



NEW STUDY FINDS MAJORITY OF FOSSIL FUEL POWER PLANTS IN NORTHEAST CONTINUE TO BE SITED IN AND DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACT ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES

The report assessed the siting of regulated power plants in states participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and found low-income communities, communities of color, and native communities continue to face the greatest public health harms from fossil fuel infrastructure

BOSTON – May 19, 2026 – Today, [Alternatives for Community and the Environment](#) (ACE), in partnership with environmental justice organizations representing six states (GreenRoots, the Institute for Policy Studies, New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance, New York City Environmental Justice Alliance, Pennsylvania Utility Law Project, Connecticut Coalition for Economic and Environmental Justice, Center for Coal Field Justice, and Dr. Marcos Luna) released a [report](#) prepared by Synapse Energy Economics assessing the siting of power plants in states participating in the [Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative](#) (RGGI). The study finds that despite initiatives to reduce the negative public health impacts of energy infrastructure on Environmental Justice communities in states participating in RGGI, the overwhelming majority of existing and new RGGI-regulated power plants continue to be sited in our most vulnerable and overburdened communities, disproportionately and adversely affecting low-income communities, communities of color, and native communities throughout the United States.

“While not surprising, this report underscores how our communities have been sacrifice zones for too long,” said ACE Executive Director Dwaigh Tyndal. “With higher rates of heart and lung disease, asthma attacks, extreme heat events, and more, environmental justice communities continue to experience the greatest harms from fossil fuel infrastructure and decision making. As Massachusetts and other RGGI states consider significant policies that will shape the future of where and how energy infrastructure is sited and who benefits, this report must be at the forefront.”

Key findings include:

- **30 percent of Environmental Justice communities in RGGI states are located within 3 miles of a regulated power plant, compared to only 16 percent of non-Environmental Justice communities.** People living in Environmental Justice communities near power plants are exposed to higher levels of PM2.5 pollution than other communities.

- **91 percent of generating units regulated under RGGI are located within 3 miles of an Environmental Justice community.** As a result, emissions of plants regulated under RGGI directly impact Environmental Justice communities in those states.
- Environmental Justice communities continue to bear the brunt of new power grid infrastructure. **Over 2009-2022, 90 percent of the emitting units added were built near Environmental Justice communities.** These communities continue to face higher exposure to power plant air pollutants.
- **Environmental Justice communities near RGGI plants are disproportionately affected, even when compared to other Environmental Justice communities.** The Environmental Justice communities near power plants tend to be ones with higher proportions of people of color, low income, unemployment, limited English-speaking households, and lower levels of educational attainment. Environmental Justice communities near RGGI power plants also have higher levels of ambient particulate matter, when compared to other non-Environmental Justice communities.

In Massachusetts, where the report found that 100% of power plants regulated under RGGI are located within three miles of an environmental justice community, advocates are hopeful that recently-passed [siting and permitting reform regulations](#) will give communities more power to determine where energy infrastructure is placed, and the tools to protect their neighborhoods from the dangerous public health impacts that come with fossil fuel-emitting power plants.

"This report validates the concerns raised by EJ communities for years and demonstrates the value and importance of doing these kinds of studies regularly as a matter of equity and accountability," said Marcos Luna, PhD, Senior Fellow at the Center for Entrepreneurship, Economic Development and Sustainability (CEEDS) and Professor of Geography and Sustainability at Salem State University.

"We have long expressed concerns about the disproportionate effects of cap-and-trade programs. This interstate report shows some critical failures for RGGI that perpetuated burdens on polluting power plants in environmental justice communities," said Daniel Chu, Senior Energy Planner at New York City Environmental Justice Alliance. "We call on RGGI Inc. and participating states to eliminate all regulatory backdoors for fossil fuel power plants and reinvest proceeds in energy efficiency, energy affordability, and a just transition for the communities that need them the most."

ACE also announced its new campaign, "90% to the Frontlines", calling on RGGI participant states to allocate 90% of RGGI funding to Black, Brown, low-income, and immigrant communities.

"Since 90 percent of new power-grid infrastructure has continued to be built in our communities, we're asking that 90% of RGGI revenue be invested in our communities too: air quality monitoring and improvement, economic development, energy efficiency, green space, climate

resilience, public transportation, and other proven solutions,” said Tristan Thomas, Policy and Law Director at ACE.

About Alternatives for Community and the Environment (ACE):

Alternatives for Community & Environment (ACE) is a neighborhood based, environmental justice and transit-oriented development nonprofit. ACE organizes Roxbury residents and works with community organizers locally, statewide and nationally to build platforms and offer resources that address systemic injustice. ACE works directly within the frontline communities that are most impacted bringing critical solutions that include advocacy, organizing, legal and regulatory campaigns. ACE is the first environmental justice nonprofit organization in Massachusetts and has defended the rights of Roxbury residents for over 30 years.