



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** August 10, 2020

## **New Jersey must vote to mitigate the environmental harm disproportionately placed on overburdened communities.**

*Advocacy and Social Justice groups call on New Jersey Assembly to Pass  
Bill [A2212/S232](#) without further amendments*

Following the brutal murder of George Floyd in May, the country witnessed historic levels of outrage across the nation. Here in New Jersey, many of our leaders issued statements and called for justice—Assemblyman Wimberly (Paterson) [referred to 401 years of injustice that have come to a head like no other “maybe because of the pandemic.”](#) Assembly Speaker Coughlin also said that the incident [“offends our cherished commitment as a state and nation to equal justice and equal rights. When that commitment is breached we all suffer. Let us not tolerate that suffering.”](#) We now call on these same members of the New Jersey Assembly to live up to that promise.

Last month the State Senate passed Bill [S-232](#) requiring that the cumulative effect of environmental and public health stressors on overburdened communities be given consideration in reviewing permit applications. This bill, if enacted, is a large step in the right direction to correcting an injustice. It will provide New Jersey’s low-income populations and those of color with a voice and empower the state to advocate for their right to environmental protection. Governor Murphy has already endorsed the bill and now that the New Jersey Senate has passed it, all eyes are on the State Assembly.

**Anjali Mehrotra, President of National Organization for Women of New Jersey (New Jersey NOW)**, called on the Assembly to pass the bill. “We cannot say that #BlackLivesMatter and then fail to bring to a vote a bill that will save Black Lives. Now is the moment that determines whether we will take up the mantle and serve as a model for the rest of the country or continue to place undue environmental burdens on our own residents.”

“This bill would make New Jersey the leader in the nation on environmental justice. We must stop creating zones of sacrifice in our communities – particularly communities of color. Corporations create long term problems by creating pollution that festers for generations. It is important we act now to begin to change course in the state,” said **Sue Altman, State Director, New Jersey Working Families.**

**Brandon McKoy, President of New Jersey Policy Perspective (NJPP)** agreed, “Black and Latinx residents have shouldered the burden of pollution and environmental toxins in our state for far too long. It is past time for New Jersey to ensure that every resident – regardless of the color of skin or their ZIP code – has access to clean air and drinking water. State lawmakers must recognize that environmental justice is inextricably linked to racial justice; you cannot have one without the other.”

“New Jersey’s communities of color are already getting sick from higher levels of pollution, and are now facing deadlier outcomes from COVID19 because of pollution’s damaging health effects. This cannot continue. The time has come to end the practice of sacrificing the health of Black and brown

# National Organization for Women of New Jersey

New Jersey residents and pass the bill quickly, without carve outs or weakening amendments," **said Dena Mottola Jaborska, Associate Director, New Jersey Citizen Action.**

"This signature piece of legislation seeks to right the wrongs of New Jersey's legacy of environmental sins. It imposes social justice in environmental permitting, requiring NJDEP and permit applicants to consider the well-documented history of the burden unfairly borne by disenfranchised people and to evaluate environmental and public health stressors of certain facilities on overburdened communities. It is long overdue," **echoed Christian Fuscarino, Executive Director at Garden State Equality Action Fund.**

"My community is full of essential workers, working dangerous jobs in warehouses and factories where our health is often put at risk. Our homes and neighborhoods are our sacred places, and our governments must listen to our concerns," **said Dayse Rodriguez, a member of Make the Road New Jersey.** "They must consider the cumulative impact any development will have on our health – on the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink, and noise that permeates our home. Just as we fight for respect and dignity at work, we will fight for the respect of having a voice in the future of our home's environment."

**This is an Environmental Justice issue, this is a Racial Justice issue, this is a Health Disparity issue.** This bill is long due—New Jersey has the unique opportunity to lead the national effort on environmental justice reform. We stand in solidarity with the NJ Environmental Justice Alliance, Ironbound Community Corporation and Clean Water Action, who have been leading this fight for over a decade, and call on all our leaders to do the right thing.

**It's time to walk the talk, New Jersey.**

Garden State Equality Action Fund  
Make the Road New Jersey  
National Organization for Women of New Jersey (New Jersey NOW)  
New Jersey Citizen Action  
New Jersey Policy Perspective (NJPP)  
New Jersey Working Families

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For more information about NOW-NJ, please visit [www.nownj.org](http://www.nownj.org).

## **About National Organization for Women of New Jersey (New Jersey NOW)**

Incorporated in 1975, National Organization for Women of New Jersey is a state-wide grassroots women's rights activist organization consisting of thousands of members, activists, and allies. The purpose of NOW-NJ is to take action through intersectional, anti-racist grassroots activism to promote feminist ideals, lead societal change, eliminate discrimination, and achieve and protect the equal rights of all women and girls in all aspects of social, political, and economic life.

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