

Eliminate Environmental Justice Programs

SAVINGS IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2016-2020	2016-2025
\$7	\$7	\$7	\$7	\$7	\$7	\$7	\$8	\$8	\$8	\$35	\$73

Heritage Recommendation:

Eliminate environmental-justice programs. This proposal saves \$7 million in 2016, and \$72 million over 10 years.

Rationale:

The EPA's environmental-justice programs were originally designed to protect low-income communities from environmental harm. However, the EPA now too often goes beyond this purpose. Under the premise of serving low-income communities, the EPA applies the law inconsistently to prevent businesses from developing, thus blocking the very economic opportunity that underserved and disadvantaged communities need. Further, environmental-justice programs have expanded to subsidize state and local projects that federal taxpayers should not be forced to fund. For example, the Environmental Justice Small Grants program has funded projects completely unrelated to environmental justice, such as neighborhood litter cleanups; education on urban gardening, composting, and the negative effects of urban sprawl and automobile dependence; and a pilot program to reach California's nail salon community in order to increase "knowledge of healthy/green nail salon concepts and practices."⁴⁴ Congress should eliminate these programs, which have been coopted by political agendas rather than protecting communities from truly dangerous conditions.

Additional Reading:

- Nicolas Loris, "EPA Is Desperately in Need of Budget Cuts. Here's a Few Places to Start," *The Daily Signal*, July 10, 2014, <http://dailysignal.com/2014/07/10/epa-desperately-need-budget-cuts-heres-places-start/>.
- The Heritage Foundation, "Environmental Conservation: Eight Principles of the American Conservation Ethic," <http://www.Heritage.org/research/projects/environmental-conservation>.
- James Rust, "'Environmental Justice' Injustice (EPA Elitism, Exploitation)," *Master Resource*, August 13, 2014, <https://www.masterresource.org/environmental-justice/environmental-injustice/>.

Calculations:

Savings are expressed as budget authority and were calculated using the FY 2014 enacted spending levels as found on page 193 of EPA, "Fiscal Year 2015: Justification of Appropriation Estimates for the Committee on Appropriations," March 2014, http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-03/documents/fy2015_congressional_justification.pdf. The FY 2014 spending level was increased at the same rate as discretionary spending for 2016–2025, according to the CBO's most recent August 2014 baseline spending projections.