

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6692

To require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to continue to carry out certain programs relating to environmental justice, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 1, 2020

Mr. RUIZ (for himself and Mr. MCEACHIN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to continue to carry out certain programs relating to environmental justice, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Communities of color, low-income commu-
6 nities, Tribal and indigenous communities, fossil
7 fuel-dependent communities, and other vulnerable
8 populations, such as persons with disabilities, chil-

1 dren, and the elderly, are disproportionately bur-
2 dened by environmental hazards that include expo-
3 sure to polluted air, waterways, and landscapes.

4 (2) Environmental justice disparities are also
5 exhibited through a lack of equitable access to infor-
6 mation and data on potential exposure to environ-
7 mental hazards.

8 (3) Communities experiencing environmental in-
9 justice have been subjected to systemic racial, social,
10 and economic injustices and face a disproportionate
11 burden of adverse human health or environmental
12 effects, a higher risk of intentional, unconscious, and
13 structural discrimination, and disproportionate en-
14 ergy burdens.

15 (4) These disproportionate burdens are being
16 exacerbated by the COVID–19 pandemic.

17 (5) The Environmental Protection Agency has
18 announced a nonenforcement policy under all envi-
19 ronmental laws during the COVID–19 pandemic for
20 monitoring and recordkeeping requirements.

21 (6) This policy is likely to increase the pollution
22 burden in environmental justice communities and de-
23 crease access to monitoring data and information.

1 (7) Citizen science will be essential for environ-
2 mental justice communities to protect themselves
3 during this pandemic.

4 **SEC. 2. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE GRANT PROGRAMS.**

5 (a) ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE GRANTS.—The Ad-
6 ministrators of the Environmental Protection Agency shall
7 continue to carry out—

8 (1) the Environmental Justice Small Grants
9 Program and the Environmental Justice Collaborative
10 Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Pro-
11 gram, as those programs are in existence on the date
12 of enactment of this Act; and

13 (2) the Community Action for a Renewed Envi-
14 ronment grant programs I and II, as in existence on
15 January 1, 2012.

16 (b) AUTHORIZATION FOR GRANTS IN RESPONSE TO
17 COVID–19 EMERGENCY.—

18 (1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
19 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
20 the programs described in subsection (a)
21 \$50,000,000 for fiscal year 2020.

22 (2) PRIORITY FOR FUNDS.—In awarding grants
23 under the programs described in subsection (a) pur-
24 suant to this section, the Administrator shall
25 prioritize projects that will—

1 (A) monitor pollution in or near environ-
2 mental justice communities; or

3 (B) investigate or address the dispropor-
4 tionate impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic in
5 environmental justice communities.

6 (c) DISTRIBUTION.—Not later than 30 days after
7 amounts are made available pursuant to subsection (b)(1),
8 the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agen-
9 cy shall make awards of grants under each of the pro-
10 grams described in subsection (a).

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