

April 23, 2015

Administrator Gina McCarthy
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mail Code: 1101A
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20460-0001



Re: Request to release EJ Screen for public use

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

The undersigned organizations, including some of the 200 member organizations of the Choose Clean Water Coalition, urge you to immediately release the EJ Screen tool for public use.

EJ Screen is an important tool that can be used by environmental groups in many ways. It can help us identify areas where we can target investments and community outreach to ensure that overburdened and underserved communities are receiving clean water funding and projects. It will also help us identify areas where we should be focusing on building connections with communities and their leaders to help diversify our Coalition and build capacity in communities that need investment.

EJ Screen is also a necessary tool to help states and funders make good decisions about where to invest clean water funds to ensure that the funds are invested equitably.

Further, the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, which you signed along with the governors of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia; the Mayor of the District of Columbia; and the Chair of the Chesapeake Bay Commission, includes an environmental justice principle and diversity outcome. The current draft of the Diversity Management Strategy for the Chesapeake Watershed Agreement plans to use EJ Screen to expand the diversity of bay stakeholders and to ensure clean water investments are targeted in overburdened communities. The management strategy will be finalized by June.

For over a year, we have been hearing from the Office of Environmental Justice that EJ Screen will be available for public use "soon." We recognize that the tool may be a work in progress, but we ask that you release EJ Screen by July 1, 2015 so that the tool can be used once the Diversity management strategy is finalized.

Sincerely,

Anacostia Watershed Society
Audubon Naturalist Society
Blue Water Baltimore
Earthworks
Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation
Friends of Accotink Creek

Friends of Lower Beaverdam Creek
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake
Little Falls Watershed Alliance
Maryland Conservation Council
National Aquarium
National Wildlife Federation Mid-Atlantic Regional Center
Nature Abounds
Peach Bottom Concerned Citizens
Penn Future
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Potomac Conservancy
Potomac Riverkeeper
Shenandoah Riverkeeper
Sleepy Creek Watershed Association
Southern Environmental Law Center
St. Mary's River Watershed Association
Trash Free Maryland
Virginia Conservation Network
Waterkeepers Chesapeake
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
West Virginia Rivers Coalition
Wicomico Environmental Trust