



EARTH CARE @LEWINSVILLE

CREATION CARE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

*When we take our air, waters and land for granted;
when we show a simple lack of respect for nature and our environment,
we unmake God's good creation.*

— John Lewis

Mourned as a civil rights icon and the conscience of Congress, Representative John Lewis was also a long-time champion of environmental justice. He introduced “Environmental Justice Act” legislation in 1992, and a similar bill in every subsequent session of Congress.



What exactly is environmental justice? The EPA describes it as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. It will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.”

Those living in low-wealth areas, mostly people of color, have shouldered disproportional burdens caused by pollution and climate change. The Sierra Club recently declared that “the fight for environmental justice cannot be separated from the fight for racial justice.” Fortunately, in 2020, Virginia’s General Assembly established the Virginia Council on Environmental Justice (VCEJ) to ensure fair treatment and meaningful participation of all frontline communities when assessing environmental risks and benefits.

In 2019 Rep. Lewis reminded us, “Clean air and clean water are rights, not privileges. We have a right to know what is in the food we eat, what is in the water we drink, and what is in the air we breathe. Each and every one of us must cherish this planet, for it is likely the only home we will ever know.... We have a moral responsibility to lead, and the time to act is now.”

[-- From the September 2020 Newsletter](#)