



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE BILL S.2236 WORLDWIDE SIGNIFICANCE

Omega and Brenda Wilson, WERA Co-Founders

Contributors to U.S. EJ Bill S.2236

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WORLDWIDE SIGNIFICANCE OF EJ BILL S.2236

The bill serves as a national and international template for people of color and indigenous areas in the context of:

- > Emancipation Proclamation – signed January 1, 1863 by Abraham Lincoln to free millions of slaves, not until 1965.
- > Civil Right Act of 1964 – lead by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- > Voting Rights Act of 1965 – lead by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- > Medicare Law of 1965 – introduced by Wilbur Mills (D-AR)
- > Disabilities Act of 1990 – lead by Patrisha Wright (she was blind)

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- A. U.S. Senator Cory Booker, Democrat for New Jersey, and his congressional staff lead a team of community EJ veterans, university researchers, and attorneys in drafting the U.S. Senate Environmental Justice Bill S.2236 that submitted July 2019.**
- B. In 2017, Omega Wilson of the West End Revitalization Association (WERA) was recruited to provide input on the Environmental Justice Bill S.2236 with specific knowledge on: a) infrastructure issues, b) community lead research and science, and c) demonstrated interagency and collaborative legal actions for measurable ground-level outcomes.**
- C. Senator Booker said. *“Clean air and clean water shouldn’t be luxuries for the privileged, yet every day, communities of color, low income communities, and indigenous communities disproportionately face environmental hazards and harmful pollutants.”* July 24, 2019**

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INTERAGENCY and COLLABORATION core strength of EJ Bill S.2236

1. EJ Bill S.2236 page-12: "develop interagency model projects relating to environmental justice that demonstrate cooperation among Federal agencies."
2. On July 24, 2019, U.S. Senator Booker member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, re-introduced legislation to address the environmental injustices that harm communities of color, low-income communities, and indigenous communities around the country.
3. The Environmental Justice Act of 2019 would require federal agencies to mitigate environmental injustices through agency action and would strengthen the legal protections of those affected by environmental injustices.
4. U.S. Representative Raul Ruiz (D-CA) introduced companion legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives.
5. Senator Booker said, "*This reality has largely been ignored and the affected communities have been left without the legal tools to protect their rights. The Environmental Justice Act of 2019 is an important first step in returning power to these communities.*"

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Senator Booker July 24, 2019 Press Release quoted Omega and Brenda Wilson, Co-Founder of WERA:

“Senator Cory Booker’s Environmental Justice Bill addresses issues upon which the West End Revitalization Association (WERA) of Mebane, North Carolina was found in 1995. African American and Native American residents are still being denied basic public health infrastructure like sewer service connection, safe drinking water access, and highway construction that does not displace affordable housing and places of worship.”

“This federal Environmental Justice bill will support proactive protections for people of color and indigenous areas with stronger implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and development of corrective interagency models at the federal, state, and local levels.”

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EJ Bill S.2236 pages 5-6: WERA specific contribution per WERA history:

INFRASTRUCTURE. The term “infrastructure” means any system for safe drinking water, sewer collection, solid waste disposal, electricity generation, communication, or transportation access including highways, airports, marine terminals, rail systems, and residential roads that is used to effectively and safely support for:

- (A) housing;***
- (B) an educational facility;***
- (C) a medical provider;***
- (D) a park or recreational facility; or***
- (E) a local businesses.***

NOTE: Supporting document: REPORT on Infrastructure Spring 2019

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REPORT on Infrastructure – Spring 2019

“Lessons from the Tri-State to the Triangle: Mitigating Environmental and Health Impacts from Transportation in Populous Regions”

by

Nicole Scott Harris, Education & Outreach Coordinator, New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance

Laureen Boles, Executive Director, New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance

Kofi Boone, Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture, North Carolina State University

Omega R. Wilson, President, West End Revitalization Association – Mebane, NC

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EJ Bill S.2236 page 12: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.—*The Working Group shall:*

A. hold public meetings or otherwise solicit public participation and community-based science for the purpose of fact-finding with respect to the implementation of this Act (EJ Bill S.2236); and (per WERA's COMR Principle of "Science for Compliance" 1999)

B. prepare for public review and publish a summary of any comments and recommendations provided.

NOTE: All references to “citizen sciences” were moved from the bill since the term “citizen” by legal definition excludes over 40-million people who live and work in the United States. Most of them are documented workers of color who are disproportionately exposed to contaminants and toxins in the places of work: crop farming, confined animal fined industrial, hotels, landscaping, construction, salon, etc.

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WERA's COMR "*Science for Compliance*":

The next few slides document rare measurable ground-level positive outcomes that WERA and collaborative partners, attorneys, and researchers produced through necessary legal leverage at the local, state, and national levels. The text of EJ Bill S.2236 will make it less rare for legal successes for: a) right to basic amenities and b) environmental justice.

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WERA's legal tools against Billion dollar 119-bypass/overpass: COMR - "Science for Compliance"

Filed US Department of Justice, EPA, NCDOT interagency “*administrative complaints*” starting in Feb 1999 under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and referenced Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898 of 1994. N.C. Department of Transportation planned construction path for interstate 119-bypass / overpass was modified in 2009 to go around the West End Community to mitigate displacements over 70 homes, two churches built over 100 years ago, and community cemetery dating back into slavery over 200 years ago.



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2000 to 2007: WERA legal interagency complaints got safe drinking water and sewer connections for over 100 African American residents in the West End Community in Alamance County, NC denies access since 1921. Funded by over \$8-million in block grants and City of Mebane matching.



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**In 2012, the first
southeast community
interagency anti-
fracking compliant filed
by WERA and Eliane
Chiosso, Riverkeeper for
the Haw River
Assembly, Bynum, NC.**



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In 2014, WERA's interagency complaints forced the removed over 5000-pounds of unsecured liquid and solid toxins from the closed Craftique Furniture plant in West End Community, Mebane, NC. In 2017, NCDEQ detailed report documented clear-up at the site of 119-bypass / overpass construction.



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In 2018, led by the Environmental Defense Fund, Sierra Club, Center for Biological Diversity, WERA invited to join a national collaborative law suit. U.S. Court of Appeals for the Washington, DC Circuit ruled to suspend an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) loophole that would allow more super-polluting "glider" diesel freight trucks that present a deadly serious and urgent threat to the health on our roads. Manufactured in NC with old engines placed in new body!? **Only signators from NC and southeast were NC Attorney General Josh Stein, and Omega Wilson for WERA.**



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March 2019, Environmental Justice Dinner-Panel at the National / International CitSci2019 Citizen Science Conference at the Raleigh-NC Convention Center. Omega Wilson announced that the EJ Bill S.2236 team decided to remove "citizen science" from the bill, since it does not proactively address "environmental justice" nor 40-plus million workers and taxpayers who are not "citizens".

Attendees: 800-plus people from all 50 states and 28 nations & LifeStream.



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EJ Bill S.2236 inserted **COMMUNITY-BASED SCIENCE:**

*The term “community-based science” means voluntary public participation in the scientific process and the incorporation of data and information generated outside of traditional institutional boundaries to address real-world problems in ways that may include formulating research questions, conducting scientific experiments, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting results, making new discoveries, developing technologies and applications, and solving complex problems, **with an emphasis on the democratization of science and the engagement of diverse people and communities.** Page 3*



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CLOSING QUESTIONS of PRINCIPLES?

- 1. Did the NCEJN board write a formal endorsement of EJ Bill S.2236?**
- 2. When will NCEJN challenge university researchers to use the "Science for Compliance" legal tool?**
- 3. Why NCEJN didn't input CAFO, coal ash, or chip mill issues into EJ Bill S.2236?**
- 4. Does NCEJN has the mission, mindset, and motivation to challenge elected officials in writing to adopt the text of EJ. Bill S.2236?**

