



NEWS RELEASE

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U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Announces that its 2016 Enforcement Report Will Examine Possible Violations of Civil Rights Relating to Environmental Justice

Washington, DC – The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights announces that on Friday, July 17 in an open meeting, the Commission voted to approve an investigation of possible civil rights violations relating to environmental justice in communities consisting predominantly of low-income, minority Americans for its annual enforcement report. Each year, pursuant to its statutory mandate, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights selects a report topic regarding the federal enforcement of civil rights laws of this nation.

The 2016 enforcement report will investigate specific and grave concerns of minority and low-income communities about possible violations of environmental and civil rights laws resulting from improper generation, storage, transfer and siting of toxic materials by public utilities and other sources near minority residential areas.

In its previous 2003 report, [*Not in My Backyard*](#), the Commission looked at various agencies responsible for implementing Executive Order 12,898 that requires federal agencies to collect data on the health and environmental impact of their activities on minority and low-income populations and to incorporate findings into their programs and activities. In its upcoming enforcement report, the Commission will primarily address the work of the Environmental Protection Agency in this area, including but not limited to storage of coal ash and hydraulic fracturing (fracking).

The Commission will also look at how agencies such as EPA are enforcing their responsibilities under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to ensure that clean air, clean earth, and clean water are available on a nondiscriminatory basis to all Americans.

Chairman Castro stated, “Having been born and raised in a community that was, and continues to be, the victim of environmental racism, I know well the adverse impact this has on low-income and minority communities. It is my hope that the Commission's focus on this issue will ensure that this form of discrimination is met with justice.”

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing a federal civil rights enforcement report. For information about Commission's reports and meetings, visit <http://www.usccr.gov>.