



Underserved Communities Committee

Underserved Communities Committee: Duties, Functions, and General Overview

October 25, 2022

Item 6a

Overview

- Admin Code Section - Duties & Functions
- Common Terms
- Current Programs Underway
- Sources of Authority
- Limits on Authority
- Next Steps – Potential Actions

Admin Code Section - Duties & Functions

Admin Code Section 2499.30

The Underserved Communities Committee shall study, advise, and make recommendations regarding the ways Metropolitan can:

- (a) Better serve the disadvantaged and underserved communities within Metropolitan's service area;
- (b) Improve the access of disadvantaged and underserved communities to reliable, high-quality drinking water supplies;
- (c) Increase the participation of currently underserved communities in Metropolitan's rebate, conservation, and other local resources programs; and
- (d) Assist and support member agency programs and advocate for underserved communities, including providing operational and technical assistance.

Common Terms

Disadvantaged Community (DAC):

CalEPA designation based on geographic, socioeconomic, public health, and environmental hazard criteria; used for funding decisions for programs funded through California Climate Investments:

- Census tracts receiving the highest 25 percent of overall scores in CalEnviroScreen 4.0 (1,984 tracts).
- Census tracts lacking overall scores in CalEnviroScreen 4.0 due to data gaps but receiving the highest 5 percent of CalEnviroScreen 4.0 cumulative pollution burden scores (19 tracts).
- Census tracts identified in the 2017 DAC designation as disadvantaged, regardless of their scores in CalEnviroScreen 4.0 (307 tracts).
- Lands under the control of federally recognized Tribes.

Common Terms

Socially disadvantaged:

- Individuals who have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias within American society because of their identities as members of groups and without regard to their individual qualities. The social disadvantage must stem from circumstances beyond their control. *13 CFR § 124.103*

Environmental Justice:

- The fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. *California Government Code § 65040.12*

Transitional Workers:

- Any individual qualifying in one or more of the following categories..."veteran, no high school diploma or GED, former foster youth, formerly incarcerated, documented income at or below 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, experiencing protracted unemployment (defined as receiving unemployment benefits for at least three months), etc. (Project Labor Agreement)

Common Terms

Underserved Community:

(a) The term “equity” means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

b) The term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of “equity”.

Executive Order 13985-Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government

Current Programs Underway

- Conservation programs
 - BeWaterWise & SoCalWater\$mart – Multi-lingual education, rebates, incentives
 - Multi-family Toilet Retrofit
 - Direct Install Partnership with So Cal Gas
- Community Services
 - Sponsorships – Community Partnering Program, Community Outreach
 - Public Education Programs - K through grey
- Capital Projects
 - Public Outreach – informing & engaging public (e.g., Pure Water)
 - Business Outreach – Small Business Program, PLAs, Equity in Infrastructure

Sources of Authority

- Metropolitan Water District Act
 - Purpose (Sec. 26)
 - Authority - Express and Implied (Secs. 120, 122, 130)
 - Conservation mandate (130.5, SB 60)
- Supplemental Statutory Authority
 - Water Code
 - Financial Code
 - Public Contracts Code
 - Government Code

Limits on Authority

- Rate Revenues: Service rates, charges, and fees collected to recover cost of service; Uniform rates for like classes of service (MWD Act Sec. 134.5, Various State laws)
- Contracts: Competitive bidding requirement on public works contracts (MWD Act Sec. 21565)
- Gift of public funds, Cal. Constitution Article XVI, Section 6
- Affirmative Action Initiative, Prop. 209

Next Steps – Potential Actions

- Set meeting schedule
- Consider Committee mission statement/charter
- Define "underserved communities" for Metropolitan
- Develop white paper
 - Assess region
 - Determine key issues/barriers to clean, affordable water
 - Identify potential solutions

Committee Discussion

