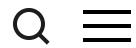




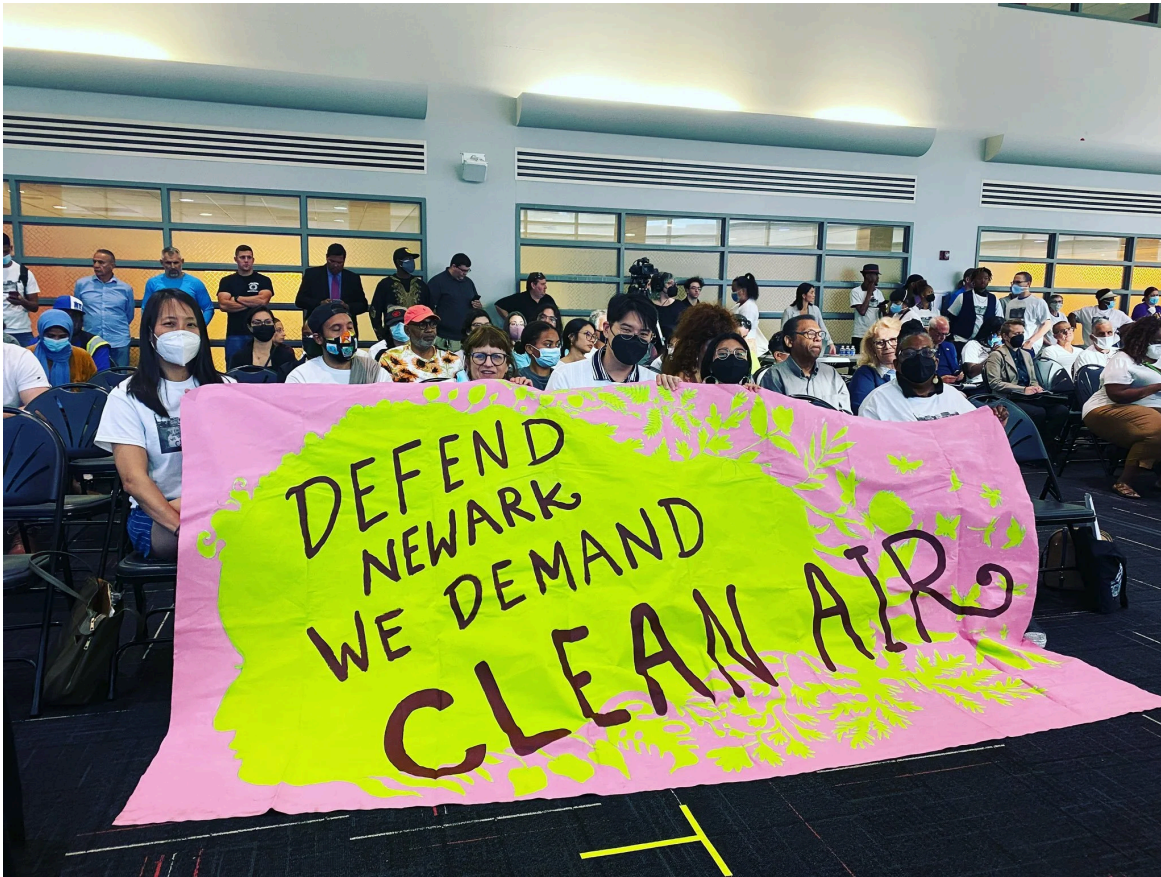
Tishman Environment
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Active Solidarity for New Jersey's Landmark Environmental Justice Bill

*Blog post by Patricia Cortado,
Thomas Ikeda and Carly Sanchez*



Solidarity to everyone leading the fight for justice at the frontlines. The [Inflation Reduction Act \(IRA\)](#) has been paraded as the first and best climate bill in the country, although it is not representative of the needs of those who will be harmed by this very bill, and is no climate bill at all. The economic benefits of the wealthy still take precedence over the lives of the most vulnerable. It is out of touch and can be seen played out across the nation. However, local power movements in states like New Jersey are taking the lead on making sure legislation like the [New Jersey Environmental Justice Law](#) is made to protect the dignity of all people.

On Wednesday, July 27, 2022 the [New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection \(NJ DEP\)](#) held a public hearing to receive public comment regarding the recently signed New Jersey Environmental Justice (EJ) Law. This law is the first in the nation to require a state to deny permits to facilities that pose a disproportionately negative environmental and public health impact on [overburdened communities](#) and is truly one of the strongest EJ bills in the country - if done with no economic exemptions.

For too long, polluting industries have gotten used to limited regulation within New Jersey. Facing this new EJ bill, they are now devising an opposing strategy, demanding that exceptions be made for projects that can provide “economic benefit” as a loophole within the bill. This debate over the inclusion of exemptions is an opportunity to undermine the bill for the industries and economic interests that necessitated the existence of the bill in the first place.

It is clear that if the NJ DEP truly intends to protect EJ Communities, they must preserve the bill in accordance with what the

community needs- putting an end to the harmful business model that makes the people choose between dirty labor jobs from polluting facilities or the health and dignity of all people. The EJ Law represents an important step towards justice in New Jersey and others throughout the rest of the country. The NJ DEP needs to recognize this. No exceptions. No loopholes.



Patricia Cortado (she/her), a queer Filipina Immigrant on occupied Lenape Homelands/ Newark, NJ, from the [Ripe for Creative Disruption EJ Fellowship](#); Thomas Ikeda

(he/him), a queer Japanese/Chinese American on occupied Lenape Homelands/ Brooklyn, NY and originally from occupied Kanaka Maoli Homelands/Hawai'i, Research Assistant with [Tishman Environment and Design Center](#) and alumni of [Environmental Policy and Sustainability Management Master's Program](#); and Carly Sanchez, (she/they) Honduran/Mexican American raised on occupied Tongva land/ Los Angeles, CA, Research Assistant with [Tishman Environment and Design Center](#) and student of [Environmental Policy and Sustainability Management Master's Program](#), joined in on a Wednesday night hearing in solidarity with the New Jersey community, especially friends at [Ironbound Community Corporation](#) and [New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance](#).

[*Read Patricia Cortado's Testimony to the NJ DEP Published at Public Square Amplified*](#)

Alongside the New Jersey EJ community, Patricia, Thomas, and Carly also believe that this is not just a New Jersey issue. It is an environmental justice issue that falls within in the midst of the crippling climate emergency. Even in their respective homes and communities,

the impacts of environmental injustice are widely felt.

Thomas Ikeda says that the entire Pacific Ocean has become a sacrifice zone under the US military:

“The Pacific Ocean has become a sacrifice zone in the name of US imperialism. Since at least the 1940s, the US military has been actively polluting the Pacific, destroying fragile ecosystems to create military infrastructure, poisoning waters with toxic chemical runoff, and rendering entire islands uninhabitable from bombings and nuclear testing. The Red Hill fuel leak in my hometown of Honolulu is just the latest crisis in a long history of environmental disasters brought on by the US military as 3 of the 4 superfund sites in Hawaii are military sites.”

Carly Sanchez says that the San Gabriel wildfires have been so close to her home that she can see fire from the front door:

“I believe it is important to show climate action solidarity even when it is on issues that have not affected you personally. By showing up you allow your body to be a physical representation of who will live with policy enforcement, or lack thereof. As someone who was raised on the

West Coast, I can tell you that I would appreciate attendance by my East coast climate defenders and that is why I show up whenever I can. In California we face wildfires, in New Jersey it's toxic waste pollution, but it's all the same climate crisis. Everyone is affected and everyone has a responsibility to get involved in whatever capacity they can. When you're present in these spaces of protest you allow yourself to be used as a resource to end injustice."

Patricia Cortado says that the intersections of the injustices reflected in the Philippines and Newark are too familiar in ways that put people to action:

"The harms of militarization, and the industry's over-exploitation of fisheries, bold deforestation and deep mining impacts, in the Philippines; and the pollution emitted by toxic facilities in Newark are met by one similar thing- the resistance of the people. We have a duty to protect our communities and the Newark community showed just that during the NJ DEP Public Hearing."



Thomas, Carly, and Patricia believe that we are not separate from the fight. EJ issues are familiar in our own respective ways and we are all accountable to our communities no matter where we are. The question is- What are you all willing to do to protect vulnerable communities? How are you going to use your power?

In New Jersey where the EJ Law could be the strongest in the nation, we need to support the leaders ensuring it stays the strongest and representative of the frontlines.

Follow the links below to take
action:

- [Talking Points for Public Comments to NJ DEP](#)
- [Leave Comments to NJ DEP, Deadline: September 4, 2022](#)

[Submit Comments In Art Raffle To Win Custom Painting](#)



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