

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AGENCY GOALS

North Carolina
Department of Commerce's
2024

INTRODUCTION

The NC Department of Commerce's mission is to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for all North Carolinians, a mission key to achieving Governor Cooper's wish for all North Carolinians to have the opportunity to be healthier, better educated, and with more money in their pockets so that they can live more happy, abundant, and prosperous lives. To do that, the North Carolina Department of Commerce works closely with local, regional, national, and international organizations to propel economic, community, and workforce development for the state.

Governor Cooper's Executive Order No. 292 Advancing Environmental Justice in North Carolina. The Executive Order takes a whole-of-government approach to advance environmental justice efforts and improving the quality of life in North Carolina communities. The order directs the development of an Environmental Justice Hub, environmental justice mapping tool. EO. 292 directs Cabinet agencies to incorporate environmental justice considerations into their policies and programs to the extent permitted by law and directs each cabinet agency to develop a minimum of three EJ goals with measurable outcomes.

1. **Climate Change Workforce Diversity**
2. **Update all public facing websites to enhance digital inclusivity**
3. **Increase Awareness of Environmental Justice by Providing *DEQ's EJ Toolkit for Businesses* to and Discussing EJ with Companies and Local Communities Seeking Grants or Funds from Commerce**

1. Climate Change Workforce Diversity

- 1.1 The NC Department of Commerce will support employers in recruiting a diverse workforce in industries and occupations related to addressing climate change by advancing the recommendations and strategies in the Climate Change Workforce Diversity Report.
- 1.2 The Department is a partner in the North Carolina State University Department of Energy grant, “Smarter NC,” which is focused on assisting workforce recruitment in low-income communities impacted by high pollution. They are targeting two areas of the state to focus their efforts. The Department and Cabinet workforce agencies will coordinate employer engagement opportunities with NCSU’s “Smarter NC” project and support 50 employers to build a talent pipeline in the electric vehicle/advanced manufacturing space by February 2025.

2. Update all public facing websites to enhance digital inclusivity

2.1 The NC Department of Commerce consists of several public facing divisions that connect residents to job seeker services, unemployment services, business or community grants, and data and information. Where relevant, the Department will update resources on public facing websites to include information and/or resources in multiple languages. The Department will collaborate with the Office of the Governor, partners engaged in the North Carolina Digital Access and Equity grant project, and state agencies to leverage resources to make information more accessible to diverse populations.

3. Increase Awareness of Environmental Justice by Providing DEQ’s EJ Toolkit for Businesses to and Discussing EJ with Companies and Local Communities Seeking Grants or Funds from Commerce

3.1 The mission of the Department of Commerce is to improve the economic well-being and the quality of life for all North Carolinians. We connect businesses with the site locations, workforce, and infrastructure they need to succeed in one of the nation's top states for business. And our targeted, performance-based incentive programs help companies and communities grow and thrive in our state. We also connect local communities with the grants and funding they need to attract new business and ensure future prosperity.

In our role as connector, funder, and grantor, Commerce communicates topics of interest and relevance to both businesses and local communities seeking resources from the Department. To increase awareness of Environmental Justice concepts, Commerce will include information on the EJ Toolkit for Businesses in all incentive proposals. The Department will report to the Advisory Council the number of proposals provided for economic development projects each year as well as the number of projects that have been announced each year. The timelines for these reports will be aligned with existing reports already provided to the NCGA by the Department.