

MAY 23, 2024

President Biden Announces Key Appointments to the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council

WASHINGTON – Today, President Biden announced his intent to appoint 12 additional members to the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council (WHEJAC), which is a federal advisory committee that President Biden established under Executive Order 14008 of January 27, 2021, on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad. The Council provides advice and recommendations to the White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council and the Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality on how to address current and historic environmental injustice. The establishment of the WHEJAC marked the first time that a Presidential advisory body had been tasked with providing recommendations to the federal government on environmental justice.

Members of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council

- Tye Baker
- Anita Cunningham
- Lloyd Dean
- Carlos Evans
- Susan Hendershot
- Harleen Marwah
- Igalious Mills
- Jamaji Nwanaji-Enwerem
- Joanne Pérodin

- Michael Walton
- Donele Wilkins
- Tanner Yess

Tye Baker, to be a Member of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Tye Baker has served in multiple roles for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma since 2004. Currently, he serves as the Senior Director of the Environmental Protection Service for the Choctaw Nation, where he directs wildlife conservation, resource management, and environmental sustainability programs for the Choctaw Nation's reservation. Baker brings experience working in environmental justice for Tribal and Indigenous communities to the Council.

Anita Cunningham, to be a Member of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Anita Cunningham has served as the Director for two organizations focused on community resilience to climate disasters since 2020, the North Carolina Disaster Response and Resilience Network and the North Carolina Climate Solutions Coalition. Cunningham has dedicated her life to help communities with environmental justice concerns prepare for and respond to the impacts of climate change. Cunningham brings experience working with communities to advance climate resilience to the Council.

Lloyd Dean, to be a Member of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Lloyd Dean is a nationally recognized healthcare leader and the Chief Executive Emeritus of CommonSpirit Health, one of the nation's largest healthcare systems. In this role, he is responsible for the organization's overall management, governance, strategy, and direction. With over 44 years in healthcare, Dean has worked at the intersection of climate change and health related impacts, particularly in low-income communities. Dean brings a valuable healthcare and management perspective to the Council.

Carlos Evans, to be a Member of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Carlos Evans is the Director of the Office of Environmental Quality & Sustainability for the City of Dallas. Evans is a senior executive and environmental attorney with two decades of experience ensuring environmental compliance, improving environmental performance, and advancing equitable environmental sustainability. He previously served in a career role at the Environmental Protection Agency as Assistant Regional Counsel in the South Central Region. Evans brings environmental justice executive and legal advocacy experience to the Council.

Susan Hendershot, to be a Member of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Susan Hendershot is the President of Interfaith Power & Light, an organization that engages faith communities around environmental justice. Previously, Hendershot served in multiple churches in Iowa as an ordained minister, most recently as the Associate Minister of the Walnut Hills United Methodist Church in Urbandale, Iowa. Hendershot also served as a field organizer for the ONE Campaign, a non-profit founded by Bono that focuses on alleviating global poverty. Hendershot brings experience in faith leadership and community organizing to the Council.

Harleen Marwah, to be a Member of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Harleen Marwah is a Pediatric Resident Physician at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Marwah is the Founding Chair of Medical Students for a Sustainable Future, a community of medical students working to prevent and address the health harms of climate change. Marwah earned Health Care Without Harm's 2020 Emerging Physician Leader Award, which recognizes medical students and professionals who have showcased a passion for sustainable health care practices and an overall commitment to climate action. Marwah brings experience in youth engagement and working at the intersection of healthcare and climate change to the Council.

Igalious Mills, to be a Member of the White House Environmental Justice

Advisory Council

Igalious “Ike” Mills is a third-generation farmer and the Executive Director of the International Farmers and Ranchers, an organization that promotes sustainable farming practices and renewable energy efforts in underserved communities. Previously, Mills served on the U.S. Department of Agriculture Minority Farmers Advisory Committee and Civil Rights Sub-Committee. Mills currently serves as the Chairman of the Port Arthur NAACP Community Development Committee, a critical organization in the fight against toxic pollution in Port Arthur, Texas. Mills’ experience in agriculture, sustainable farming, and economic development will bring a valuable perspective to the Council.

Jamaji Nwanaji-Enwerem, to be a Member of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Jamaji C. Nwanaji-Enwerem is an Emergency Medicine Resident Physician and Adjunct Assistant Professor of Environmental Health at Emory University School of Medicine and Emory’s Rollins School of Public Health. His research focuses on how environmental exposures impact human aging and health, especially in underserved communities. Nwanaji-Enwerem brings extensive academic research experience and knowledge in health equity and environmental justice to the Council.

Joanne Pérodin, to be a Member of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Joanne Pérodin serves as the Senior Director of Climate Equity at The Climate Leadership Engagement Opportunities (CLEO) Institute, a Florida-based non-profit organization working on climate education and advocacy to build climate literacy and mobilize climate action for a just, resilient future. Previously, she was the Climate Justice Program Director for Florida Rising, a voting rights and grassroots organizing group advancing economic and racial justice across Florida. She also worked with the Health Initiatives Foundation Inc. by leading climate disaster resilience initiatives in the U.S., West Africa, and the Caribbean. Pérodin brings social equity, disaster risk reduction, and community building experience to the Council.

Michael Walton, to be a Member of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Michael Walton is the General Manager of Energy Transition Finance LLC, a strategic advisory firm committed to accelerating the deployment of clean energy technologies. Previously, Walton served as Executive Director of Green Spaces, a non-profit organization that improves economic, social, and environmental resilience, with a focus on empowering the most vulnerable communities in Tennessee. Walton brings experience in business, community sustainability improvement, and energy innovation advancement to the Council.

Donele Wilkins, to be a Member of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Donele Wilkins is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Green Door Initiative, a non-profit organization promoting environmental justice in Michigan through green job workforce training and community organizing. For more than two decades, Wilkins has led local movements for environmental justice, including advocating for cleaner air and launching Detroit's first green jobs training program. Wilkins brings experience in community-based organizing, planning, and workforce development to the Council.

Tanner Yess, to be a Member of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Tanner Yess is the founding co-Executive Director of Groundwork Ohio River Valley, an environmental non-profit that works to expand climate-resilient natural resources and buildings for low-income communities. Through this work, Yess has created one of the nation's largest green workforce programs. Yess brings expertise in community organizing, youth engagement, and workforce development to the Council.

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