

Date of Hearing: August 27, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Juan Carrillo, Chair

AB 1457 (Bryan) – As Amended August 18, 2026

SUBJECT: General plan: environmental justice element: disadvantaged communities

SUMMARY: Requires cities and counties to adopt an environmental justice element on or before June 30, 2031 and requires certain community engagement procedures. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires a city, county, or city and county to meaningfully involve disadvantaged communities in the development, adoption, and implementation of the environmental justice element, or the related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements, using methods that are designed to effectively involve disadvantaged communities based on local conditions and circumstances, including, but not limited to, all of the following:
 - a) Conducting outreach to disadvantaged communities to encourage and receive input, including, but not limited to, both of the following:
 - i) At least two public workshops to receive and consider public input, provided that the city, county, or city and county shall determine whether additional workshops are needed based on local circumstances. Workshops shall be held at times and locations that are readily accessible to residents of disadvantaged communities and that include both in-person and online virtual options.
 - ii) At least two other methods to meaningfully involve disadvantaged communities, which may include any of the following:
 - 1) Collaborating with non-profit and community-based organizations to develop and implement outreach strategies.
 - 2) Establishing and facilitating an environmental justice advisory committee comprised of community members and community stakeholders.
 - 3) Issuing a survey to solicit input from residents of disadvantaged communities and community stakeholders.
 - 4) Conducting interviews with residents of disadvantaged communities and community stakeholders.
 - 5) Any other strategy designed to solicit input from residents of disadvantaged communities in culturally appropriate ways.
 - b) Using at least two methods to notify disadvantaged communities of opportunities to provide input, which may include any of the following:
 - i) Direct mail.

- ii) Television or radio advertisements on stations that use the three most commonly spoken languages in disadvantaged communities in the city, county, or city and county, based on United States Census Bureau data.
 - iii) Flyers at community spaces within disadvantaged communities.
 - iv) Social media.
 - v) Any other method that is targeted to reach residents of disadvantaged communities.
- c) Maintaining an internet website where the city, county, or city and county shall post all of the following:
- i) Drafts of the environmental justice element or the related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements.
 - ii) The adopted environmental justice element or the related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements.
 - iii) Other relevant materials.
 - iv) Information about public workshops, hearings, and other opportunities to provide input, translated into the three most commonly spoken languages in disadvantaged communities in the city, county, or city and county, based on United States Census Bureau data.
- d) Releasing an initial draft of the environmental justice element, or the related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements, for public review at least 90 days prior to adoption. Further specifies:
- i) Making the initial draft of the environmental justice element, or the related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements, available for public input and comment for at least 45 days.
 - ii) Considering and incorporating public comments received and releasing a new draft for public review, input, and comment at least 15 days prior to adoption.
- e) Meaningfully considering the input and recommendations of disadvantaged communities received.
- f) Compiling and summarizing public input received; providing the summary and any written public comments received to each member of the legislative body of the city, county, or city and county before adoption; and including the summary in the environmental justice element or related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements.
- 2) Requires a city, county, or city and county of provide notice of any public workshop, hearing, or other opportunity to provide input described in 2) above in the three most commonly spoken languages in disadvantages communities in the city, county, or city and county, based on the United States Census Bureau data.

- 3) Provides that:
 - a) A city or county subject to the bill that, by January 1, 2027, adopted amendments to its general plan that substantially complied with the requirements of the bill is not subject to a requirement to review its environmental justice element, or the environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives in other elements, by June 30, 2031.
 - b) The requirements in the bill for consultation and public engagement apply to the adoption or review of an environmental justice element, or related goals, policies, and objectives in other elements, adopted after June 30, 2027, or related goals, policies, and objectives in other elements adopted after June 30, 2027.
- 4) Provides that no reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because a local agency or school district has the authority to levy service charges, fees, or assessments sufficient to pay for the program or level of service mandated by this act, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code.

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, pursuant to Senate Rule 28.8, negligible state costs.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Bill Summary:** This bill requires cities and counties to adopt an environmental justice element, or related policies, goals, and objectives, on or before June 30, 2031. However, a city and county that has adopted an environmental justice element or related policies, goals, and objectives that substantially complied with SB 1000 (Leyva), Chapter 587, Statutes 2016, by January 1, 2027, does not need to review their environmental justice element or related policies prior to June 30, 2031.

The bill also requires cities and counties that review or adopt an environmental justice element or related policy to meaningfully involve disadvantaged communities beginning June 30, 2027. The bill provides specific methods for cities and counties to effectively communicate with disadvantaged communities based on local conditions and circumstances.

This bill is sponsored by the Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment and the State of California Attorney General Rob Bonta.

- 2) **Author's Statement.** According to the author, "Ten years ago, SB 1000 was signed into law, requiring local jurisdictions to include environmental justice in their general plans when updating 2 or more elements, yet gaps in transparency and compliance remain. Every Californian should have the opportunity to live in a community that is healthy and safe. AB 1457 promotes community engagement in environmental justice element development, ensuring that community voices are central to local planning decisions and that no neighborhood is left behind. This bill prioritizes transparency and sets a compliance deadline for existing requirements."
- 3) **Background.** The California Constitution allows cities and counties to "make and enforce within its limits, all local, police, sanitary and other ordinances and regulations not in conflict with general laws." It is from this fundamental power (commonly called the police power) that cities and counties derive their authority to regulate behavior to preserve the health, safety, and welfare of the public-including land use authority.

Planning and Zoning Law requires every county and city to adopt a general plan that sets out planned uses for all of the area covered by the plan. A general plan must include seven mandatory elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. In 2016, SB 1000 (Leyva), Chapter 587, additionally required the general plan to either include an eighth element on environmental justice, or incorporate environmental justice concerns throughout the other elements.

The general plan must be "internally consistent," which means the various elements must work together and cannot have conflicting information or assumptions. Additionally, cities' and counties' major land use decisions-including zoning ordinances and development permitting-must be consistent with their general plans. In this way, the general plan is a blueprint for future development.

- 4) **Environmental Justice Legislation.** Since 1999, the Legislature has enacted several laws to advance consideration of environmental justice; as defined in state law, environmental justice means the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. SB 115 (Solis), Chapter 690, Statutes of 1999, designated the Office of Planning and Research (OPR)-now known as the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation-as the lead state agency on environmental justice matters. Subsequently, AB 1553 (Keeley), Chapter 762, Statutes of 2001, required OPR to adopt recommendations in its general plan guidelines that local governments may use to address environmental justice issues. Recognizing the importance of local planning in environmental justice issues, SB 244 (Wolk), Chapter 513, Statutes of 2011, required consideration of specific water, wastewater, and fire protection needs for disadvantaged communities in general plans as well as in some proceedings that determine local government boundaries.

SB 1000 (Leyva), Chapter 587, Statutes of 2016, formalized consideration of environmental justice in local planning. As a result, whether in a standalone element or throughout the document, the general plan must identify disadvantaged communities and identify objectives and policies to:

- a) Reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities by means that include, but are not limited to, the reduction of pollution exposure, including the improvement of air quality, and the promotion of public facilities, food access, safe and sanitary homes, and physical activity.
- b) Promote civil engagement in the public decision-making process.
- c) Prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.

Cities and counties must only comply with these requirements upon adopting or revising two or more elements of the general plan concurrently.

In February 2018, then-Attorney General Xavier Becerra established a Bureau of Environmental Justice within the California Department of Justice. The Bureau's stated mission is to, "Protect people and communities that endure a disproportionate share of environmental pollution and public health hazards." The Bureau has engaged on local land use matters, including to identify best practices for the citing of logistics uses and

development of environmental justice elements, as well as to provide comments to communities on their implementation of SB 1000. SB 352 (Reyes), Chapter 120, Statutes of 2025, formally codified the existence of the Bureau.

- 5) **SB 1000 Guidance.** Following the enactment of SB 1000, OPR released updated general plan guidelines in 2020 that included information and recommendations to local governments on implementing SB 1000. Subsequently, the Attorney General published guidance on SB 1000 implementation in 2023. Both documents emphasized the need for meaningful engagement with disadvantaged communities as a part of developing an environmental justice element. The Attorney General's guidance states, "Environmental injustices often result from excluding communities from land use planning processes...[C]ommunity engagement is especially important for developing environmental justice policies because local governments will not be able to develop compliant policies without involving the community." The guidance goes on to identify best practices, including to:
- a) Establish an environmental justice advisory committee.
 - b) Partner with local community organizations and trusted community leaders.
 - c) Consult with Native American Tribes.
 - d) Select meeting times and locations that are convenient for the community, and offer opportunities for childcare, along with virtual options.
 - e) Ensure language access by translating written materials and ensure interpretation is available at meetings.
 - f) Establish metrics to assess the effectiveness of their community engagement.

A 2023 policy brief titled "The Emergence of Environmental Justice in General Plans: Lessons from California's Senate Bill 1000." from the University of California, Irvine, and the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, found that of the 238 cities and 29 counties with census tracts that are overburdened by environmental health issues, only 33 jurisdictions had general plans that included environmental justice provisions.

- 6) **Related Legislation.** AB 1914 (Schiavo) requires cities and counties to adopt or integrate a childcare plan in the next adoption of their general plan, but no later than January 1, 2033, to address the childcare needs of the jurisdiction, as specified. This bill was held in Senate Appropriation Committee.
- 7) **Arguments in Support.** The California Environmental Justice Alliance Action, the Planning and Conservation League, and the Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment, among other organization write in support, "Currently, local jurisdictions must only adopt an environmental justice element when concurrently updating at least two or more general plan elements. However, many local jurisdictions have not implemented SB 1000 by only updating one element at a given time.

"We strongly support Assemblymember Bryan's AB 1457 because it establishes a June 30, 2028 deadline for local jurisdictions that have not yet adopted an environmental justice element.

“Furthermore, AB 1457 upholds community engagement in the environmental justice element development— a vital component that allows communities to have a voice in the decisions made in their neighborhoods. The passage of this bill will ensure that communities have the opportunity to provide input in the development of their local environmental justice element.”

- 8) **Arguments in Opposition.** The California State Association of Counties, League of California Cities, Rural County Representatives of California, and the Urban Counties of California have an oppose unless amended position and write, “General plan updates are costly and time-consuming endeavors. Between staff time, consultant costs, and environmental review requirements, plan updates can routinely range into the low millions of dollars. While the Legislature has imposed numerous ad hoc requirements for new general plan elements or updates in recent years, these mandates are always approved without accompanying state funding for implementation because local governments are able to increase fees on housing developers and other applicants for land use entitlements and permits to recoup their costs. Local governments are in turn left with the difficult decision of either tapping already over-extended general funds or increasing costs for all types of development in the jurisdiction to pay for the plan update.”

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

350 Bay Area Action
 350 Humboldt
 Asian Pacific Environmental Network Action
 California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) Action
 California Environmental Justice Coalition
 California Environmental Voters
 California Nurses for Environmental Health and Justice
 Catholic Charities of Stockton
 Center for Biological Diversity
 Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCA EJ)
 Center for Environmental Health
 Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment
 Central California Asthma Collaborative
 Central California Environmental Justice Network (CCEJN)
 Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy
 Clean Water Action
 Cleaneearth4kids.org
 Climate First: Replacing Oil & Gas (CFROG)
 Climate Resilient Communities
 Coalition for Clean Air
 Committees for Land, Air, Water and Species
 Communities for a Better Environment
 Dayenu: a Jewish Call to Climate Action
 East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice
 Endangered Habitats League
 Environmental Defense Center

Food & Water Watch
LA Waterkeeper
Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability
Mercury Press
Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles
Planning and Conservation League
Poder Sf
Regional Asthma Management and Prevention (RAMP)
Sacramento Environmental Justice Coalition
San Diego 350
San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility
Sf Baykeeper
Sierra Club California
State of California Attorney General
Sunflower Alliance
The Climate Center

Opposition

California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
League of California Cities
Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)
Urban Counties of California (UCC)

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