

Tribal & Environmental Justice

Information Sheet



**Delta
Stewardship
Council**

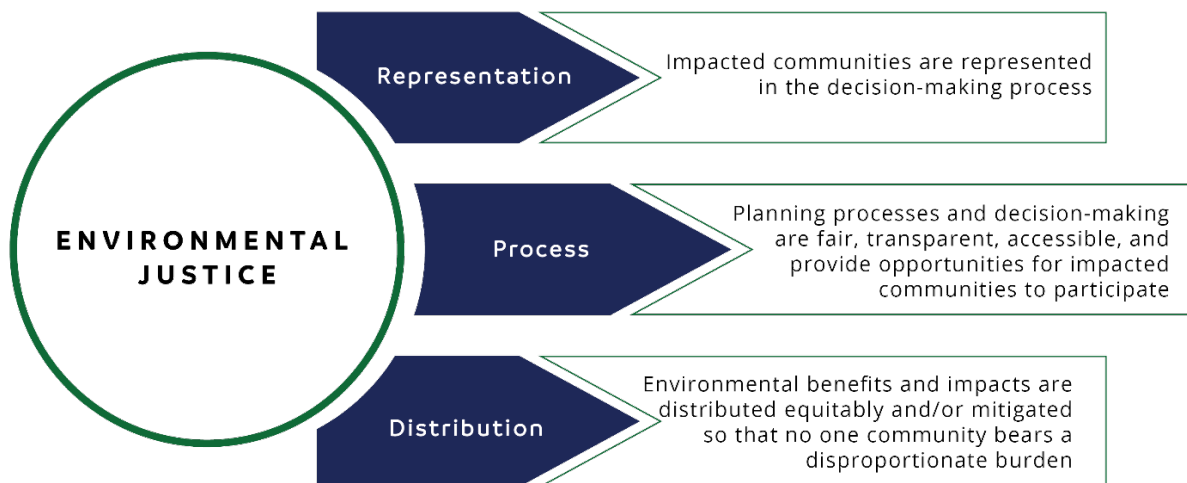
A CALIFORNIA STATE AGENCY

What is Tribal & Environmental Justice?

Tribal justice recognizes tribal equity, and the priorities and unique status tribal nations, Native communities, and Indigenous peoples have with environmental decision-making and management. Tribal justice involves interweaving tribal knowledge and perspectives into environmental decisions.

Environmental justice is about creating a healthy environment for all. It is the fair treatment of all people, no matter their race, culture, income, or national origin, and their inclusion in the creation and enforcement of laws, regulations, and policies that affect the environment.¹ Environmental justice is especially focused on ensuring that communities most burdened by pollution have a seat at the table in environmental decisions.

Environmental justice can be organized into **representation, process, and distribution issues** that, when addressed, can create more environmentally just decision-making.



¹ Paraphrased from statutory definition in Government Code section 65040.12, subdivision (e).

Environmental Impacts on the Delta

Communities in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta face a variety of environmental impacts.

Examples that Delta Communities Face Today



High flood risk made worse by subsidence and sea level rise



Water pollution from farm runoff, historic mining operations, and other sources



Harmful algal blooms



Extreme heat and drought



Loss of native plants, animals, and wetlands



Poor air quality

Concerns in the Delta

The Delta Stewardship Council (Council) staff consulted with California Native American tribes and met with community-based organizations in the Delta to understand how tribes and communities are affected by these environmental impacts and the challenges they face in being fairly included in environmental decisions. Through these conversations, public comments, and other sources, Council staff identified some key representational, procedural, and distributional issues that Delta tribes and communities encounter when working with public agencies and governments.








Common Issues

	Tribal Justice	Environmental Justice
Representation	Lack of consideration of a tribe's unique status, issues, and priorities Repression of cultural practices	Inadequate representation of vulnerable communities
Process	Marginalization and exclusion Poor tribal consultation	Lack of government transparency and coordination across agencies
Distribution <i>(impacts distributed inequitably)</i>	Water, soil, and air pollution	Climate change, flood risk, water supply and quality, pollution exposure, lack of affordable housing, lack of access to healthy foods, limited access to green spaces

Recommendations for Agencies Working in the Delta

Addressing environmental justice issues in the Delta will take a collective effort. Council staff developed some general recommendations for all agencies working on issues in the Delta to consider.

General Recommendations

 Invest in Relationship- and Trust-Building
 Work Through Trusted Community Partners
 Be Intentional and Justice-Oriented
 Make it Easy to Participate Early
 Follow Through
 Enhance Connections Between State Agencies and Local Governments
 Identify and Fill Research and Data Needs

Get Involved!

Do you have other ideas for creating a healthy Delta for all? **The Council has released a draft Tribal and Environmental Justice issue paper for a 60-day public comment period.** For information on reviewing and commenting on the draft issue paper or for more information about this effort, visit deltacouncil.ca.gov/environmental-justice. Please email questions to environmentaljustice@deltacouncil.ca.gov. Tribal consultation requests were sent via U.S. mail and email to tribes. If a tribe is interested in initiating consultation with the Council on the draft issue paper, they are encouraged to email the Council's tribal liaison at tribal.liaison@deltacouncil.ca.gov for more information.

Follow the Council on Social Media

 x.com/deltacouncil

 instagram.com/deltastewardshipcouncil/

 linkedin.com/company/delta-stewardship-council-a-california-state-agency/

 facebook.com/Delta-Stewardship-Council-137873226259597/