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Environmental Justice Presentation – Michigan EJ Workgroup Meeting 6/26/17

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1. Current status of EJ at EPA
    a. Expecting general continuity of work – incoming political leadership has stated support for EJ principles
    b. Organization (where EJ is placed w/in EPA) and planning approach (EJ 2020 or not) up for review as part of normal transition steps
    c. Committed to supporting Michigan's leadership in this important work, esp. recognizing that state agencies like MDEQ are on the front lines of implementing federal environmental law; and closer to the communities we all serve.
2. Brief history of evolution of EJ program at EPA
    a. Driven by EO 12898 (1994), including Presidential Memorandum which identified existing environmental and civil rights law as means of implementing the policy.
    b. Long process of integrating into program work, and of understanding what approaches are most effective in preventing or reducing disproportionately high and adverse impacts (fair treatment) as well as engaging informed citizens in decisions that affect community well-being (meaningful involvement). First EJ strategy came out April 1995.
    c. Plan EJ 2014 was a significant step focused on further program integration and tool development. See https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/plan-ej-2014.
    d. EJ 2020 Action Agenda built on 20 years of experience along with the program and tools development from EJ 2014. Setting aside its status as a plan or not, I will focus on the basic roadmap reflected in the plan: three areas for investment to advance EJ. For more details, see https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/ej-2020-action-agenda-epas-environmental-justice-strategy.
3. Three investment areas in advancing the EJ program –
    a. Integrating EJ in decisionmaking of agency
        i. Rulemaking
        ii. Permitting
        iii. Compliance and enforcement
        iv. Science
    b. Measurable results in communities – e.g., ending lead disparities (national challenges); but applicable to any issue.
        i. This is about how we apply our programs on the ground in an integrated, holistic way (using EJ integration tools, policy) Sustainability lens: think about economic, environmental, social aspects together when working toward community well-being
    c. Effective work on both fronts requires strong partnerships. These include:
        i. State and local government
        ii. Tribes
        iii. Communities (which includes all public and private partners in a given area, along with community members)

iv. Other federal agencies – in R5, all regional feds meet regularly to coordinate work in communities (always w/ a sustainability perspective, sometimes specifically focused on EJ) and share info on grants, other opportunities.

4. Additional area for states: civil rights program