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NOAA Fisheries Draft Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy

Requesting Public Comments

**Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Sharon Benjamin (GARFO) - June 7, 2022**

Objectives

- Context for NOAA Fisheries Equity and Environmental Justice (EEJ) Strategy
- Defining EEJ terms
- Barriers to achieving EEJ
- Requesting feedback



Mandates for Equity and Environmental Justice

- **EO 13985** (2021) - Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government
- **EO 14008** (2021) - Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad
- **EO 12898** (1994) - Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations

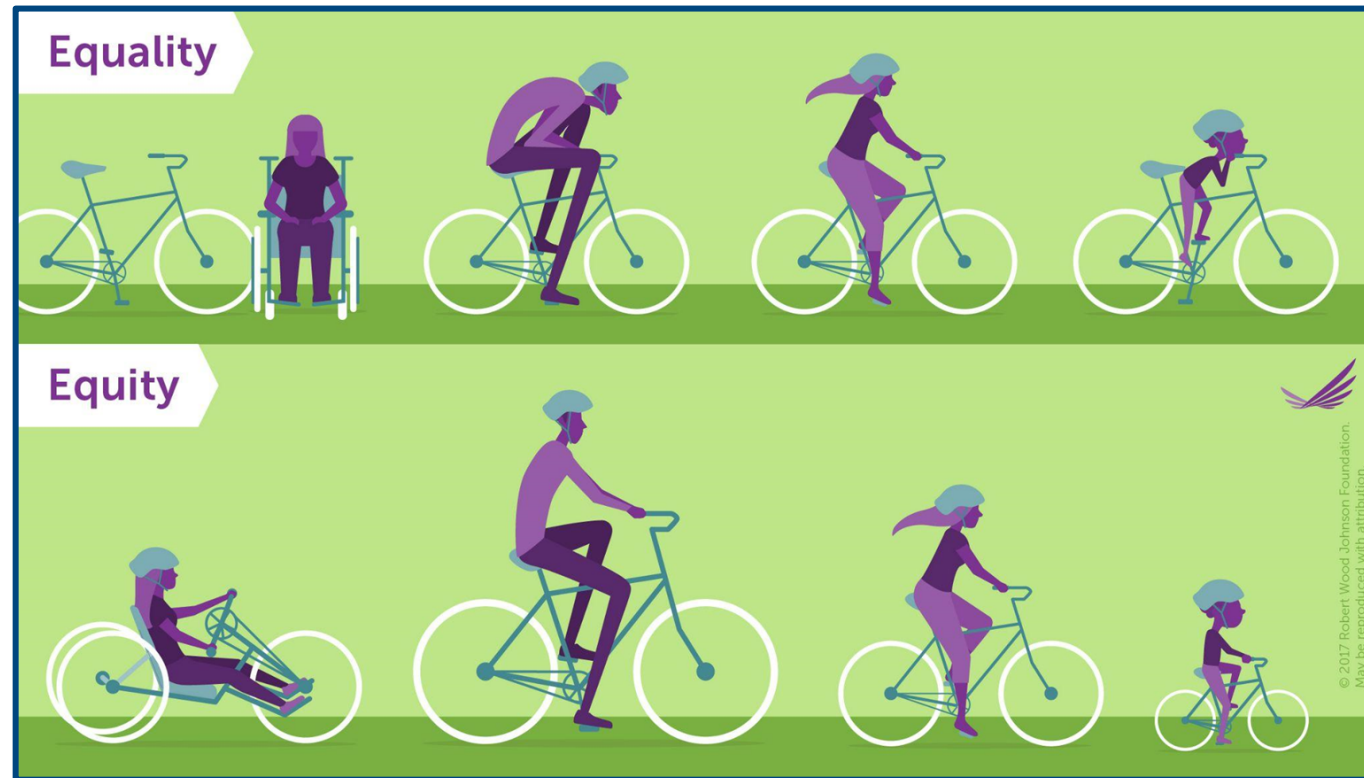
Also: **MSA**, **ESA**, **MMPA**, **CERCLA**, and the **Oil Pollution Act**



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Key Terms: Equity

Equity means the **consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment** of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment.



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Key Terms: Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice is the **fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people**, regardless of race, color, gender, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies, including but not limited to:

- Equitable protection from environmental and health hazards
- Equitable access to decision-making processes
- Equitable opportunity for disadvantaged communities that have been historically marginalized



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Key Terms: Underserved Communities

Underserved communities have been **systematically denied a full opportunity** to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.

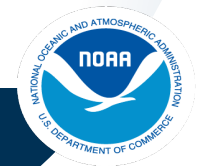
- Geographic communities
- Populations sharing a particular characteristic such as:
 - women and girls;
 - Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and other persons of color;
 - persons facing discrimination or barriers related to gender identity; members of religious minorities;
 - lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons;
 - persons with disabilities;
 - persons who live in rural areas; and
 - **persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.**



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Barriers to Equity and Environmental Justice

- Unawareness of underserved communities
- Structural barriers
- Barriers to accessing services
- System complexity
- Gaps in expertise
- Gaps in representation



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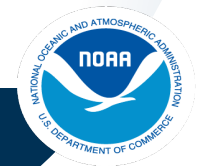
Examples from Greater Atlantic Region

- **Recreational Fisheries Outreach**

Translation of several recreational and safe boating guides into Spanish

- **Increase Diversity in Hiring, Recruitment and Retention**

Building relationships with stakeholders at Minority Serving Institutions, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) programs, and affinity organizations



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The NOAA Fisheries' draft EEJ Strategy asks:

- Who are our underserved communities?
- How can we better communicate with them? How can we better serve them?
- How can we improve equity in our research and monitoring programs?
- Does everyone have equal access to benefits?
- Do some communities carry the weight of regulatory burdens more than others?
- How can our governance or management resources be more inclusive?



Strategy Development



We need your input!

Please provide comments by **August 19, 2022:**

- **Draft EEJ Strategy** <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/noaa-fisheries-invites-public-comment-new-draft-equity-and-environmental-justice>
- **Provide Input via Google Form**
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdq5LzUzPfvSJYAdlrAAXAFjbq1Fnd0qLbwpWG972onQ6kO3Q/viewform>
- **Webinars:** May 24, June 21, June 30, and July 19
- **In-person:** Meeting dates and venues will be announced



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Thank you!

- NOAA Fisheries has renewed focus on equity and environmental justice
- Request input by August 19, 2022

EEJ Strategy, comment form, and more information at this link:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/noaa-fisheries-invites-public-comment-new-draft-equity-and-environmental-justice>

