the people we serve.

Led by this commitment, in 2024, EPA finalized a rule to reduce hazardous air pollutants from chemical plants, providing critical health protections to hundreds of thousands of people living nearby. The rule will eliminate more than 6,000 tons of air toxics every year, many of which are known or suspected to cause cancer and can have serious health effects even in small quantities. The final rule will protect fence-line communities, and especially children, who for too long have borne the worst health impacts from pollution, reducing elevated cancer risks for people living near these facilities by 96%.

## Community Change Grants and Technical Assistance

EPA has made \$2 billion in funding available to support community-driven projects that deploy clean energy, strengthen climate resilience, and build capacity for communities to tackle environmental and climate justice challenges. EPA's Community Change Grants are the single largest investment in environmental justice going directly to communities in history, and will advance collaborative efforts to achieve a healthier, safer, and more prosperous future for all.

This program also dedicates \$200 million of Inflation Reduction Act funding to provide technical assistance to applicants and grant recipients, which will enhance the ability of disadvantaged communities to access resources for environmental and climate justice activities.

## Safety from Lead

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The Biden-Harris Administration made a commitment to protect communities from the harmful effects of lead, especially in disadvantaged and overburdened communities facing multiple sources of lead exposure, advancing President Biden's environmental justice goals.

The Get the Lead Out Initiative is one part of EPA's comprehensive approach to protect Americans from lead in drinking water. Overall, EPA has helped replace more than 220,000 lead service lines since 2021, ensuring healthier drinking water for communities.

\$15 billion from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is dedicated to lead service line replacement and \$11.7 billion of general Drinking Water State Revolving Funds can also be used for this purpose. Together, these actions will achieve President Biden's vision of removing all lead pipes across the country.

EPA proposed to strengthen the requirements for the removal of lead-based paint hazards in pre-1978 buildings and childcare facilities. This rule is estimated to reduce the lead exposures of approximately 250,000 to 500,000 children under age six per year.

## Billions for Cleanup Projects at Superfund Sites and Brownfields

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More than one in four Black and Hispanic Americans live within three miles of a Superfund site. Thousands of contaminated sites nationally can include toxic chemicals from manufacturing facilities, processing plants, landfills and mining, and can harm the health of local communities.

In February 2024, EPA announced over \$1 billion for cleanup projects at more than 100 Superfund sites across the country as part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda. This funding will launch new cleanup projects at 25 Superfund sites and continue other cleanups at over 85 Superfund sites. This investment is the final wave of funding from the \$3.5 billion allocated for Superfund cleanup work in the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

A brownfield is a property where expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be impacted by pollutants. In May 2024, EPA announced the selection of 178 communities to receive grant awards totaling more than \$230 million in EPA Brownfields funding. The grant selections will help transform distressed communities by providing them with funding to assess, plan for, and clean up distressed and potentially contaminated properties and return them to economic assets.

More than half of this grant funding comes from the historic \$1.5 billion investment from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This investment has also allowed the grants' maximum award amounts to grow from \$500,000 to a new maximum of \$5 million per award.

## Farmworker Protections

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This Administration has advanced environmental justice by taking steps to ensure people, especially farmworkers, are protected from dangerous pesticides. In 2023 alone, EPA completed over 8,000 actions to improve pesticide safety, including more farmworker protections and bilingual pesticide labels. The agency is taking steps to improve farmworker protections years ahead of schedule by increasing safety regulations for high-risk uses of four organophosphate pesticides.

## Expanding Enforcement in EJ Communities

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In fiscal year 2023, EPA's enforcement and compliance actions benefited communities overburdened by pollution and with potential environmental justice concerns. EPA committed to conducting 55 percent of our inspections in overburdened communities by 2025. By 2023, more than 60 percent of inspections took place in EJ communities.

EPA also surpassed its goals for environmental justice case conclusions ahead of schedule, with over 55 percent occurring in overburdened communities, the highest percentage since EPA began tracking EJ statistics a decade ago. The agency also completed Superfund cleanup settlement agreements where nearly 900,000 people live in communities within a one-mile radius of a site of which 85% are communities with potential EJ concerns.