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## DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STRATEGY

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*With honor and integrity, we will safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values.*

Fiscal Years 2021-2025

## Executive Summary

Since its inception, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has worked toward making our Nation safer, stronger, better prepared, and more resilient. From protecting and securing our borders to leading recovery efforts during natural disasters, DHS is committed to safeguarding the Nation. Our work to protect the American people and our homeland is multi-faceted with programs and operations nationwide. It is critically important while executing this mission that the Department consider and address potentially adverse effects of its actions, especially in communities burdened with adverse environmental impacts, poverty, or racial inequity, and those facing disproportionate impacts due to climate change.



Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, calls on federal agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse health or environmental effects of our programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. Recently, President Biden issued three additional executive orders that strengthen federal agency efforts related to environmental justice: Executive Order 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*; Executive Order 13990, *Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis*; and Executive Order 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*.

The following updated Environmental Justice Strategy reflects the Department's renewed commitment to upholding the principles of environmental justice while at the same time establishing new goals and objectives that mature the program and seek to support resilient communities. The DHS Climate Change Action Group, the primary forum to coordinate and drive the Department's action, will coordinate and oversee the implementation of this Environmental Justice Strategy.

DHS will track its progress towards meeting these goals by collecting data that will be compiled in annual implementation reports made available online at [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov). Over the next five years, I invite members of the public to review the Environmental Justice Strategy and annual reports and provide input on progress toward achieving our environmental justice goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alejandro N. Mayorkas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alejandro N. Mayorkas  
Secretary

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## I. Introduction

Executive Order (EO) 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*,<sup>1</sup> requires federal agencies to identify and address, as appropriate, “disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.” The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) currently defines environmental justice as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”

Fair treatment is not provided if, for example, minority populations and low-income populations face especially high levels of air pollution, or if such populations are especially vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Fair treatment will be achieved when all groups enjoy the same degree of protection – the constitutional principle of “equal protection” – from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process in order to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.<sup>2</sup> EO 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*,<sup>3</sup> EO 13990, *Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis*,<sup>4</sup> and EO 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*,<sup>5</sup> do not merely affirm the federal government’s commitment to identify and address environmental justice concerns; they also offer new principles, commitments, and guidance, especially in the domains of climate change and racial equity.

These EOs fully apply to the Department of Homeland Security (Department or DHS). DHS was established in 2002 and is thus not an agency expressly included in EO 12898; however, DHS affirmed its commitment to environmental justice by joining 16 other federal agencies in signing the August 2011 *Memorandum of Understanding on Environmental Justice and EO 12898* (MOU).<sup>6</sup> The MOU served as a formal agreement among federal agencies to recommit identifying and addressing environmental justice through a more collaborative, comprehensive, and efficient process. In response to both EO 12898 and the MOU, DHS finalized its first Environmental Justice Strategy in 2012, and began reporting annually on its progress.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.archives.gov/files/federal-register/executive-orders/pdf/12898.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/learn-about-environmental-justice>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/25/2021-01753/advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/25/2021-01765/protecting-public-health-and-the-environment-and-restoring-science-to-tackle-the-climate-crisis>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/01/2021-02177/tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad>

<sup>6</sup> The Environmental Justice MOU is available at <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/memorandum-understanding-environmental-justice-and-executive-order-12898>. Concurrently with the MOU, the participating agencies issued a *Charter for the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice*, available at <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/charter-interagency-working-group-environmental-justice>.

DHS approaches environmental justice through the missions and general strategic framework set forth in the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR), which guides the activities of the homeland security enterprise, including those of the Department. As described in the 2014 QHSR,<sup>7</sup> the Nation envisions a homeland that is safe and secure, resilient against terrorism and other hazards, and where American interests and aspirations can thrive. In seeking to fulfill this vision, the Department is committed to taking environmental justice considerations into account for mission and operational activities associated with efforts to secure the Nation by revising the DHS Environmental Justice Strategy. With this report, the Department seeks both to affirm that commitment and to suggest its distinctive role in promoting the goal of environmental justice.

## II. Vision and Scope

Some communities are at greater risk of disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects from elevated temperatures and weather impacts; are more vulnerable to natural disasters and illnesses; are at greater risk of being adversely affected in terms of energy insecurity and food insecurity; and are at greater risk of displacement due to climate change and rising sea levels.<sup>8</sup> These communities are typically low-income; they often consist largely of minority populations. Poor communities, due to lack of resources and systemic inequality, are often less resilient against an assortment of environmental risks. A changing environment calls for an Environmental Justice Strategy that focuses on planning for resilience to prevent, anticipate, adapt, and recover from natural and man-made events while considering potential disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects from Departmental actions. Many of these events are made more likely by climate change.

DHS continues, and seeks to improve, efforts to incorporate environmental justice considerations into its programs, policies, and activities through stakeholder engagement, policy, regulatory actions, disclosure of relevant information, and public reporting. Through data.gov, for example, DHS provides information that people can use to reduce environmental risks, and much of that information can be used to promote the goals of environmental justice. The Department's ability to affect environmental justice arises in part through environmental review of the impact of operations; financial assistance to state, local and tribal governments; information disclosure; guidance documents; regulatory permitting activities; regulations; and reports that can be used (for example) for nature-based approaches to building community resilience. By identifying goals, objectives, and outcomes within the following updated Environmental Justice Strategy, the Department carries out its obligations under EO 12898, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA),<sup>9</sup> and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964,<sup>10</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq (Title VI).

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<sup>7</sup> Department of Homeland Security, *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review Report: A Strategic Framework for a Secure Homeland* (June 2014), available at <http://www.dhs.gov/publication/2014-quadrennial-homeland-security-review-qhsr>.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/cira/coastal-property-impacts-environmental-justice>

<sup>9</sup> <https://ceq.doe.gov/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2010-title42/pdf/USCODE-2010-title42-chap21-subchapV.pdf>

Every Component of the Department has a responsibility to identify and address potential disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations (i.e. communities with environmental justice concerns) resulting from the Department's activities. Building upon the 2012 Environmental Justice Strategy, the Department continues to identify major programs, policies, and activities that advance environmental justice considerations. This Strategy outlines the key goals and objectives to integrate and uphold the principles of environmental justice in the Department's larger mission efforts over the next five years (Fiscal Years 2021-2025).

### **III. Background**

In 2010, DHS began developing the first Environmental Justice Strategy to promote a comprehensive, consistent, and adaptive strategy among DHS operational and support Components. Through participation in the Federal Environmental Justice Interagency Working Group<sup>11</sup> (EJ IWG) led by the EPA, DHS tailored its strategy to mission requirements by establishing internal environmental justice points of contact in major areas of responsibility. From these points of contact, DHS formed an internal working group charged with aiding in the integration of environmental justice principles, including but not limited to, Title VI (as applicable), goods movement, climate change, and the NEPA, into Component programs, policies, and activities. The DHS Environmental Justice Working Group (DHS EJ WG) was co-chaired by the Office of the Chief Readiness Support Officer (OCRSO) and the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL). The working group met regularly to identify and discuss programs and policies from an environmental justice perspective.

The first DHS Environmental Justice Strategy was approved in February 2012,<sup>12</sup> after offering the public opportunity for input via the DHS website. That Strategy outlined several strategic objectives including: creating policy; identifying, reviewing, and addressing programs, policies, and activities; creating a DHS EJ WG; developing compliance and review capacity to assess policy performance measures; collaborating with other agencies on environmental justice related matters; and effectively communicating with the public and various stakeholders.

Starting in 2012, the Department began fulfilling its obligation under the Environmental Justice MOU by annually reporting on its efforts to meet the goals outlined in the DHS Environmental Justice Strategy. The Department further formalized its commitment to upholding the tenants of EO 12898 and the Environmental Justice MOU through the 2016 Environmental Justice Directive, 023-04, Rev. 00, *Environmental Justice*.

In 2019, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) reviewed federal agency environmental justice plans, reports, and funding data, interviewed agency officials, and compared EJ IWG collaboration on leading collaborative practices. As a result of its review, GAO made 24 recommendations to participating federal agencies.<sup>13</sup> GAO recommended DHS

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/dhs-environmental-justice-strategy>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gao.gov/assets/710/701401.pdf>

update its Environmental Justice Strategy and ensure annual implementation reports were posted online, to which the Department concurred. Therefore, in October 2019, the Department confirmed annual implementation reports were publicly available online and began reviewing and updating its 2012 Environmental Justice Strategy through OCRSO, CRCL, and the DHS EJ WG. Since January 2020, this review has been undertaken with close reference to recent EOs from President Biden, to which we have referred. The review has been informed in particular by the emphasis on climate change, on scientific integrity, on racial justice, and on equity and inclusion, and by new work, empirical and normative, on climate change, on distributive impacts, and on racial justice.

As the first DHS Environmental Justice Strategy was being developed, the Department focused on creating policy, developing broad goals, and reporting evidence of environmental justice analysis and disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects. Some examples of Departmental successes achieved under the previous Environmental Justice Strategy include: establishment of the DHS Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Decision Support System for evaluating and documenting NEPA compliance for categorically excluded actions; implementation of the DHS Civil Rights Evaluation Tool for recipients of DHS financial assistance; CRCL technical assistance to recipients as part of the DHS Federally Assisted Compliance Program; and creation of a DHS Tribal Consultation Policy. Some examples of component-specific successes include working with environmental justice communities before, during, and after natural disasters, assisting traditional subsistence gathering, and environmental remediation efforts, and can be reviewed further in the Department's online annual implementation reports for FY 2012 through FY 2020.<sup>14</sup>

A central goal of this Strategy is to build resilience and to promote adaptation in low-income and minority communities. As the environmental justice landscape evolves due to climate change, new scientific understandings, and an increased policy focus on environmental justice and equity throughout the federal government, the maturity of the Department's environmental justice program must also evolve. In brief, new and more ambitious approaches are essential, with concrete, substantive steps including new environmental justice policies, introduction of a Department-wide environmental justice educational framework, and integration of environmental justice and racial equity considerations into the Department's Climate Action Plan. A continued requirement to promote further integration within all mission areas, to educate the DHS workforce, to strengthen relationships with stakeholders, to honor the Department's commitment to implementing GAO's recommendations, and to align with new Administration priorities, an update to the Strategy is necessary.

## **A. Guiding Documents and Principles**

In important respects, of course, the most recent documents establish the most pertinent principles, but within the executive branch, the commitment to environmental justice has a history. Signed February 11, 1994, EO 12898 resulted in three main federal mandates, among others:

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/dhs-environmental-justice-strategy>

1. Federal agencies make “achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States and its territories and possessions, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands;”
2. Executive offices and agencies participate in an EPA-led Federal EJ IWG where federal staff provide best practices, receive public comments, and research how environmental justice is considered throughout the federal government; and,
3. Federal agencies prepare an Environmental Justice Strategy that lists programs, policies, planning, and public engagement processes that (a) promote enforcement of all health and environmental statutes in areas with minority populations and low-income populations; (b) ensure greater public participation; (c) improve research and data collection relating to the health of and environmental quality of minority populations and low-income populations; and (d) identify differential patterns of use and consumption of natural resources among minority populations and low-income populations.

Accompanying EO 12898, a Presidential Memorandum<sup>15</sup> highlighted certain provisions of existing law, such as NEPA and Title VI, that federal agencies should comply with to ensure all communities and persons across the nation are not being subjected to disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects. The EO and Presidential Memorandum were further institutionalized in the 2011 Environmental Justice MOU. The Environmental Justice MOU created a charter and served as a formal agreement among federal agencies to recommit to address environmental justice through a more collaborative, comprehensive and efficient process. It also broadened the EJ IWG to include additional agencies and articulated additional commitments made by member agencies.

We have referred to more recent EOs, which emphasize the importance of climate change and its relationship to issues of equity, inclusion, and racial justice; which put a premium on scientific integrity; and which connect environmental issues to economic issues, with obvious implications for environmental justice.

## **B. DHS Authorities**

In addition to implementing EO 12898 and the Environmental Justice MOU, DHS considers potential effects on environmental justice communities through compliance with NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.* When considering a proposed action, NEPA requires federal agencies to consider the environmental effects of proposed major federal actions with the potential to significantly affect the human environment. Although the legal and regulatory framework has been shifting, the NEPA process can be understood to provide a framework for considering potential disproportionately high and adverse health or environmental effects on minority

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<sup>15</sup> [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-02/documents/clinton\\_memo\\_12898.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-02/documents/clinton_memo_12898.pdf)

populations and low-income populations. This may be accomplished through environmental analysis, the consideration of reasonable alternatives, development of mitigation measures for significant impacts, and public input in federal decision-making.

DHS also has a responsibility under Title VI and the Department's implementing regulations in 6 C.F.R. Part 21 and 44 C.F.R. Part 7, to ensure discrimination does not occur in the Department's federally assisted programs, including those that affect human health or the environment. Title VI prohibits discrimination based on race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance from DHS and its Components. Environmental justice issues may arise in programs and activities supported through federal financial assistance. In this context, Title VI is an important tool for addressing those concerns.

Some Component authorities involve policies related to climate change and other environmental problems. Under those authorities, Components can help mitigate and respond to floods, hurricanes, fires, and other risks that have important environmental justice dimensions. Some of those authorities take the form of information disclosure (as on data.gov); others take the form of guidance (as through public reports); some take the form of assisting in prevention and mitigation efforts. By making environmental risks salient, DHS can help communities, including low-income communities, to make a warming world far less dangerous than it would otherwise be, in terms of public health and also economic sustainability. Component-specific authorities and activities have been reported annually since FY 2012 in a publicly available implementation report.<sup>16</sup>

#### DHS Delegation and Policy

By delegation from the Secretary (Delegation No. 00501), OCRSO leads the Department in environmental management, energy management and resilience, and environmental planning and historic preservation. By Delegation No. 19003 and through regulations at 6 C.F.R. Part 21, CRCL leads the Department's compliance efforts to assure federally assisted programs, including those that affect human health or the environment, do not discriminate based on race, color, or national origin, and comply with the affirmative requirements of Title VI and the Department's implementing regulations. OCRSO and CRCL are the Department's delegated authorities charged with executing and administering the policies and responsibilities of the environmental justice program.

In addition to delegations of authority, in 2016 the Department issued Directive 023-04, rev. 00, *Environmental Justice*, which establishes the policy for the Department's ongoing efforts to incorporate environmental justice principles into its related programs, policies, and activities. Additionally, the Directive outlines the roles and responsibilities between OCRSO and CRCL and establishes the DHS EJ WG.

#### DHS Mission

DHS approaches environmental justice consistent with the Department's mission: *With honor and integrity, we will safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values.*

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/dhs-environmental-justice-strategy>

Established in 2002 in response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the Department is headed by the Secretary of Homeland Security. DHS is comprised of fifteen Operational and Headquarters Support Components consisting of: Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services; U.S. Customs and Border Protection; U.S. Coast Guard; Federal Emergency Management Agency; Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Transportation Security Administration; U.S. Secret Service; Science and Technology Directorate; Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office; Management Directorate; Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans; Office of Intelligence and Analysis; and Office of Operations Coordination. With more than 240,000 employees in jobs that range from aviation and border security to emergency response, from cybersecurity to infrastructure protection, the duties of DHS are wide-ranging with a clear goal - keeping America safe.

The Department holds five guiding principles<sup>17</sup> to shape its mission, four of which have relevance to implementation of the DHS environmental justice program: Champion “Relentless Resilience” for All Threats and Hazards; Reduce the Nation’s Risk to Homeland Security Dangers; Promote Citizen Engagement and Strengthen and Expand Trusted Partnerships; and Uphold Privacy, Transparency, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties. Additionally, the 2014 QHSR helps outline the vision and goals for the Department while highlighting past accomplishments and informs the Department’s environmental justice priorities. The QHSR compliments the DHS Strategic Plan, which establishes a common framework to analyze and inform the Department’s management decisions, including strategic guidance, operational requirements, budget formulation, annual performance reporting, and mission execution. The Department executes six overarching missions, all having an environmental justice nexus, that make up the DHS 2020-2024 Strategic Plan.<sup>18</sup> These six mission areas are:

- Counter Terrorism and Homeland Security Threats;
- Secure U.S. Borders and Approaches;
- Secure Cyberspace and Critical Infrastructure;
- Preserve and Uphold the Nation’s Prosperity and Economic Security;
- Strengthen Preparedness and Resilience; and,
- Champion the DHS Workforce and Strengthen the Department.

The Department’s mission includes interactions and support with minority populations and low-income populations. For example, countering terrorism and homeland security threats includes DHS acting to secure the nation’s ports for both people and goods moving in and out of the country. Securing and managing the nation’s borders requires that DHS maintain a substantial presence along thousands of miles of land and water border. Strengthening preparedness and resilience requires DHS to have robust programs for emergency preparedness, mitigation, and response in addition to disaster recovery. In order to responsibly execute these, and other DHS missions, meaningful communication with potentially affected communities, including minority populations and low-income populations, is critical.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/guiding-principles>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/department-homeland-securitys-strategic-plan-fiscal-years-2020-2024>

In addition, the regulatory and rulemaking activities of DHS include a range of potential measures that can address environmental justice – for example, by assisting low-income communities in cases of natural disasters. We commit to using those authorities more ambitiously in the future.

### **C. Strategy Development**

This Environmental Justice Strategy is intended to promote a comprehensive, consistent, and adaptive method for identifying and addressing environmental justice through the activities, policies, and programs of DHS Operational and Support Components. OCRSO and CRCL began updating the DHS Environmental Justice Strategy in the fall of 2019, with the assistance of the DHS EJ WG. Through this process, DHS Components provided input on strategic goals and objectives to ensure alignment and consistency with Department priorities. From September 24, 2020 to November 5, 2020, DHS made the draft Environmental Justice Strategy available to the public in five languages by posting on a public website<sup>19</sup> and distributed it among the CRCL stakeholder email list. One anonymous comment was received via email, and all comments have been taken into consideration.

With President Biden’s recent EOs in mind, DHS has reoriented its work on environmental justice, and with respect to mitigation and resilience in particular, DHS is considering a series of concrete steps. Risk Rating 2.0: Equity in Action is an example. DHS will continue to provide meaningful opportunities for the public to submit recommendations relating to the revised Environmental Justice Strategy and the ongoing efforts to incorporate environmental justice principles into DHS programs, policies, and activities via the Department’s website.

### **D. Partnerships and Implementation**

#### Partnerships

Senior leadership in the following program areas have important roles in implementing the DHS Environmental Justice Strategy by ensuring environmental justice considerations are appropriately integrated into their specific mission: maritime safety, security, and stewardship; the administration of federally assisted programs; emergency management programs; border security; transportation security; immigration services; law enforcement training; science and technology research; cyber security; and mission support and asset management. As the Department’s capacities and mission areas evolve in response to improved understanding of emerging threats to safety and security, the concepts of this strategy will be applied to programs, policies, and activities in those new areas.

Two DHS headquarters offices will lead efforts for the success of the Environmental Justice Strategy.

- **OCRSO:** Environmental justice is considered at the earliest stages of planning new policies, programs, and activities by OCRSO, which has Department-wide oversight of asset management and environmental planning and historic preservation compliance.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/dhs-environmental-justice-strategy>

This is primarily accomplished through ensuring compliance with EO 12898 and considerations through the NEPA compliance process.

- **CRCL:** CRCL supports the Department’s mission to secure the Nation while preserving individual liberty, fairness, and equality under the law. CRCL works to integrate civil rights throughout the Department’s programs, including rights secured by Title VI, which provides one legal underpinning of EO 12898. Title VI prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, and national origin in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance, including those affecting human health or the environment.

Three other headquarters offices provide critical support for the activities of OCRSO and CRCL in successfully implementing this Strategy.

- **Office of the General Counsel** provides legal advice, guidance, and review for all environmental justice policy and supports Departmental compliance for implementation actions.
- **Office of Partnership and Engagement** establishes and maintains relationships with state, local, and tribal governments to ensure adequate consideration of environmental justice issues in the Department’s activities.
- **Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans** ensures that mission-driven policies of the Department support the objectives and priorities set forth in the Environmental Justice Strategy and provides a source of integration and analysis of Departmental policies, including in the context of environmental justice.

#### Implementation

DHS will provide a concise report on progress toward meeting the goals outlined in this Environmental Justice Strategy during the previous fiscal year. The report will focus on achieving the goals of EO 12898 and implementing the Department’s Environmental Justice Strategy. Consistent with the Environmental Justice MOU, the annual implementation report will address the following areas in addition to those outlined in the next section:

- (1) implementation of NEPA;
- (2) implementation of Title VI;
- (3) impacts from climate change, with an emphasis on reducing emissions and promoting resilience and adaptation, with particular reference to low-income communities; and,
- (4) impacts from commercial transportation and supporting infrastructure (“goods movement”).

The annual implementation report is posted on the Department’s environmental justice webpage each spring and includes a summary of comments submitted by members of the public and any updates or revisions to the Environmental Justice Strategy. All such reports and other public information will be compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the reports or summaries thereof will be made available in languages other than

English, consistent with DHS's language access policy. Environmental justice activities will also be discussed, as relevant and appropriate, in the quarterly or annual reports to Congress mandated by the Homeland Security Act of 2002 and other statutes.

## **IV. Goals and Objectives**

Consistent with the DHS mission, QHSR, and Strategic Plan, the Department has established the following five Environmental Justice Strategic Goals.

**Goal 1:** *Expand Department-wide awareness of environmental justice considerations that might result from its programs, policies, and activities.*

**Issue Statement:** Those with a foundational knowledge of environmental justice require training to apply best practices and strategies to their functional areas. Those without an understanding of environmental justice need opportunities to increase their awareness and understanding of Departmental policy.

### **Objectives:**

- 1.1 Through the DHS EJ WG, establish environmental justice training, education, and awareness opportunities through programs such as the DHS NEPA Warrant Program, new environmental and civil rights employee orientation, and Component trainings to relevant field personnel.
- 1.2 Advance Departmental strategies to identify and address environmental justice concerns in agency programs, policies, and activities by working with the DHS EJ WG to develop fact sheets on environmental justice for decision makers within the Department and Components.

**Outcome:** Goal 1 objectives would result in streamlining the Department's consideration of environmental justice during project planning and execution by appropriately training and preparing its workforce. Furthermore, it would assist in the understanding that environmental justice considerations are an evolving set of parameters.

**Goal 2:** *Further the integration of environmental justice principles into DHS lines of business, prominently including mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.*

**Issue Statement:** The Department and its Components have a broad range of missions, one of which is promoting and increasing resilience, with special emphasis on environmental justice. Additional policy and resources are needed for relevant lines of business to understand and fulfill their responsibilities.

### **Objective:**

- 2.1 Integrate environmental justice principles within DHS lines of business by revising Departmental policy and creating additional guidance documents, as needed.

**Outcome:** Goal 2 objective would increase Departmental considerations of environmental justice and compliance with relevant statutes, regulations, and EOs, into Departmental programs policies, and financial assistance activities.

**Goal 3:** *Strengthen outreach to communities and stakeholders through public engagement.*

**Issue Statement:** Engaging the public is a tenet of the environmental justice and is required to ensure the Department and Components are appropriately identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental impacts on minority populations and low-income populations.

**Objectives:**

- 3.1 Enhance public participation in environmental decision-making by providing resources and technical assistance to Department Components in planning meaningful engagement with communities and stakeholders through the development of an online resource library and guidance to Department Components during the planning process.
- 3.2 Promote effective communication for persons with limited access to technology, limited English proficiency, persons with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs in public participation efforts by providing language interpretation and translation services in accordance with the Departmental and Component Language Access Plans, and aids and services, including information in alternative formats, in accordance with the Component Disability Access Plans.
- 3.3 Build and cultivate relationships with communities, academia, and stakeholders by providing opportunities for public input and engagement on potential or actual, disproportionately high and adverse impacts on human health or the environment on minority populations and low-income populations.
- 3.4 Provide opportunities and engagement, as appropriate, for indigenous and tribal communities to be aware of and involved in environmental justice strategies through increased collaboration between the environmental justice program and Department and Component Tribal Affairs Programs.
- 3.5 Increase recipient awareness of environmental justice considerations and responsibilities under Title VI in federally assisted programs and activities, including obligations to persons with limited English proficiency.
- 3.6 Expand opportunities for public input on the DHS Annual Environmental Justice Implementation Report.
- 3.7 Seek out public involvement during public comment periods by targeting community members and organizations in the potentially impacted communities with environmental justice concerns.

**Outcome:** Goal 3 objectives would result in effective communication through active outreach efforts with the public, the academic community, other agencies, and non-federal governmental entities, including government-to-government consultation with tribes, and would increase understanding, strengthen partnerships, and address specific issues of concern raised by DHS activities.

**Goal 4:** *Expand collaboration and knowledge-sharing with interagency partners, as to efficiently focus Department resources and technical assistance.*

**Issue Statement:** Trends in environmental justice may change due to specific national or international conditions. An understanding of these trends and best practices is needed to ensure the Department continues to identify and address environmental justice considerations and responsibilities and serves as a leader across the federal government.

**Objectives:**

- 4.1 Increase collaboration with interagency partners to better target environmental justice resources and technical assistance such as participating in subgroups of the EJ IWG.
- 4.2 Identify cross-cutting environmental justice issues and leverage resources to address disproportionately high and adverse health and environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations through participation in national environmental justice symposiums, conferences, and trainings.

**Outcome:** Goal 4 would result in an expansion of knowledge and lead to innovative practices of Department and Component environmental justice practitioners and increase collaboration with interagency partners.

**Goal 5:** *Integrate environmental justice principles into Departmental climate change initiatives.*

**Issue Statement:** Climate change is an environmental justice issue. As the Department expands adaption, mitigation, and resilience efforts across programs, environmental justice must be considered and integrated to ensure that disadvantaged populations also benefit from these programs and policies, such as the management of procurement, real property, and financial programs.

**Objective:**

- 5.1 Collaborate with Department and Component subject matter experts to enhance climate literacy and its nexus with environmental justice across DHS, with recipients of DHS financial assistance, and with communities with environmental justice concerns.

**Outcome:** The integration of environmental justice considerations into Departmental climate change initiatives establishes a policy of achieving environmental justice to address potential

disproportionately high and adverse human health, environmental, climate-related, and other cumulative impacts on disadvantaged communities.

## **V. Conclusion**

EO 12898 calls upon federal agencies to make “achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations...” More recent EOs specify that message and emphasize the connections among scientific integrity, environmental protection, climate change, equity, and racial justice. Through its varied missions, DHS interacts with communities with environmental justice concerns. These interactions may include activities related to securing our ports for both people and goods moving in and out of the country, maintaining a substantial presence along thousands of miles of land and water border, and administering programs needed for emergency preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts. Accordingly, DHS has an obligation to identify and address the impacts of its programs, policies and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. This fundamental obligation coupled with an evolving environmental justice landscape over the last decade necessitates a new strategy.

The updated Environmental Justice Strategy reflects the Department’s renewed commitment to upholding the principles of EO 12898, EO 13985, EO 13990, and EO 14008, while at the same time establishing new goals and objectives that mature the program, seek to support resilient communities, and provide meaningful participation for all persons in federal environmental decision-making processes.

During the next five years, OCRSO and CRCL, in coordination and consultation with Department and Component leadership, will implement the DHS Environmental Justice Strategy. This will include updating Department policy, identifying and developing training and educational resources for DHS personnel, building relationships with stakeholders, engaging with interagency partners, and integrating climate literacy with environmental justice, among other actions. DHS will track progress in meeting the goals outlined in the Strategy by collecting data which will be compiled in an annual implementation report. DHS will reevaluate this Strategy at the conclusion of the five-year implementation period.