

# **Biden announces environmental justice advisers**

**Kelsey Brugger, E&E News reporter** Published: Monday, March 29, 2021



Robert Bullard, a well-known environmental justice advocate, will be a White House adviser on the issue.

The White House today announced a group of community leaders and green activists to join the Council on Environmental Quality's Environmental Justice Advisory Council.

Members include Texas professor Robert Bullard, regarded as the father of the environmental justice movement. The group will convene tomorrow for the first time.

"This is a historic moment that environmental justice communities have been working toward for decades," Cecilia Martinez, CEQ's environmental justice coordinator, said in a statement.

"President Biden and Vice President Harris are, for the first time ever, bringing the voices, perspectives, and expertise of environmental justice communities into a formal advisory role at the White House."

The board will include 26 activists and environmental leaders from all over the country. Other prominent voices will be Peggy Shepard, founder of We ACT for Environmental Justice; LaTricea Adams, CEO of Black Millennials 4 Flint; Susana Almanza, founding

member of People Organized in Defense of Earth and Her Resources; and Jade Begay, a director at NDN Collective, an Indigenous rights group.

Many of the members are also part of the Environmental Justice Working Group, a committee formed in 2018 by Reps. Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.), chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, and Donald McEachin (D-Va.).

The pair, who have introduced the "Environmental Justice for All Act," H.R. 2021, lauded the new White House advisory council.

Vice President Kamala Harris said in a statement that the council would ensure the "administration's work is informed by the insights, expertise, and lived experience of environmental justice leaders from across the nation."

The council — created by Biden's Jan. 27 climate executive order — will advise the White House on "how to address current and historic environmental injustices."

It comes as Biden seeks to make environmental justice a cornerstone of his green agenda. The order directs that 40% of investments go to historically disadvantaged communities.

The council will also work with EPA. The agency will play a role in tomorrow's meeting, which will be held virtually at 2 p.m.

Martinez, a longtime EJ activist who founded the Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy, is looking to "clean up toxic pollution, create good-paying, union jobs in all communities, and give every child in America the chance to grow up healthy."

Abigail Dillen, president of Earthjustice, called the White House council "a critical step in the right direction."

"We are thrilled to see environmental justice champions bring their leadership and expertise to the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council," she said. "President Biden committed to partnering with front-line communities and bringing equity and justice in decision making."

Members of the advisory body also include:

- Maria Belen Power, an associate director at GreenRoots.
- Tom Cormons, executive director at Appalachian Voices.
- Andrea Delgado, government affairs director at the United Farm Workers Foundation.
- Catherine Flowers, founder of the Center for Rural Enterprise and Environmental Justice.
- Jerome Foster, executive director of OneMillionofUs.
- Kim Havey, director of sustainability for Minneapolis.
- Angelo Logan, co-founder of East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice.

- Maria Lopez-Nuñez, director of environmental justice and community development at Ironbound Community Corp.
- Harold Mitchell, former South Carolina state representative.
- Richard Moore, executive director of the National Environmental Justice Conference.
- Rachel Morello-Frosch, environmental researcher at the University of California, Berkeley.
- Juan Parras, founder of Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services.
- Michele Roberts, national co-coordinator at Environmental Justice for All.
- Ruth Santiago, ambassador at Earthjustice.
- Nicky Sheats, advocate with the New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance.
- Carletta Tilousi, longtime advocate for the Havasupai Tribe.
- Vi Waghiyi, environmental health and justice director at Alaska Community Action on Toxics.
- Kyle Whyte, professor at the University of Michigan's School for Environment and Sustainability.
- Beverly Wright, American environmental justice scholar.
- Hli Xyooj, attorney for the Farmers' Legal Action Group.
- Miya Yoshitani, longtime activist and member of the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit.