

Shankar Prasad

Dr. Shankar Prasad currently working as Toxicologist at the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment has held many coveted positions in his career spanning over 35 years. He has served as Advisor to the Chairman of the California Air Resources Board, Deputy Secretary for Science and Environmental Justice at CalEPA and as Executive Fellow at the Coalition for Clean Air. He assisted U.S. EPA for over 12 years being a reviewer for the grants program and serving as a Member of the NEJAC and its three working groups.

Dr. Prasad is recognized for his strategic thinking and recommending actions that have long-term implications in the context of science, policy, and resources. His concept of "Pollution Burden Matrix" (included in 2004 U.S. EPA report) served as the foundation for many of the cumulative impacts evaluation tools of today. Similarly, his lead was primarily responsible for CalEPA to adopt a definition for "Cumulative Impacts," and for securing funds to initiate the first "Environmental Justice Screening Method" development by Manuel Pastor's Group at the University of Southern California. This ultimately led to the development of the world famous CalEnviroScreen that is used to identify Disadvantaged Communities across the state to allocate resources and improve the health as well as environmental conditions in these area.

Since 1996, Dr. Prasad has been advocating for Environmental Justice. In California, over one billion dollars is allocated to emission reduction programs in Disadvantaged Communities. This is the outcome of the Senate Bill 535 authored by the Senator De Leon that was signed into law in 2012. Dr. Prasad originally conceived this concept in 2007, left the government to join the non-profit world, formed a coalition of community, health and environmental groups, and tirelessly advocated for four years to get this law passed. For this contribution, he is fondly known as "Father of SB 535."

Early in his career, being a trained physician, he recognized the need to have non-invasive techniques to study the effects of air pollution on human volunteers' lungs, thus funded studies resulting in today's routine sputum induction protocols. He is highly respected among his peers on both sides of the aisle for his insight, integrity and candid nature.

In 2015, U.S. EPA honored him with the "EJ Pioneer" award for his contributions to the field of Environmental Justice. He is also recognized by Breathe California with "Clean Air Award" for his scientific and research contributions.