



# Memo

Date: March 14, 2019

To: State Coastal Conservancy Board

From: Sam Schuchat, Executive Officer  
Amy Hutzal, Deputy Executive Officer

CC: Oversight Members

RE: Equity and Environmental Justice Guidelines

## **Background**

During the coming year, Conservancy staff will develop Equity and Environmental Justice Guidelines for consideration and eventual adoption by the Conservancy Board. The goal of these guidelines is to articulate guiding principles for the Conservancy about our agency's role in promoting equity and addressing environmental justice.

The Conservancy's Strategic Plan identifies Equity and Environmental Justice as a key driver of our work. There are populations in California (such as disadvantaged communities, persons with disabilities, people who are linguistically isolated, Tribes, and others) that disproportionately confront greater barriers to health and well-being and face increased vulnerability to environmental issues. Our work to restore habitats and watersheds, provide public access and recreational opportunities, and increase resilience to climate change should promote equity and benefit vulnerable communities in California.

Staff expects that the guidelines will include direction related to our project work, on topics such as meaningful engagement, respecting tribal concerns, effective communication, and supporting projects that advance equity. We also expect the guidelines to be instructive with regard to our internal operations, such as hiring and training.

## Stakeholder Outreach

A major focus of the development of the guidelines will be to solicit input from stakeholders. Conservancy staff are planning a multi-pronged approach to obtaining meaningful input. First, we are conducting an online survey of people working in Environmental Justice to get their perspectives on which priorities are most important for the guidelines to encompass. We will follow-up the survey with a series of targeted interviews to obtain more in-depth feedback. We will conduct webinars and workshops to obtain additional comments. We will invite the Conservancy Board and oversight members to all the public meetings, but no more than three board members can attend at any one meeting per Bagley Keene. After the initial stakeholder input, we will release draft guidelines and solicit public responses to that draft. Finally, we have read all comments submitted to the Coastal Commission and the State Lands Commission related to their Environmental Justice Policies developed last year and identified the comments applicable to the Conservancy. We will incorporate these lessons into our guidelines.

## Guideline Content

There are many issues that could be included in our Equity and Environmental Justice Guidelines, such as:

- Expand partnerships and relationships to include more diverse partners.
- Provide technical assistance to build capacity for partners.
- Prioritize funding that benefits disadvantaged communities.
- Ensure meaningful community engagement in projects.
- Ensure tribal consultation occurs early and tribal concerns are respected.
- Develop an Equity Action Plan, include targets to track, and report on progress.
- Ensure agency contractors and vendors reflect California's diversity.
- Conservancy staff and board reflects California's diversity.
- Conservancy staff are culturally competent and able to dialogue about equity and environmental justice issues.

Based on input from the public, stakeholders, and the Board, the draft guidelines will focus on the most important of these issues for the Conservancy and analyze how we could improve our practices to better achieve the goal of promoting equity and addressing environmental justice.

## Proposed Schedule

<u>When</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Who</u>
Feb – Mar	Online survey of stakeholders	Stakeholders/SCC Staff
Feb- May	Stakeholder interviews	Stakeholders/ SCC Staff
May -Sept	Workshops and Webinars	Stakeholders/ SCC Staff
Sept. 1	Release draft guidelines, start comment period	SCC Staff/Public
October 17	Present draft guidelines to Conservancy Board	SCC Board
October 31	End of public comment period	Public
November	Revise guidelines	SCC Staff
December 12	Board meeting, final adoption	SCC Board