



## Environmental Justice League of Rhode Island

### Mission

The Environmental Justice League of Rhode Island is an alliance of individuals and organizations working together to promote environmental justice in Rhode Island through advocacy, education, networking, organizing, and research. Our definition and vision is that environmental justice will be achieved when:

- All people have access to the information that will enable them to participate fully in making decisions that affect their environment
- All people are treated fairly and provided the opportunity for meaningful involvement with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies
- All people have equal and fair access to a safe, healthy, and sustainable environment at home, at work, at school, and in public places
- No group of people, including any racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group or vulnerable population such as children, the elderly or the disabled suffers from a disproportionate share of negative environmental risks or burdens.

### History

Many people believe the Environmental Justice movement began in 1982, when a community of color in Warren County, North Carolina, organized against the placement of a dangerous PCB Landfill in their neighborhood. The Environmental Justice movement recognizes the intricate connections between the issues of health, environmental quality, and social justice. Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, ethnicity or income, in the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws and policies.

The Environmental Justice League of Rhode Island has its roots in activism that arose around siting schools on contaminated ground in Providence. Gradually this and other issues brought together concerned individuals and organizations to search for a solution, and they formed the Providence Environmental Justice Forum. This Forum held educational meetings for years, culminating in an Environmental Justice conference in November of 2007. In December of 2007, the Environmental Justice League of Rhode Island was officially formed to address the myriad environmental justice issues that currently face the residents of Providence by building power in the communities most affected by environmental hazards, and moving people into action around those issues to improve the quality of their environment

### Our Principles

In promoting environmental justice, the EJLRI will strive to ensure: Democratic participation and community empowerment, non-violence and cooperation, environmental remediation that does not result in displacement and gentrification, and fair access to, and distribution of, environmental benefits related to public health, safety, and welfare.

### Our Work

The EJ League has set out to work with Providence residents and other stakeholders to develop a comprehensive understanding of the sources of existing and potential risks from toxic and environmental pollutants; set priorities for pollution reduction; inventory and highlight community assets; foster the political will to take action in the community to reduce the exposure of the members of the community to harmful substances; and ultimately to create the impetus for a society and economy that no longer puts anyone, especially low-income communities and communities of color, in harm's way.

### Governance

The EJ League is currently governed by a 12-member Board. Board members are elected to serve either one or two-year terms, depending on their preference, but these terms are staggered to ensure that the Board reflects the diversity of our communities, and allows for the development of new leadership within the organization. The Board is made up of representatives from the community, and from the various organizations and groups which partner with the EJ League.

### RI Organizations Working for Environmental Justice

American Lung Association of Rhode Island  
Childhood Lead Action Project  
Community Asthma Program, Hasbro Children's Hospital  
Community Outreach Core, Brown University Superfund Basic Research Program  
Direct Action for Rights and Equality (DARE)  
Environment Council of Rhode Island  
Family Life Center  
Hartford Park Residents Association  
Healthy Housing Collaborative (RI DOH)  
RI Committee on Occupational Safety and Health  
Rhode Island Diesel Pollution Initiative (RIDPI)  
Rhode Island HUD Tenant Project  
Rhode Island Legal Services  
Sierra Club, Rhode Island Chapter  
Toxics Action Center  
Toxics Information Project (TIP)  
Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council

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