



Environmental Enforcement in Colorado

The EPA and Colorado Partnership For Environmental Justice

Colorado focuses on environmental justice as a core priority. In 2021, Governor Polis signed the Environmental Justice Act (HB21-1266) into law, and subsequently appointed members to Colorado's first Environmental Justice Advisory Board. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) then launched the new Environmental Justice Action Task Force and the agency created a new Environmental Justice Unit to reduce environmental health disparities for communities of color and low-income communities across Colorado.

To further those goals, on March 8, 2022, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the CDPHE signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to coordinate enforcement actions that advance the environmental justice goals of both agencies. California was the first state to partner with EPA, and Colorado is the second state to formally engage with EPA on this topic. The agreement is designed to enhance their efforts to identify the most serious threats to public health and the environment in communities that are disproportionately impacted by pollution.

The MOU addresses clean air, water, soil, and drinking water and exposure to hazardous waste and toxic chemicals. The partnership between the two agencies expands activities related to enforcement, inspections, compliance assistance, communication, community engagement, and training to benefit public health and the environment in these communities.

The memorandum (the terms of which last five years) focuses on several goals:

- Strategically prioritizing inspections at facilities located in communities that are disproportionately impacted by pollution;

- Enhancing enforcement coordination between CDPHE and EPA to reduce pollution burdens in disproportionately impacted communities; and
- Expanding transparency through public engagement about enforcement and compliance actions in impacted communities.

See the MOU [here](#).

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