



# County of Monterey Planning Commission

**Item No.2**

## Agenda Item No. 2

Board of Supervisors  
Chambers  
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor  
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: PC 23-030

March 29, 2023

**Introduced:** 3/22/2023

**Current Status:** Agenda Ready

**Version:** 1

**Matter Type:** Planning Item

### **REF220021 - COUNTY OF MONTEREY GENERAL PLAN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ELEMENT**

- a. Establish an Environmental Justice Community Advisory Committee;
- b. Consider a list of community-based organizations and groups for invitation to participate on the Environmental Justice Community Advisory Committee; and
- c. Appoint up to twenty total members to the Environmental Justice Community Advisory Committee.

**Project Location:** Countywide

**Proposed CEQA action:** Establishment and appointment of the EJCAC constitute an early planning activity that is not a project under CEQA. The Environmental Justice Element will be subject to a CEQA determination in the future.

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#### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Planning Commission:

- a. Establish an Environmental Justice Community Advisory Committee;
- b. Consider a list of community-based organizations and groups for invitation to participate on the Environmental Justice Community Advisory Committee; and
- c. Appoint up to twenty total members to the Environmental Justice Community Advisory Committee.

#### SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

On December 7, 2022, the Planning Commission received a presentation on General Plan Elements Updates including preparation of a new Environmental Justice Element. Government Code §65302 requires that a local jurisdiction which identifies a “disadvantaged community” according to state-defined criteria shall prepare an Environmental Justice Element. In developing the Environmental Justice Element, the Environmental Justice Community Advisory Committee (EJCAC) is established as part of the approach to civic engagement required by SB 1000 legislation. The Planning Commission provided direction to staff on December 7 to return for the Commission to consider the list of community-based organizations invited to participate on the EJCAC.

By State law, a “disadvantaged community” is defined as a low-income area that is disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation. As a result, a community defined as disadvantaged is more

likely to suffer from a lower quality of life and worsened health outcomes compared to areas that are more affluent. Initial observation of the criteria indicates that unincorporated Monterey County does have disadvantaged communities as defined by the state in Boronda, Bradley, Castroville, Chualar, Las Lomas, Lockwood, Moss Landing, Pajaro, Pine Canyon, San Ardo, and San Lucas. Within the identified disadvantaged communities, the Environmental Justice Element is required to include objectives and policies that reduce unique or compounded health risks through reduction of pollution or hazard exposure, improvement of air quality, and promotion of public facilities and services, food access, safe and sanitary homes, and physical activity.

The EJCAC serves as a working group composed of community representatives, members, and activists involved with community-based organizations or other groups with a history of underrepresentation in civic proceedings. Members of the EJCAC are recruited for having local or experienced knowledge of environmental challenges within communities identified as being disadvantaged in unincorporated Monterey County, are expected to provide informed feedback from the community being served, and are depended upon to share targeted preliminary input for key information used to develop the Environmental Justice Element. There will be three total meetings at which each member of the EJCAC is expected to relay a clear understanding of the environmental justice issues specific to that particular disadvantaged community's struggles and concerns.

A sprawling list of ninety community-based organizations and underrepresented groups in unincorporated Monterey County was assembled. Staff believes that a maximum of twenty participants would support manageability of the group while capturing a comprehensive cross-section of perspectives throughout the community, both geographically and distributed across populations. Therefore, the list was narrowed to twenty groups, each with a connection to separate underserved groups within each identified disadvantaged community throughout the County. Groups were chosen for specific population of need being served and for broad reach throughout the disadvantaged community being served.

The Housing and Community Development Director issued a memo (Attachment A) to gauge invitee interest in commitment to serve on the EJCAC in an advisory capacity to staff for development of the Environmental Justice Element. Staff emailed the invitation memo to twenty community groups (Attachment B). For those fourteen groups that did not respond by the appointed deadline of March 8, staff reached out directly by phone. As of writing this staff report on March 21, 2023, eight organizations have accepted, two have declined, and no response has been received from the remaining ten groups.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Multiple County departments are involved in the development of the Environmental Justice Element including the: Health Department's Environmental Health Bureau and its Planning, Evaluation and Policy Unit; Civil Rights Office; County Administrative Office's Sustainability Program, Office of Community Engagement and Strategic Advocacy, and Office of Emergency Services; and the Public Works, Facilities and Parks Department.

Staff provided the Health, Housing, and Human Services Committee (HHHSC) an overview presentation of the status of the General Plan Elements Updates on December 5, 2022.

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Reviewed by: Melanie Beretti, AICP, HCD Principal Planner

Approved by: Erik Lundquist, AICP, HCD Director

The following attachments are on file with the HCD:

Exhibit A - Resolution

Exhibit B - Memorandum from Erik V. Lundquist, AICP, HCD Director

Exhibit C - Proposed EJCAC Invited Participant Contact List