

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 4, 2022

CONTACT:

Jairaj Singh, Climate Resilience and Environmental Justice Director, Unite Oregon  
(503)-287-4117 ext. 113, [jairaj@uniteoregon.org](mailto:jairaj@uniteoregon.org)

Joel Iboa, Executive Director, Oregon Just Transition Alliance  
(541) 357-7664, [joel@ojta.org](mailto:joel@ojta.org)

## **“Environmental Justice for All” passes Oregon Legislature, Heads to Governor’s Desk**

**HB 4077 creates Environmental Justice Council to address environmental disparities**

SALEM, Ore.—The Oregon legislature yesterday passed HB 4077, Environmental Justice for All, to help the state identify patterns of pollution and climate burdens, identify disadvantaged and vulnerable communities, and assess environmental threats. The bill creates the Environmental Justice Council to advise the governor and natural resource agencies on environmental justice concerns and provides funding for data collection, analysis, and research to determine environmental impacts on low-income, rural neighborhoods, people of color and other impacted communities.

“Thank you to legislators from across the state for coming together to pass HB 4077, establishing the Environmental Justice Council for Oregon,” said **Governor Kate Brown**. “We must uplift and center the voices of vulnerable and underserved communities through the advancement of environmental justice. I’d like to thank the coalition of community partners and organizations who worked together on this bill to ensure we take environmental action now to address environmental disparities and shape a sound environmental future for Oregon.”

HB 4077 directs the Environmental Justice Council (EJC) to develop a mapping tool that would assess environmental, health, and socioeconomic disparities. The tool will layer together data such as air emissions, ozone level, and toxic hazards with health-related data and socioeconomic information such as linguistic isolation and income levels to help state agencies better understand the impacts of environmental disparities. Data from the mapping tool would be accessible to lawmakers, community organizations, and the public to assist in decision making in environmental program development, implementation, and funding.

“We owe the next generation a healthier, more sustainable and resilient Oregon,” **Joel Iboa Executive Director, Oregon Just Transition Alliance** “In the last two years, Oregonians have faced an ongoing pandemic, devastating wildfires, and an unprecedented heat wave that took the lives of more than 96 people. While many of us

have been impacted, people with disabilities, many tribal communities, rural communities, low-income communities, Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other people of color feel it first and worst.”

The current Environmental Justice Task Force, the precursor to the EJC, was established in 2007 and is made up of volunteer advocates from around the state who work to design collaborative, data-driven solutions to environmental threats and inequities. The EJTF has focused on ensuring the state’s environmental decision making processes have been accessible to those most impacted such as low-income, Black, Indigenous, people of color, people with disabilities, rural, and coastal Oregonians.

“I am excited that our region is now bolstering our environmental justice infrastructure to help address the unprecedented challenges we now face, with the formation of an Environmental Justice Council and the development of an Oregon Environmental Justice Mapping tool. These investments will have a profound impact in regards to representation, public participation, and reducing environmental disparities, by identifying impacted communities and determining their unmet needs.” **Jairaj Singh, Climate Resilience and Environmental Justice Director at Unite Oregon**

“Community-driven and data-driven policies are key to building community resilience,” **Manjeet Kaur, Policy Organizer at Unite Oregon said.** “Extreme weather has only added to the ongoing threats that Oregonians have faced such as hazardous air quality, lead exposure, and toxic waste. Low-income, Black, Indigenous, people of color, people with disabilities, rural, and coastal Oregonians have faced an unfair share of these threats. By focusing on those most impacted by environmental threats, we can make strategic decisions to strengthen and protect our communities.”

###

### **ABOUT UNITE OREGON**

Led by people of color, immigrants and refugees, rural communities, and people experiencing poverty, we work across Oregon to build a unified intercultural movement for justice. Unite Oregon represents over 13,000 supporters and members across Oregon. Learn more at [uniteoregon.org](https://uniteoregon.org).

### **ABOUT OJTA**

The Oregon Just Transition Alliance (OJTA) is a movement of communities facing environmental racism, climate change, and economic exploitation – the frontlines of injustice and the frontlines of change. We bring together organizations committed to base-building in frontline communities. We gather to create ownership over our collective future and move Oregon toward an economy that is rooted in our shared values, the principles of a Just Transition. Learn more at [ojta.org](https://ojta.org).