

Dear Friends,

The focus of the June/July Sustainability & Creation Care newsletter is on the intersection of Climate and Racial Justice known as Environmental Justice (EJ) or Climate Justice. This month we'll discuss the problems and describe instances where Environmental Justice problems are being addressed.

If you know of others who should receive this newsletter, please forward it to them, and let me know who to add to the email list. More up-to-date info can be found on the Sustainable Winchester Facebook page at www.facebook.com/SustainableWinchester. Please like that page and share with others who should know.

In Faith,

Josh

EPIPHANY SUSTAINABILITY AND CREATION CARE GROUP MEETINGS



The Epiphany Sustainability and Creation Care Group Meetings are held the last Monday of each month from 5:30pm – 6:30pm. Throughout the Summer of 2021 they will be Zoom Meetings.

The next Zoom Meeting is **Monday, July 26.**

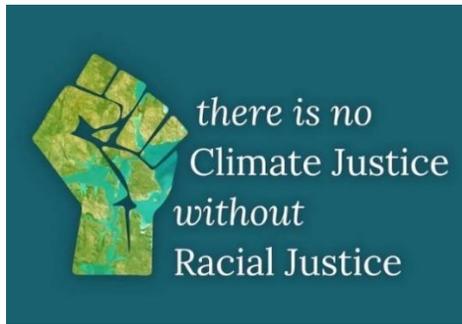
Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8734975675>

Meeting ID: 873 497 5675

Password: 1111

Dial by Phone at: 929-205-6099



As a group committed to environmental justice, we stand with those calling for racial justice, accountability and an end to violence. We grieve for the loss so many are experiencing in our community, and we stand with those most affected by racist structures and systems.

The Mass. Bishop's Declaration of Climate Emergency drafted this month says: "We recognize that the climate crisis affects low-income communities and communities of color first and hardest. We confess that we, and our churches, have not yet responded with adequate seriousness or urgency to the ongoing, intensifying effects of climate change, and to its underlying causes." It calls on us all to pray, learn, act and advocate for environmental justice reform.

JUNE/JULY FOCUS – CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Although environmental activists had traditionally been characterized as white suburbanites, Climate activism today is more often driven by communities of color. This is based on the realization that low-income communities and communities of color are often disproportionately affected by environmental impacts and most vulnerable to climate change.

This is a focus on *Environmental Justice* – the development and enforcement of environmental laws and policies to provide fair treatment of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income. The goal of Environmental Justice is to afford everyone the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.

This month's issue discusses the movement to realize Environmental Justice.

Biden administration linking Climate and racial inequity



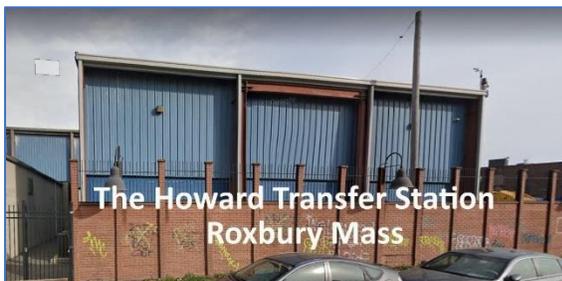
The fight against climate change may be taking a striking new turn under the Biden administration. The White House is calling climate action a form of Environmental Justice, part of a campaign to address economic and racial inequity.

It's bringing new attention and, potentially, a flood of cash to low-tech approaches to climate action that directly benefit low-income neighborhoods. They include aid for home renovations and upgrades to city transportation infrastructure, including buses.

"The Environmental Justice community, and many of our Black and brown communities, have identified the connection between climate change and their own community infrastructure. They can't be disconnected," says Cecilia Martinez, senior director for environmental justice at the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

This Environmental Justice approach has been underway for a number of years in Cleveland OH, this NPR article discusses Cleveland's progress: <https://www.npr.org/2021/06/21/1003227623/cleveland-wants-climate-justice-can-the-biden-administration-help>

The Environmental Justice movement in Boston



Do you know where the waste collection and disposal site in the city of Boston is located? Here's a hint: more than 83% of the residents in this neighborhood are people of color. Well, if you guessed Roxbury, you're correct. Roxbury is not very different from many other neighborhoods in cities around the country. Landfills and incinerators are often placed in black and brown, and low income, neighborhoods.

Black and brown communities are more than 20 times likely than white communities to be exposed to environmentally hazardous sites that harm their air, their water, and their quality of life. These kinds of inequalities are what the Environmental Justice movement has formed around. The movement works to reduce the burden that pollution and climate change have on certain groups of people, a concept we call environmental racism.

The harm that comes with rising seas and contaminated water systems isn't evenly distributed. People who are already disadvantaged by race, wealth, and income are usually the most affected by environmental disasters. Environmental Justice reminds us to tie our efforts to movements that address racism and classism, as they work hand in hand with environmental issues.

Watch this video of Environmental Justice in Harlem: https://youtu.be/zJX_MXaXBJA

Learn more about EJ activism in Massachusetts at: https://www.betterfutureproject.org/ej_explained

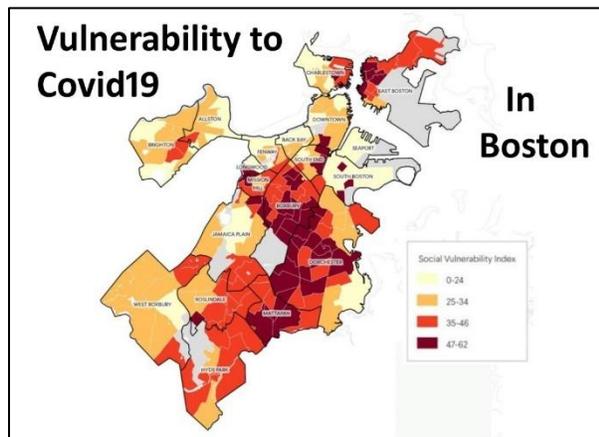
How is Climate Injustice Impacting Communities?



Low-income communities and Black and Brown communities have been the sacrifice zones so that the rest of the region has the benefits that industries bring. You can see this every day in fossil fuel power plants in these communities, or highways with single occupancy vehicles running through and dividing neighborhoods. People often don't have access to green space to walk and bike and enjoy with families and friends. And, it looks like a place where people are literally sick and dying at higher rates because they are exposed to these cumulative burdens of environmental harm.

Conservation Law Foundation Senior Attorney Staci Rubin, discusses these issues with María Belén Power from [GreenRoots](#) and Andrea Nyamekye of [Neighbor to Neighbor](#) in this CLF blog article: <https://www.clf.org/blog/what-we-mean-by-environmental-justice/>

In Boston, COVID-19 and Climate Change Hit the Same Communities Hardest



Just like the risks posed by climate change, Covid19 has hit communities unequally, falling largely along racial and socioeconomic lines. In Chelsea (where about 65 percent of residents are Latinx) infection rates were the highest in the state.

It's a familiar pattern, and with evidence linking long-term air pollution exposure to more serious COVID-19 infections, the work of addressing health disparities due to public health crises has taken on a renewed sense of urgency.

Low-income households, people of color, and the elderly often lack the resources and capacity to respond to the health and climate crises, and many public health and climate policies do not include strategies to specifically address the needs of vulnerable populations. As the links between COVID-19 and climate change become increasingly apparent, it's clear that the people bearing the brunt of climate change–related problems are now the same communities at a disadvantage in fending off the novel coronavirus.

Read more at: <http://www.bu.edu/articles/2020/in-boston-covid-19-and-climate-change-are-hitting-the-same-communities-the-hardest/>

How Black Lives Matter and Environmental Justice are Connected



Over 14 million people of color are living in counties with high air pollution. To them the phrase “I can’t breathe” often means they literally can’t breathe.

Watch this video on the connection between the BLM movement and Climate Justice:

<https://youtu.be/Di-JmGwjoOs>

What’s Being Done to Address the Environmental Justice Issue?

Climate Justice is such a daunting task, it’s hard not to become disheartened, but advocates are addressing Environmental Issues on many fronts. Here are three examples of successful campaigns in the Boston area where activists are “moving the needle”.



With extreme heat increasingly in forecast, Chelsea works to adapt

When extreme heat comes, much of Chelsea becomes an urban heat island. Daytime temperatures can be much as 7 degrees hotter in a heat island than in neighboring areas thanks to buildings and pavement that absorb heat and a lack of greenery to help cool it down.

Between 2004 and 2018, heat caused at least 10,500 deaths in the US -- that's more than hurricanes, tornadoes, or floods.

Chelsea is experimenting to significantly reduce extreme heat with some carefully selected low-tech strategies. Buildings with black roofs are being converted to a "cool roof" — painted white to reflect the sun rather than absorbing it. Researchers have found that the widespread adoption of cool roofs can lower the temperature of an urban area up to 9 degrees.

Vacant lots are being converted to green space with misting stations and fountains for drinking and refilling bottles, and shady spots. And the city is piloting changing building to require a 10-foot setback from the sidewalk and landscaping plans that include lots of trees.

Read the Boston Globe article at: https://bit.ly/Globe-Chelsea_heat-island

Activists hail Massachusetts law as crucial step on environmental justice

Activists are heralding the Massachusetts climate law (signed 6 months ago) as a crucial next step in the state's fight for environmental justice, saying it marks a key change in the state's approach to identifying which residents are the most burdened. In addition to setting new goals on emissions and clean energy, the law sets out new provisions for how communities can have a meaningful voice in how the state makes decisions on future infrastructure projects. When approving new projects, the state must take into account how existing pollution levels have already affected residents.

"For 20 years, we've been fighting to have this into law," says María Belén Power, of the local non-profit *GreenRoots* and a member of the White House's new Environmental Justice Advisory Council who helped draft the legislation with other grassroots organizers.

Read more at:

<https://bit.ly/Guardian-Mass-EJ>

Boston Climate Action Network - Energy Retrofits for Buildings with largest emissions

Boston's buildings are a significant source of heat-trapping gases. Over half of total emissions from Boston are produced by just 3% of its buildings. Massachusetts' new climate law mandates a 50% reduction of emissions of 2005 levels by 2030. Retrofitting our most wasteful buildings would go a long way toward meeting these goals. Boston Climate Action Network is working to retrofit the city's largest, most inefficient buildings.

Read more at: <https://bostoncan.org/buildings/>

OTHER NEWS

3 Climate Activists Now On Exxon's Board of Directors



A tiny hedge fund dealt a major blow to Exxon Mobil Corp last month, unseating three board members in a bid to force the company's leadership to reckon with the risk of failing to adjust its business strategy to match global efforts to combat climate change. This is a powerful and successful effort to change one of the worlds largest fossil fuel producers from within.

Read more at: <https://bit.ly/Exxon-board-members>

OTHER RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATIONS & GROUPS

Here are some additional organizations committed to climate change. This is only a small sample of the many environmental groups. If you have other groups that should be included on this list, please email joshua.reynolds85@gmail.com

350 Mass (Part of the Better Future Project group) www.betterfutureproject.org

Green Car Reports <https://www.greencarreports.com/>

Green Energy Consumers Alliance <https://www.greenenergyconsumers.org/>

Mass Clean Energy Center <https://www.masscec.com/>

MassSave <https://www.masssave.com/en>

Mothers Out Front.org <https://www.mothersoutfront.org/>

Sustainable Winchester www.facebook.com/SustainableWinchester

WinPower Community Choice Electricity www.winpowerma.org

Wright Locke Farm <https://www.wlfarm.org>