



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20240-0001

**Draft Environmental Justice Strategy and Action Plan Community Discussion
October 23, 2024**

The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement held a community-oriented environmental justice workshop from 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. EST on Wednesday, October 23rd. This was the second public workshop BSEE held to gather input on our environmental justice strategy and action plan.

The purpose of the workshop was:

1. To foster the relationship between BSEE and the public and drive the bureau's mission to deepen its knowledge and understanding of environmental justice.
2. To follow-up with communities on the proposed actions associated with the four environmental justice goals (e.g., Institutionalize Environmental Justice, Deliver Equity Through Investments, Reduce Burdens and Harms, Advance Meaningful Engagement and Outreach) outlined in the draft BSEE Environmental Justice Strategy and Action Plan.

The workshop began with welcoming remarks and a brief review of the draft BSEE Environmental Justice Strategy and Action Plan. Community participants also introduced themselves.

Open Discussion

Participants were invited to share their feedback directly—this dialogue leaned on the practice of a semi-formal, office hours style conversation between the facilitators and community leaders. The discussion was guided by a set of broad questions to gauge their thoughts on the current development of the plan. Specific questions were not needed to launch the conversation, as this is a follow-up of an existing dialogue between BSEE and community participants. However, each goal and its respective actions were shared in a PowerPoint and community members were invited to share any thoughts or questions that they had with content. They were also encouraged to provide any other information or comments related to BSEE's environmental justice work. Participants were reminded that BSEE's Environmental Justice Strategy and Action Plan would be a living document and that BSEE welcomes ongoing suggestions, interactions, and input.

Note: The following comments and responses have been paraphrased and synthesized for readability.

- Participant Question: What is the intention behind the use of the term “institutionalize?” The term is subjective and jargon-based and is not a term orally shared in tribal spaces. Ultimately, how is “institutionalize” defined and what are the benefits? Salted Roots shared a language guide: <https://next100coalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Ocean-Equity-Collective-Language-Guide.pdf>

- *BSEE Response: The term “institutionalize” refers to incorporating environmental justice principles into BSEE decision making and culture. The actions under Goal #1 support BSEE’s strategy to ensure the bureau: 1) is knowledgeable about the past and potential impacts experienced by communities with environmental justice concerns stemming from activities on the Outer Continental Shelf; 2) possesses the capacity to regularly engage with communities and monitor and respond to environmental justice concerns; and 3) meaningfully considers environmental justice implications in bureau decisions and enforces compliance measures designed to mitigate adverse impacts.*
- Participant Question: Other agencies hire staff to support environmental justice initiatives. Is there a desire for budget actions associated with engaging environmental justice communities?
 - *BSEE Response: There is an action in the plan regarding budgeting and the bureau does have access to limited Inflation Reduction Act funds while trying to build capacity. BSEE has also created a full-time Environmental Justice Coordinator role and is building liaison roles within existing positions.*
- Community Question: Who will the future BSEE Environmental Justice Coordinator report to?
 - *BSEE Response: The BSEE Environmental Justice Coordinator will report to the Senior Environmental Stewardship Coordinator in the Office of the Director.*
- Community Question: How will this plan, new hires, etc. be affected by the elections and the change of administration?
 - *BSEE Response: BSEE has been working internally to dedicate resources towards embedding environmental justice into our bureau activities. BSEE has engaged offices and internal staff by asking them to make decisions about environmental justice actions that their offices can lead or participate in and to identify the actions that they believe would be most impactful in bringing BSEE closer to achieving the bureau’s environmental justice goals. These actions will continue to be integrated into existing program and office tasks and strategic planning as environmental justice principals fundamentally align with BSEE’s mission. to promote safety, protect the environment, and conserve resources offshore. Further, the bureau recognizes protecting human health and the environment as inherent to the pursuit of accomplishing our overarching strategic goals and objectives.*
- Community Comment: Regarding Goal #3, it is important to conduct outreach with communities to find out what the harms are relevant to their areas. It is essential to include pipelines and the transportation of the oil in and out of waterways on the Gulf Coast in bureau focus.
 - *BSEE Response: Many of our proposed actions support or span more than one goal. Goal #4, for example focuses specifically on facilitating understanding of communities and how they may be affected by BSEE activities. We will work to incorporate what we learn from the outcomes of our Goal #4 actions into Goal #3’s aim to reduce adverse impacts on communities.*

- Community Comment: There is a lack of collaboration and communication amongst federal agencies. We suggest sharing operator records with other federal agencies that oversee onshore energy work).
 - *BSEE Response: Some of the impacts from BSEE’s decisions are experienced by communities onshore and many of those are indirectly related to BSEE-authorized activities, such as increases in port activities, supply chain considerations, or downstream processing of oil and gas. BSEE monitors the offshore industry’s compliance with the mitigation measures imposed on the offshore energy industry to eliminate or reduce environmental, health, and safety impacts. While our practice has historically been to provide feedback to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management for their environmental assessment process that informs future decisions, we also now have an objective (Objective 2.1) as part of this environmental justice plan to engage with other ocean-based agencies and partners to collaborate on environmental justice issues.*

- BSEE should get granular with the term “community” in the Gulf region, specifically focusing on block groups to help identify the scale of what are considered communities in the Gulf region.
 - *BSEE Response: BOEM has developed guidance and tools for applying sound methodologies and best practices for environmental justice analysis that supports both BOEM and BSEE decisions. Analysts start with U.S. Census Bureau data, EJScreen, and state-level tools as initial sources, but then customize and augment that data based on the individual projects. Local data sources – such as healthcare facilities, academic institutions, and non-profit organizations are used when available, as well as information from engagements and collaborations with communities. Block groups can be considered, too, especially for activities in the Gulf of Mexico region.*

Participant List

- Community Participants
 - Healthy Gulf
 - Salted Roots
 - Coastal Defenders
 - Gullah/Geechee Nation

- BSEE Participants
 - Senior Environmental Stewardship Coordinator
 - Decommissioning Advisor
 - Deputy Assistant Director for Environmental Compliance

- Project Support
 - Alankok, LLC