

THE PROBLEM

Connecticut is known as a nationwide leader in the fight against climate change, however, our state has not done enough to address environmental injustice. Low-income and communities of color in Hartford, Waterbury, New Haven, and Bridgeport are disproportionately impacted by climate change, pollution, and other environmental threats.

In 2008, Connecticut signed its first environmental justice legislation into law. Although imperfect, it was a step in the right direction. It recognized the unjust placement of “affecting facilities” (power plants, sewage treatment plants, waste incinerators, and landfills) near low-income and minority communities. These toxic sites are responsible for high rates of asthma, respiratory illness, and other diseases among members of these communities. The original law was intended to ensure that affecting facilities could not be placed near these communities without meaningful public participations and input. Unfortunately, it lacked significant penalties for bad actors who ignored the law’s intent.

A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION

Last year, the legislature introduced HB 5395 to evaluate our Environmental Justice law, expand its scope, and strengthen its language. Rather than simply suggest that developers notify neighborhood and environmental groups of their plans in writing, HB 5395 would have mandated these activities.

Additionally, HB 5395 had a new clause that would automatically nullify any application for an affecting facility if the applicant does not abide by the stated rules of public participation. This revision would have stopped F&G’s application in Waterbury from being approved after they failed to properly notify the public of their plans, and would have protected communities in the South End. The revision would also have implications in Hartford and other communities.

MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about the Environmental Justice law, contact:

Alex Rodriguez, CTLCV Education Fund
alex@ctlc.org | 860-236-5442



HARTFORD’S INCINERATION PROBLEM

Hartford is currently home to an aging, high-polluting trash incinerator serving 70 towns. It is the county’s second largest air polluter. Trash incinerators tend to be dirtier than coal power plants and inefficient at energy production. True environmental justice would involve investment in waste recycling and composting services and updating our current Environmental Justice statutes.

A STRONG ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE LAW WOULD:

- Reduce health burdens on communities of color and low income communities;
- Lower greenhouse gas emissions;
- Mandate notification to municipal residents, city commissions, and Neighborhood Revitalization Zones of potential commercial and industrial interests in their areas;
- Ensure outreach to state residents be in their preferred language;
- Protect clean air and water for people and wildlife.