

BILL NUMBER:

SPONSOR:

TITLE OF BILL:

Regenerative Economy and Environmental Justice Act

PURPOSE:

This bill incorporates provisions from *H.R. 2021 - Environmental Justice for All Act*, including community engagements, cumulative impact assessments, a private right of action, and public accountability for corporate environmental harms and exploitative practices. It also strengthens corporate disclosure requirements, promotes a regenerative economy, and ensures community-centered, climate-resilient development.

BILL LANGUAGE:

Section 1: Title

This Act shall be known as the "Regenerative Economy and Environmental Justice Act."

Section 2: Findings and Purpose

Findings:

1. For generations, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities have been disproportionately impacted by environmental injustice, economic exploitation, and climate change.
2. Existing corporate and economic structures, particularly racial capitalism, perpetuate environmental harm through extractive practices and exacerbate health and economic inequities.
3. There is a critical need to transition to a regenerative economy that prioritizes climate resilience, community wellbeing, equitable resource use, and long-term sustainability.

4. Public accountability, transparency, and community input are essential for ensuring corporations are held responsible for environmental harms and to shift power to impacted communities.
5. Climate-resilient urban development and equitable green job creation are vital for the long-term sustainability of BIPOC and marginalized communities.

Purpose: The purpose of this Act is to:

1. End exploitative practices in labor, resource extraction, and land use that harm BIPOC communities.
2. Establish a comprehensive public disclosure framework to ensure transparency on environmental and labor impacts, with corporations held accountable.
3. Create a legal and financial framework for a regenerative economy that centers climate resilience and sustainability.
4. Implement aspects of the *Environmental Justice for All Act* (H.R. 2021) to promote environmental health, equity, community input, and reparative justice for historically marginalized communities.

Section 3: Definitions

1. **Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs):** Legal agreements between community benefit groups and developers, stipulating the benefits a developer agrees to fund or furnish, in exchange for community support of a project. Benefits can include commitments to hire directly from a community, contributions to economic trust funds, local workforce training guarantees and more.
2. **Cumulative Impacts:** The total, combined exposure to environmental and health hazards faced by a community, which must be considered in permitting and project decisions.
3. **Environmental Justice** (As definition in the *H.R. 2021 - Environmental Justice for All Act*): The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, culture, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies to ensure that each person enjoys—

(A) the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards; and

(B) equal access to any Federal agency action on environmental justice issues in order to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, work, and recreate.

4. **Injunctive Relief:** Also known as injunction, is a legal remedy which restrains a party from taking certain actions or compels them to take specific actions. This preventative remedy is typically granted when no other legal remedy is sufficient, and there is a risk of irreparable harm if the injunction is not issued.
5. **Racial Capitalism:** The concept that racialized exploitation and capital accumulation are mutually reinforcing.
6. **Regenerative Economy:** An economic system focused on replenishing ecosystems and promoting equitable resource distribution, ensuring environmental sustainability, and economic justice for all communities.
7. **Right to Repair:** The legal entitlement for individuals and communities to access necessary tools, parts, and information to repair and maintain devices and technology, supporting sustainability.

Section 4: Ending Exploitative Practices

1. Ban on Exploitative Practices:

- Prohibit extractive and exploitative corporate practices that degrade natural resources or labor conditions in BIPOC or low-income communities.
- Establish strict penalties for corporations and entities that engage in such exploitative practices.
- Require consideration of cumulative environmental and health impacts during project assessments, as mandated in *H.R. 2021*.

2. Community Benefit Agreements:

- Require corporations to enter into binding community benefit agreements (CBAs) with local communities before initiating projects.
- These agreements will include provisions for fair labor practices, environmental protections, and investments in local infrastructure.

- CBAs must be negotiated with meaningful community input and designed to address cumulative impacts.

Section 5: Promoting Climate-Resilient Practices

1. Funding for Climate-Resilient Projects:

- Establish a Climate Resilience Fund to support community-led projects that enhance climate resilience and sustainability.
- Prioritize funding for projects that benefit BIPOC communities and incorporate traditional ecological knowledge.

2. Technical Assistance and Training:

- Provide technical assistance and training programs to help communities develop and implement climate-resilient practices.
- Partner with educational institutions and community organizations to offer training in sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, and conservation.

Section 5: Corporate Disclosures and Accountability

1. Public Disclosure Requirements:

- Corporations must disclose environmental and labor impacts, including their use of natural resources, carbon emissions, and the cumulative health impacts of their operations on affected communities.
- Disclosures must align with enhanced transparency mandates in *H.R. 2021*, ensuring that environmental justice concerns are publicly reported.

2. Public Availability of Information:

- Require that all environmental and labor impact disclosures be submitted to regulatory agencies and be publically available in clear, accessible formats.

3. Private Right of Action:

- As in *H.R. 2021*, this Act grants impacted communities a private right of action to bring legal claims against corporations for environmental harms.
- Empower communities to seek injunctive relief and damages for environmental harms and require that any

monetary awards go toward reparative projects in the affected areas.

Section 6: Supporting a Regenerative Economy

1. Right to Repair:

- Enact federal right to repair laws, allowing consumer and communities access to tools, parts and information necessary to repair equipment and products, reducing waste and supporting local economies.
- Support state-level initiatives by creating federal incentives for companies to design products for longevity and repairability.

2. Climate-Resilient Urban Development Grants

- Establish an EPA grant program, inspired by *H.R. 2021's* focus on community-driven environmental solutions, to fund retrofitting of unused commercial buildings into climate-resilient housing.
- Priority funding will be given to projects employing union labor
- Ensure that retrofitting projects meet sustainability standards, use green building materials, and incorporate renewable energy solutions.

3. Climate Resilience Fund:

- Create a dedicated fund to support community-led initiatives aimed at improving climate resilience, focusing on projects that reduce environmental hazards in vulnerable communities.
- Fund projects that emphasize the restoration of ecosystems and promote long-term sustainability.

4. Green Jobs Initiative

- Establish a federal initiative to create jobs in renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture, and climate-resilient infrastructure as proposed in *H.R. 8253 - BUILD GREEN Infrastructure and Jobs Act*.
- Fund job training in programs that focus on green industries, with priority given to BIPOC and climate-vulnerable communities, partnering with local organizations, unions, and schools.

Section 7: Long-term Sustainability

1. Sustainable Resource Management:

- Promote sustainable and equitable resource management practices that ensure the long-term health of ecosystems and communities.
- Support research and development of sustainable technologies and practices that minimize environmental impact.

2. Monitoring and Accountability:

- Establish an independent monitoring body to oversee the implementation of this Act and ensure compliance with its provisions.
- Require annual reports from corporations and government agencies on their efforts to promote sustainability and support BIPOC communities.

Section 8: Centering Care, Healing, and Health Equity

1. Addressing Health Inequities:

- Implement provisions from *H.R. 2021* to address environmental health disparities through investment in healthcare infrastructure, particularly for marginalized communities suffering from health impacts of environmental degradation and climate change.
- Establish culturally responsive healthcare models that address climate-related health concerns, mental health, and trauma recovery.

2. Community Health and Wellbeing:

- Fund initiatives that promote community health and wellbeing, focusing on mental and physical health impacts of environmental stressors.
- Support the creation of community-led healing and care spaces that provide wellness services, mental health support, and access to culturally appropriate care for those impacted by environmental injustice.
- Provide grants to community organizations for mental health support programs addressing climate anxiety and trauma related to environmental degradation.

Section 9: Implementation and Oversight

1. Oversight Committee:

- Create a Regenerative Economy and Environmental Justice Oversight Committee, similar to the advisory bodies of *H.R. 2021*, composed of representatives from BIPOC communities, environmental organizations, labor unions, and government agencies.
- The committee will monitor the implementation of this Act and make recommendations for improvements.

2. Public Reporting and Accountability:

- Require that all corporate and regulatory entities produce annual public reports on the environmental, labor, and community impacts of their operations, as well as progress made towards achieving the goals of this Act.
- Incorporate feedback from affected communities in the oversight process, ensuring that cumulative impacts and disparities are addressed.

Section 10: Funding

1. Appropriations:

- Authorize appropriations for the creation and maintenance of the Climate Resilience Fund to support initiatives outlined in this Act.
- Fund community-led environmental projects, health equity programs, and training for green job development.

2. Pollution Taxes:

- Implement a pollution tax on corporation whose operations significantly harm the environment, with funds directed to the Climate Resilience Fund and reparative justice projects for impacted communities.