

Recommendations to the Ensure Equity in Louisiana's Climate Change Plan in COVID-19

Vulnerable Communities Associated with Air Pollution

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Objective: Identify barriers to racial and socioeconomic equity under Louisiana's current political climate, and recommend policies to address inequities.

Background: Louisiana Climate Change Workgroup is tasked with proposing solutions for the State's Climate Change Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. The Equity Task Force is a subgroup of this Workgroup tasked with reducing socioeconomic and racial inequity. River Parish representatives on the Equity Task Force are seeking input from the public on policies to protect vulnerable communities along the Mississippi River. This project presents recommendations addressing the Equity Task Force's request.

Case Description: In March 2021, the United Nations determined that the primarily poor minority Louisiana parishes along the Mississippi River have endured decades of environmental racism. The current project identified potential factors contributing to this injustice: 1) arbitrary environmental justice assessment protocols; 2) laws limiting aid provided by academic law clinics; 3) insufficient environmental monitoring in Fenceline communities; 4) lack of community and local government considerations in permit determinations; 5) inadequate regulatory oversight and enforcement; 6) inappropriate use of health registry data in government decision making; 7) lack of land buy out mechanisms and funds; 8) biased industrial tax exemption program decisions; and 9) lack of investments in infrastructure for transportation, education, health care, fresh foods, drinking water and renewable energy.

Conclusions: Policies are proposed to address these deficiencies for the purpose of ensuring an equitable transition to a more sustainable economy.

Keywords: Climate change, equity, environmental justice assessment, industry