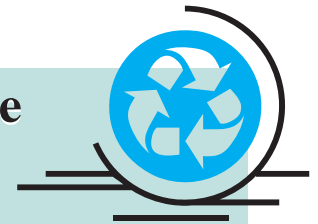




The State of Environmental Justice in America 2009 Conference



May 27 – 29, 2009

Issue 6, June 2009

Howard University School of Law (2900 Van Ness Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20008) on May 27, 2009
Crystal City Doubletree Hotel (300 Army-Navy Drive, Arlington, VA 22202) on May 28 and 29, 2009



Dean Kurt Schmoke, Howard University School of Law, welcomes the participants of The State of Environmental Justice in America 2009 Conference.



Craig E. Hooks, Acting Assistant Administrator for the EPA Office of Administration and Resources Management, gives the Conference opening address.



Timothy Fields, Former EPA Assistant Administrator for Solid Waste and Emergency Response, Senior Vice President, MDB, Inc., and EJ Conference, Inc. Board Member moderates a conference session with fellow EJ Conference, Inc. Board Member Lessie Price.



The State of Environmental Justice in America 2009 Conference brought together nearly 500 participants from Federal agencies, academia, business and industry, and non-profit organizations, as well as local community activists and citizens to dialogue on achieving equality of environmental protection. This conference focused on climate change, youth involvement, sustainable community planning, environmental health in disadvantaged communities, and environmental justice considerations in emergency preparedness and homeland protection.

The Conference started on Wednesday, May 27, 2009, at the Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C. Craig Hooks, Acting Administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Administration and Resources Management, delivered the keynote speech. His speech was followed by a panel discussion on environmental justice and climate change. The panel members were Gina Wood, Director of Policy and Planning, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies; Shankar Prasad, Executive Fellow, Coalition for Clean Air; Beverly Hogan, President, Tougaloo College; Doug Wyatt, Program Director, New Energy & Environmental Sciences, Lead, Integrated Carbon Solutions, URS Washington Division; John Atcheson, Program Specialist, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Energy Technology; Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., Environmental Justice, Campus Greening and Sustainability Task Force of the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education; and Avis Robinson,

Former Deputy Director, EPA Office of Atmospheric Programs; and President, Washington Metropolitan Scholars. Former Assistant Administrator for EPA Solid Waste and Emergency Response, and Senior Vice President, MDB, Inc., Tim Fields and Lessie Price, Manager, Public Affairs Division, URS, Washington Division moderated the discussion. This lively conversation kicked off a conference where leaders from various sectors engaged in three days of free exchange of new ideas and new approaches to environmental justice.



The crowd listens during the Conference opening session.



The State of Environmental Justice in America 2009 Conference



Shankar Prasad, Executive Fellow, Coalition for Clean Air, makes a point during a climate change discussion.



Beverly Hogan, President, Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, Mississippi, makes a point during the Conference opening session.



Benjamin Chavis, Environmental Justice, Campus Greening and Sustainability Task Force of the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, and Avis Robinson, Former Deputy Director, EPA Office of Atmospheric Programs; and President, Washington Metropolitan Scholars, share a point during the Conference.



Ann Bartuska, Acting Under Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources and Environment, gives the keynote address.



John Cruden, Acting Assistant Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice, listens as he waits to present.

This conference was an interactive training event that featured voices of experience, research, discussions, and thought-provoking dialogue. The program format addressed the needs and challenges of communities, governments, municipalities, tribes, faith-based organizations, and others with an interest in environmental matters and environmental justice. Conference participants were provided examples of approaches that produce positive results through innovation and collaboration. The Conference highlighted programs and collaborations that work, as well as initiatives that were not successful.

Thursday's opening keynote address was delivered by Ann Bartuska, Acting Under Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources and Environment. Dr. Bartuska spoke about the need for greater stakeholder participation in agency decision-making and the outreach efforts that the agencies are taking. In addition to the normal phases of environmental justice of non-discrimination and meaningful participation, Dr. Bartuska spoke about the need for all stakeholders to share in the benefits of environmental actions. Other conference speakers included Lisa Jackson, Administrator, EPA; John C. Cruden, Acting Assistant Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice; David Hayes, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Interior; Cheryl Cook, Deputy Under Secretary, USDA Rural Development; Honorable Donna Christensen, U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Virgin Islands; Jeff Allison, Manager, DOE Savannah River Site; and Gerald Boyd, Manager, DOE Oak Ridge Site. Other presentations featured representatives from Federal and state agencies, local governments, tribes, community

groups, business and industry, public interest groups, academia, and other entities. These presentations covered a broad range of topics of interest to all sectors. This interactive forum provided the conference participants the opportunity to network with a variety of representatives from diverse groups. The presentations proved beneficial and informative to conference attendees.

The 2009 Conference was the third annual conference, and introduced two new features. The first feature was a special briefing for small town mayors and rural communities on President Obama's stimulus package. Representatives from various Federal agencies briefed the participants on the particulars of programs and explained how to access program funds. This day-long briefing was reserved specifically for mayors and rural community representatives. The second special feature introduced this year was one called "Meet the Agencies." This feature allowed conference participants to request and have a private meeting with a Federal official to discuss any matter of interest. This feature proved very popular with many individuals who would otherwise not have such an opportunity. Both features were well received by conference participants and will be repeated next year.

Planning for the State of Environmental Justice in America 2010 Conference is already well underway.



Martina Cartwright poses a question during the Conference opening session.

What They Are Saying About the State of Environmental Justice in America 2009 Conference

"Dear Melinda,

It was a pleasure to meet you at the conference and to participate in the mayors briefing on the ARRA of 2009. I am writing to congratulate you and everyone on your Planning Committee for a successful conference which truly reflects the fact that Environmental Justice is in its second generation of mature dialogue, involvement of a broad spectrum of stakeholders, and tangible progress. As an EPA manager who has been actively involved in integrating EJ issues in EPA programs under my supervision (and who was tutored and inspired by Tim Fields' leadership when he was at EPA) I am very impressed by the diversity of issues which have been embraced by the EJ community and the variety of stakeholders who are now at the table. Clearly, persistence and leadership are creating results. I truly enjoyed the conference and learned a great deal from each of the sessions I attended; I assure you that it is knowledge that will be used. You and your colleagues deserve the kudos and mementos of appreciation you received at the closing plenary session but I know that is not what keeps you motivated! Finally, as someone who has attended perhaps a couple hundred conferences over the course of my professional life, I do want to note that you created a very friendly atmosphere which, in turn, was very conducive to networking. Please keep me on your mailing list for developments which may be of interest for those of us at EPA. All best wishes and congratulations."

*Maria Parisi Vickers, Deputy Director,
EPA Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery*

"You went beyond the call of duty to not only assist me, but to ensure our attendees advanced their learning about brownfields. The last interactive exercise truly engaged the attendees. From a review of the feedback forms, the session attained excellent and very good ratings. This is a tribute to your wonderful contributions, they were most appreciated!"

*Brian Holtzclaw, EPA Office of Policy,
Economics & Innovation; National Center for
Environmental Innovation*

"This was my first time attending The State of Environmental Justice in America Conference and I was very pleased with the attendance of young college students and the seminars for this conference. I thought the issues were very important and can have an significant impact on our youth to become more involved around our home cities and communities. I hope that next year's conference will have the same success as this one did."

*Justin Price, Environmental Science Major,
Savannah State University*



A Federal panel discusses the environmental justice programs of various agencies.

"What a pleasure to meet everyone and learn so much in a short period of time. My schedule may not allow me to participate in the remainder of the conference, but trusting it will be most successful. Some really excellent presenters are on the schedule."

*Gina Wood, Director of Policy and
Planning, Joint Center for Political and
Economic Studies*

What They Are Saying About the State of Environmental Justice in America 2009 Conference (continued)

"It was my privilege to have been a part of the learned panel and I came to know about some new angles/facets associated with the issue (Climate Change). John, thanks for including me. Tim and Lessie, thanks for being a great pair of moderators."

Shankar Prasad, Executive Fellow, Coalition for Clean Air

"I became more aware of Environmental Justice and meaning of it. I am willing to work with the community on the issue of fair treatment regardless of race or color. The state of Environmental Justice in America Conference 2009 has also enabled me to implement the environmental justice concept in my own community."

Andre McGregor, Environmental Science Major, Savannah State University

"The State of Environmental Justice in America 2009 Conference was an incredible opportunity for students. Those of us affiliated with the launch of The Shapna Project—an entirely student-led initiative designed to eradicate environmental injustice at home and abroad through economic development and the sale of tea (www.shapna-tea.com)—were blessed with an overwhelming show of support. Not only did we get the chance to share ideas, discuss synergies, and forge alliances with new friends, our tea sale proceeds during the first 12 hours of the Conference were sufficient to feed over 200 villagers and EJ host communities, 3 healthy meals a day, for over 3 weeks straight. This was only possible because of the strong commitment by Conference participants and organizers alike to help students advance the torch of environmental justice! Thanks to the EJ Conference, young activists have been calling us in droves to learn more about how they can get involved in environmental justice. On behalf of all us at Shapna, THANK YOU for your commitment to helping students succeed!"

*Johny Chaklader, Juris Doctorate/
Master of Business Administration Candidate
Howard University*

"Thank you for giving me the opportunity to observe some, may I say historic exchanges, at the Environmental Justice conference. It was an eye-opening, awe-inspiring, horizon-broadening experience, and might I add, you did a great job yourself. I see that we have set some important things in motion for Environmental Justice."

Cameron C. Reed, Trinity College



Dr. Gladys Gary Vaughn, Director, Office of Outreach, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), discusses USDA programs.



Conference participants pose for a picture following lunch.

What They Are Saying About the State of Environmental Justice in America 2009 Conference (continued)

"The conference was a great success, I truly enjoyed it. My first thought was that it was going to be boring and way over my head. But it was the complete opposite. Again I truly enjoyed it. Everyone that I talked to felt the same as I did, that it was not a lot of high tech terminology. Great conference! Looking forward to next year's conference."

*Lisa M. Mason, Program Marketing Specialist,
USDA Office of Outreach*

"Thank you so much for the opportunity to be a part of your expert panel discussion on environmental justice and climate change. It was a once in a life-time experience that I will treasure."

*Avis Robinson, Former Deputy Director,
EPA Office of Atmospheric Programs; and
President, Washington Metropolitan Scholars*

"Great EJ Conference and networking opportunity for USDA Forest Service. I believe EJ Training would be very helpful for managers and supervisors in the Forest Service; and keep the EJ issue front and center over the next year as we make our program delivery decisions."

*Robert Ragos, USDA Forest Service,
Washington Office, Civil Rights*

Conference closing luncheon speakers, Jeff Allison, Manager, Savannah River Site, and Gerald Boyd, Manager, Oak Ridge Site, join EJ Conference, Inc. Board Members Lessie Price, John Rosenthal, and Ben Wilson as they congratulate d'Lisa Bratcher, Geraldine Herring, Melinda Downing, and Dave Geiser, who were honored for their environmental justice work during the Conference closing session.



Front row, from left to right, d'Lisa Bratcher, Lessie Price, Geraldine Herring, Melinda Downing, and Gerald Boyd. Back row, from left to right, Jeff Allison, John Rosenthal, Dave Geiser, and Ben Wilson.