



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

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U.S. EPA, CalEPA launch joint effort to strengthen environmental enforcement in communities overburdened by pollution

New agreement will serve as model for other EPA and state partnerships on environmental justice

SAN FRANCISCO (Sept. 10, 2021) – Today, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9 (EPA) and the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) signed a five-year, first-of-its-kind Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to expand joint activities supporting the agencies' shared goals of reducing pollution burdens, increasing environmental compliance, and improving public health outcomes in overburdened California communities.

EPA Pacific Southwest Acting Regional Administrator Deborah Jordan and CalEPA Secretary Jared Blumenfeld signed the agreement at the Middle Harbor Shoreline Park in West Oakland, in front of a small group of EPA representatives, CalEPA staff, and members of the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project community organization.

The MOU creates a framework for a partnership between the two agencies and expands collaborative activities related to enforcement, inspections, compliance assistance, communication, community engagement, and training to benefit public health and the environment in overburdened communities.

“As we know all too well, the burden of pollution is not evenly shared. Communities whose residents are predominantly of color, Indigenous, or low-income are among those who continue to suffer from disproportionately high levels of pollution and adverse health effects,” **said EPA Pacific Southwest Acting Regional Administrator Deborah Jordan.** “This agreement is a first in the nation and will improve transparency and communication among federal and state

agencies to be more accountable and responsive to compliance concerns in overburdened communities.”

“By focusing our joint enforcement efforts in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods, California and President Biden’s EPA are sending a clear message to those violating environmental laws: we will take legal action against polluters and make sure they pay the price for the health impacts they have caused to our most vulnerable residents,” **said CalEPA Secretary Jared Blumenfeld.**

Under the MOU, the agencies intend to:

- Enhance existing collaborations by increasing joint inspections in overburdened communities; sharing or jointly developing metrics for determining pollution burdens and vulnerability; and collaborating on staff training.
- Promote coordination of enforcement responses, including joint judicial enforcement actions in overburdened communities.
- Expand engagement with overburdened communities to ensure that targeting of enforcement resources, and compliance-related activities are fully informed by the knowledge and lived experience of these communities.
- Improve communication and transparency by collaborating on an annual workplan and annual report to highlight achievements under the MOU.

For more information about environmental justice, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice> and <https://calepa.ca.gov/envjustice/>

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