



# Environmental Justice in S.C.

NACAA Permitting Workshop

July 13 – 15 2009

Nancy Whittle

Community Liaison

SCDHEC



# **What is Environmental Justice(EJ)?**

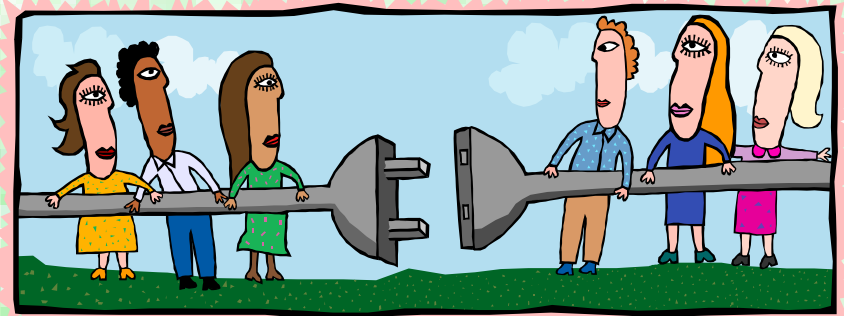
Environmental injustice is ...

“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.”

# The Importance of EJ

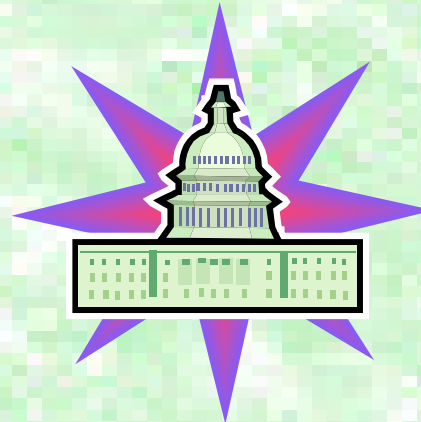
## EJ Addresses ...

- Disproportionately overburdened communities
- Environmental harms
- Social justice
- Public health risks
- Equity issues
- Human rights issues
- Public participation in government decision-making
- Effective problem-solving collaboration
- Health disparities



# Presidential Executive Order

- Executive Order 12898
  - February 4, 1994
  - Comprised of 12 federal agencies
  - Formed Interagency Work Group on EJ
  - Awarded 15 pilots – ReGenesis Project in Spartanburg, SC



# **SC Environmental Justice** **Advisory Committee**

- Formation – 2007, H.3733/Act 171
- Governmental Advisory Committee to DHEC
- Consists of 13 state agencies & 3 academia
  - Attorney General's Office, Agriculture, Commerce, Education, Health and Human Services, LLR, DNR, PRT, Public Safety, DOT, USC-Arnold School of Public Health, Clemson University-Community and Economic Development, South Carolina State University, State Ports Authority
- Study & consider ej issues in economic development and revitalization
- January 2010 – Findings/recommendations to Governor and General Assembly

# Advisory Committee Work

- 4 Subcommittees
  - Health
  - Revitalization and Reuse
  - Policy
  - Marketing & Awareness
- Listening Sessions
  - 4 across state



# Listening Sessions

## Topic Questions

- Economic Development & Revitalization
- Environmental Justice & Revitalization
- Community Health & Revitalization
- Brownsfields/Grayfields
- Revitalized SC Communities: Defining Success





# What We Heard?

- Hold State and regulated community accountable.
- Communication is lacking – need for more community education.
- Need to consider health and economic status in decisions.
- Residents need a voice.





# **EJ and Permitting**

- Minority populations and low-income communities bear a disproportionate share of health & environmental burdens.
- Permits don't consider demographics, local zoning and siting decisions or cumulative impact.
- Quality of life issues are also not considered in permitting decisions.
- Need to better address the broader social, health and economic impact issues.

# What is DHEC Doing about EJ?

- Conducting More Meaningful Public Participation
- Public Participation is ...
  - *A full range of actions and processes that EQC uses to involve the public in our work (EQC Public Participation Task Force)*
  - *Public Participation is any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision-making and uses public input to make decisions (IAP2)*

# How is DHEC Conducting Public Participation ...

- Task Force
- Training Staff on Public Participation and EJ
- Hired Public Participation Staff
- Deputy has public participation as one of his top 5 priorities for EQC
- Conducted 3 Listening Sessions (diversity of stakeholders) – asking about our process, i.e., public meetings, public notices, DHEC’s authority, accessibility of information & staff
  - 2009 Goals:
    - Public Education and Interaction
    - Early, Consistent, and Effective Notification

# Building Trust

- Build relationships
- Identify all stakeholders
- Don't expect to be trusted. Accept a lack of trust based on history and other experience related to authority or regulatory agency.
- Provide information in everyday language
- Use collaborative problem solving

# Good Public Participation Behaviors

- Willingness
- Openness
- Validation
- Respect
- Humility
- Mutuality



# Examples

- Proposed Santee Cooper Coal Fired Power Plant
- N. Charleston Port Expansion





# EPA Environmental Justice Achievement Award

- October 20, 2008



# Contact Information

Nancy Whittle  
Community Liaison  
EQC Administration  
SC DHEC  
Columbia, SC  
(803) 896-8967  
[whittInc@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:whittInc@dhec.sc.gov)

