



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

LORI E. LIGHTFOOT  
MAYOR

**EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 2023-3**

**WHEREAS**, environmental justice is the principle that all people and communities are entitled to equal protection and equal enforcement of environmental laws and regulations and have a right to equitable treatment and meaningful involvement concerning the development, implementation, and enforcement of policies and regulations that can impact the environmental conditions of their communities; and

**WHEREAS**, in the 1960s, Civil Rights leaders brought attention to the public health risks associated with the unsafe environmental conditions especially affecting communities of color and low-income neighborhoods, laying the foundation for the environmental justice movement; and

**WHEREAS**, Chicago has a rich legacy of promoting environmental justice—from Hazel Johnson, who worked to improve living conditions in public housing, to the many community-based organizations that advocate to protect health and the environment in their neighborhoods; and

**WHEREAS**, environmental pollution is linked to certain chronic illnesses such as asthma and cancer, and chronic disease is the leading driver of Chicago’s ten-year life expectancy gap between Black and white residents and decreases in life expectancy in the Latino population; and

**WHEREAS**, a 2021 report by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) found that the impacts of climate change fall disproportionately on under-resourced communities, and many of these communities lack the resources to prepare for extreme weather conditions; and

**WHEREAS**, Section 2 of Article XI of the Constitution of the State of Illinois provides that “[e]ach person has the right to a healthful environment;” and

**WHEREAS**, the City in 2022 codified both an Office of Climate and Environmental Equity and an Office of Equity and Racial Justice, signifying the City’s commitment to providing Chicago residents with a healthful environment, and doing so in a way that supports racial equity; and

**WHEREAS**, the City has repeatedly reiterated its commitment to equity among its neighborhoods, most recently in the “We Will Chicago” citywide plan, a set of goals and

objectives to guide City priorities for the next 10 years, adopted by the Chicago Plan Commission in February 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, in May 2022, the City issued a new Climate Action Plan, as defined in Municipal Code of Chicago Section 2-31-020, which serves as the City’s official climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy and implementation plan, and which is focused on meeting such climate goals through pollution burden reduction and equitable access to critical infrastructure and community health and resilience; and

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Public Health’s five-year community health improvement plan (“Healthy Chicago 2025”), which was developed with input from hundreds of partners across sectors, established a citywide goal to address Chicago’s racial life expectancy gap by addressing the root causes of health, including the environment; and

**WHEREAS**, We Will Chicago, Chicago’s Climate Action Plan, and Healthy Chicago 2025 each includes strategies to improve health, opportunity, and quality of life in communities disproportionately burdened by, and vulnerable to, industrial development and pollution; and

**WHEREAS**, in order to advance environmental justice, the City must address cumulative impacts, which the U.S. EPA defines as “the totality of exposures to combinations of chemical and nonchemical stressors and their effects on health, well-being, and quality of life outcomes;” and

**WHEREAS**, Chicago’s historic role as an industrial center and its location at the nexus of the United States’ transportation network have contributed to environmental, social, and health burdens for generations of residents who work at or live near industrial facilities, rail yards, waterways, highways and airports; and

**WHEREAS**, cumulative burdens that stem from decades of inequitable development patterns persist citywide; and

**WHEREAS**, since 2022 the Chief Sustainability Officer and the Department of Public Health have been working in partnership with community organizations and technical experts to develop an assessment of such cumulative impacts, incorporating research and guidance from the U.S. EPA; and

**WHEREAS**, in order to achieve equity, and help advance environmental justice goals by the City, State, and federal governments, such as the Biden Administration’s Justice40 initiative, whereby 40 percent of the overall benefits of many federal investments must flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution, Chicago is committed to identifying the communities that experience the greatest cumulative impacts, supporting the meaningful involvement of community groups in decision-making, drafting new laws based on evidence of cumulative impacts, and fostering a whole government approach to minimize burdens and maximize benefits of existing and future development on our most vulnerable communities; now, therefore,

**I, LORI E. LIGHTFOOT, Mayor of the City of Chicago, do hereby order as follows:**

## **SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS**

As used in this Executive Order,

“Cumulative Impact Assessment” or “CIA” means a report completed jointly by the Office of Climate and Environmental Equity, the Department of Public Health and community organizations and technical experts that details how environmental burdens, health conditions, and social stressors vary across Chicago, and identifies neighborhoods that experience the greatest cumulative impacts (“Environmental Justice Neighborhoods”).

“Environmental Justice” means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people, including a racial, ethnic or socioeconomic group, should (i) bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state or local programs and policies or (ii) receive an inequitably low share of environmental benefits.

“Environmental Justice Action Plan” means a suite of departmental commitments and goals to advance Environmental Justice, compiled jointly by the Office of Climate and Environmental Equity and the Department of Public Health. Until a map designating Environmental Justice Neighborhoods is adopted, departments will use currently available data such as the City's 2020 Air Quality and Health Index to identify priority communities.

## **SECTION 2. ENVIRONMENTAL EQUITY WORKING GROUP**

The Office of Climate and Environmental Equity shall continue to convene the Environmental Equity Working Group, which includes community representatives, environmental leaders, and local partners. The Environmental Equity Working Group shall continue to co-design the Cumulative Impact Assessment, including all related materials as specified in Section 4 of this Executive Order, through members serving as co-chairs of and participants in the associated working groups. The Environmental Equity Working Group shall further be tasked with making recommendations for the role, membership, structure, and governance of an ongoing community advisory body, which may be formally established at a later date to replace or supplement the Environmental Equity Working Group, to provide strategic counsel on the City's environmental initiatives.

## **SECTION 3. INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP**

The Office of Climate and Environmental Equity and the Department of Public Health shall continue to convene an interdepartmental group with representatives from across the various City departments with authority to address environmental impacts, including but not limited to representatives from the Department of Planning and Development (including the Zoning Administrator or their designee); the Department of Public Health; the Department of Transportation; the Department of Assets, Information and Services; the Department of Water

Management; the Department of Buildings; the Department of Procurement Services; the Department of Housing; and the Department of Law. The group is directed to:

- a) Identify actions within the scope of their authority to promote environmental justice and address cumulative impacts.
- b) Produce an Environmental Justice Action Plan by September 1, 2023, outlining the departments' respective commitments to reform internal policies, programs, and practices to better protect Environmental Justice Neighborhoods from burdens associated with intensive industrial and transportation uses.
- c) Seek public input on the Environmental Justice Action Plan, including from the Environmental Equity Working Group, and formally respond to comments received.
- d) Publish a report by December 31, 2023, and on an annual basis thereafter, to detail progress toward the goals enumerated in the Environmental Justice Action Plan.

#### **SECTION 4. CUMULATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The Office of Climate and Environmental Equity and the Department of Public Health will complete a baseline Cumulative Impact Assessment by September 1, 2023. The governance structure of the CIA shall include a Project Management Team, as well as working groups for Data & Methods, Policy, and Communications & Engagement, each of which shall be co-chaired by a member(s) of the Environmental Equity Working Group and a representative(s) of the Department of Public Health. The CIA shall be used by the Mayor's Office and all City departments and offices to inform decision-making in policy areas such as land use and zoning, transportation, permitting, enforcement, and other interventions that consider the burdens of existing and proposed intensive industrial operations and better protect Environmental Justice Neighborhoods, as described in the Environmental Justice Action Plan.

The baseline CIA must include the following materials:

- i. community input summary;
- ii. working group charters;
- iii. set of proposed environmental, health, and social data indicators;
- iv. map(s) that identify Environmental Justice Neighborhoods using the indicators specified in (iii) of this Section;
- v. the Environmental Justice Action Plan; and
- vi. recommendations for a future ordinance to achieve cumulative impacts policy reforms.

These materials should be understood as subject to continuing review and refinement by the City and the Environmental Equity Working Group based on empirical and qualitative evidence. Data supporting the CIA shall be made publicly available.

#### **SECTION 5. CUMULATIVE IMPACT FINDINGS & ORDINANCE**

Upon completion of the CIA, the Chief Sustainability Officer and the Commissioner of Public Health shall present their findings, which will include all deliverables specified in Section 4 of this Executive Order, to both the Mayor and the Chair of the City Council Committee on

Environmental Protection and Energy by no later than October 31, 2023. The Chief Sustainability Officer and the Commissioner of Public Health shall encourage the Committee to discuss the findings and recommendations through one or more public hearings, including at least one subject matter hearing. The draft ordinance language shall additionally include protocols regarding Environmental Justice engagement and the Environmental Justice Project Manager and departmental role(s), as specified in Section 5 of this Executive Order.

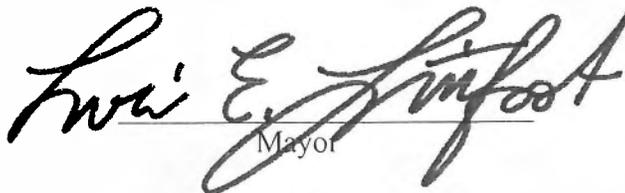
## SECTION 6. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PROGRAM

The Mayor directs the Chief Sustainability Officer to designate within the Office of Climate and Environmental Equity a position with the primary responsibility for coordinating all Environmental Justice efforts on behalf of the City (the “Environmental Justice Project Manager”). With input from the Environmental Equity Working Group, the Environmental Justice Project Manager shall work cross-departmentally to develop and oversee the implementation of improved internal policies and operations to support Environmental Justice, which must include:

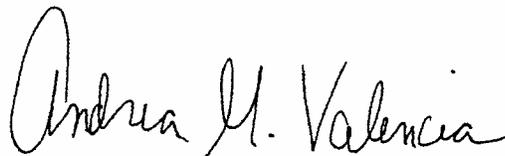
- a) An enhanced notification process so that residents of Environmental Justice Neighborhoods have greater awareness of land use/zoning, permitting, and enforcement activities.
- b) A public participation policy, including a language access plan, with standards for community outreach, public meetings, and hearings.
- c) A procedure by which residents of Environmental Justice Neighborhoods can raise complaints of discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, disability, income, age, or gender.

The Environmental Justice Project Manager will coordinate closely with the Department of Public Health, Department of Planning and Development, and other City departments responsible for aspects of planning, zoning, permitting, enforcement, and policy that affect the environment.

This Executive Order shall take effect upon its execution and filing with the City Clerk.

  
Mayor

Received and filed

  
City Clerk

Chicago City Clerk - Council Dir.  
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