

# EPA REGION 2 YEAR IN REVIEW



- 2022 -



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Note from Our Regional Administrator</i>	02
<i>Supporting Communities through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law</i>	03
<i>Advancing Environmental Justice</i>	04
<i>Improving Air Quality</i>	06
<i>Ensuring Clean Water</i>	07
<i>Cleaning Up Superfund Sites</i>	08
<i>Revitalizing Brownfields Sites</i>	09
<i>Sustainably Managing Wastes and Chemicals</i>	10
<i>Responding to Emergencies</i>	11
<i>Combatting Climate Change and Building Resilient Communities</i>	12
<i>Looking Ahead</i>	13

# A WORD FROM OUR REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

I am honored to highlight the important work EPA has done in 2022 with and for communities and the significant accomplishments we have achieved carrying out the critical and ambitious agenda of the Biden-Harris Administration.

It has been a little over a year since the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and EPA employees are rolling up their sleeves to make the largest infusion of EPA funds **ever** really work for communities. We have taken advantage of this unprecedented opportunity to send kids to school on clean electric school buses, invest in water infrastructure upgrades, clean up polluted Brownfields and Superfund sites, and prevent pollution at the source.

And we are just beginning our work under the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022—the most significant climate legislation in U.S. history. The Inflation Reduction Act will finance green power, lower costs through tax credits, reduce emissions, and advance environmental justice.

This year we also found ourselves standing with communities, colleagues, friends and family in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Fiona—almost exactly five years after the devastating Hurricane Maria. We are heartbroken that friends and family in Puerto Rico endure storms like Fiona and Maria and frustrated that the fragile infrastructure is no match for these storms. To that end, the whole of government is investing in Puerto Rico, with new efforts to shore up and permanently fix the power grid and efforts to vastly improve wastewater and drinking water infrastructure.

There is an urgent need to advance environmental justice, tackle the climate crisis, and protect public health. That is why I was so pleased this year to announce a new Community Engagement and Environmental Justice (CEEJ) Team in our Region 2 office, making a longstanding vision a reality. By filling critical roles within this new unit—including a full-time position in the Caribbean—we will bring about a new chapter in how we can more thoughtfully work with communities and support those most overburdened by pollution. We also established a regional Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Advisory Group to further integrate DEIA for the benefit of our staff.

As regional administrator, I am so grateful to my colleagues at EPA and the work that we have accomplished together this past year to further protect and support communities against environmental threats. As you read on, you will see we have made significant strides in our work, hit key milestones and made unparalleled progress. As we look toward the coming year, protecting public health and the environment will remain our inspiration, propelling us to do more and move faster seizing the rare opportunities provided through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act.

¡Vamos!

Sincerely,

**LISA F. GARCIA**  
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR



# SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW



*We awarded \$18.5 million to purchase 51 electric school buses in New York City .*

We selected 25 school districts in New York, New Jersey and Puerto Rico to receive over **\$82 million** in rebates to purchase over **215 all-electric** and other non-diesel school buses.

In this region, we have awarded over **\$358 million** of the **\$574 million** available to improve aging water infrastructure under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

We awarded New York **\$5.9 million** and New Jersey **\$5.5 million** to advance the cleanup and revitalization of Brownfields sites. Region 2 also received **\$1.7 million** to provide free assistance to communities for environmental site assessments.

We applied over **\$250 million** from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to Superfund cleanups in the Region, including for **10 cleanups** that had been stalled due to lack of funding.

Under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, EPA is ensuring that at least **40 percent** of funding flows to disadvantaged communities.



*We celebrated the one-year anniversary of President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, representing the largest amount of funds EPA has ever received.*

# ADVANCING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

In 2022, we continued to support underserved and overburdened communities working to achieve equitable and positive outcomes for people and the environment.

This summer we welcomed EPA Administrator Michael Regan on his Journey to Justice tour to hear firsthand from frontline communities in Puerto Rico. The administrator quickly [announced a series of initial actions](#) to directly respond to the disproportionate impacts of pollution he saw and heard about during the visit.

To ensure healthy outcomes for overburdened areas of New York City, we led the EPA review of the proposed New York City “Congestion Pricing Plan”—a precedent-setting program intended to relieve congestion in Manhattan and enhance revenue.



*EPA Administrator Michael Regan and Regional Administrator Lisa F. Garcia tour Caño Martín Peña and the San Juan Bay Estuary in PR.*

EPA made the important decision to require that the oil refinery on St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands get a [new comprehensive Clean Air Permit](#) before operating. The decision makes good on our promise to deliver environmental justice and protect the health of every community, regardless of race, zip code or income.



*EPA Administrator Michael Regan and Regional Administrator Lisa F. Garcia listen to community members living near the San Juan Bay Estuary in Puerto Rico.*

# ADVANCING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (CONT.)

**We continued conversations with community members, encouraging those disproportionately impacted by environmental pollution to engage in planning and decision-making.**

We led a cross-cutting effort to engage the overburdened South End community in Albany, New York and drafted a Community Action Plan to advance the community's environmental priorities.



*Meeting with South End community members in Albany, NY.*



*New Jersey students visited the EPA Edison Environmental Center.*

Partnering with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Youth Inclusion Initiative Program, we hosted students from Camden, Elizabeth and Newark at the Edison Environmental Center to introduce them to careers in the environmental field.

# IMPROVING AIR QUALITY



*Skyline of Guaynabo. Source: Wikimedia*

In a settlement, TotalEnergies Marketing Puerto Rico Corp. agreed to spend **\$1.3 million** to resolve violations of the Clean Air Act at its petroleum storage facility in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico.

We provided communities in New Jersey and Puerto Rico information about the risk of living near sterilizer facilities that use a chemical called ethylene oxide (EtO).



*Regional Administrator Lisa F. Garcia speaks with community members in Salinas, Puerto Rico.*



We are funding nine community air monitoring projects in New York and New Jersey with more than **\$4 million** from the American Rescue Plan. We gave states and Indian Nations **\$1 million** to enhance existing monitoring networks and we continued our regional air sensor loan program with the goal of launching a project in Salinas, Puerto Rico in 2023.



## ENSURING CLEAN WATER

---

We celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act in Camden, New Jersey where decades of water infrastructure improvements have reduced pollution in key waterbodies and increased the community's access to clean water.

Jersey City Municipal Authority agreed to repair and improve their wastewater system to reduce flooding and prevent sewage overflows to Newark Bay and the Hudson and Hackensack Rivers by 370 million gallons annually. They will also remove over 12,000 lead drinking water lines in underserved communities.

We partnered with the Shinnecock Indian Nation, so they are eligible to receive Clean Water Act grants used to develop, maintain and expand water pollution control programs.

---

Through the Long Island Sound Futures Fund, EPA collaborated with state and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and community groups to provide \$10.3 million for 41 innovative, locally based conservation and restoration projects.

We completed the construction on the Emerald Shiner Fish Passage demonstration project, which is part of our Great Lakes Restoration Initiative work.

We broke ground on a \$10 million shoreline habitat restoration project at the Ralph C. Wilson Park in Buffalo, New York, funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.



# CLEANING UP SUPERFUND SITES

EPA [added the Lower Hackensack River to the National Priorities List](#), the culmination of years of work to address industrial and sewage pollution that has impacted the riverbed. Now EPA can investigate the contamination and determine how to clean up the site quickly and effectively.

We [added the Ochoa Fertilizer Co. Superfund site in Guánica in southern Puerto Rico to the Superfund National Priorities List](#). We can now use Superfund resources to clean up the site, which was damaged by Hurricanes Maria and Fiona and by earthquakes in recent years.



*Lower Hackensack River*

## This year we made significant headway at Superfund sites across the region

We cleaned up and demolished three large buildings riddled with mercury at the [Vo-Toys site](#) in Harrison, New Jersey. This paves the way to reuse the property located in the center of a bustling urban community.

Under our oversight, [General Electric](#) will investigate the [Lower Hudson River](#). What they find will help decide the next steps to address the Hudson River PCBs Superfund site.



*Before and after photos of the Vo-Toys site in Harrison, NJ.*



*EPA and partners celebrate the opening of the Whitman Park Expansion Project in Camden, New Jersey.*

## REVITALIZING BROWNFIELDS SITES

In 2022, Region 2 held—for the first time—a soon-to-be biannual week of training and collaboration to bolster brownfields work in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Following a multi-year investment of over **\$600,000** in brownfields grant resources to the City of Camden, New Jersey, the Whitman Park Expansion Project opened for the benefit of community residents.

Four communities in New Jersey will receive **\$6.5 million** to cleanup Brownfields. The largest of these grants—**\$3.5 million**—will be awarded to the Camden Redevelopment Agency to clean up sites like the Elijah Perry Park.

We awarded **\$600,000** to PathStone Corporation in Puerto Rico and the City of Rochester and the Laborers' Local 17 Training and Educational Fund in upstate New York to boost job training and advance economic opportunity in underserved and overburdened communities. We selected five other entities in New York and Puerto Rico to receive the first chunk of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding for Brownfields job training.

*Whitman Park*





*Lead RRP program certification and lead-safe work practices training.*

## SUSTAINABLY MANAGING WASTES AND CHEMICALS

---

EPA and the U.S. Department of Justice directly engaged the impacted community before filing a settlement order to address serious issues at the Toa Alta Landfill in Puerto Rico. We held a public meeting and received significant input from community members.

EPA and the Department of Justice reached a settlement with Tzumi Innovations, LLC for selling unregistered antimicrobial household products during the COVID-19 pandemic. The significant **\$1.5 million** settlement is the largest civil penalty ever obtained by EPA under pesticide law.

We worked with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to choose the best option for cleaning up the Eastman Business Park/Lower Genesee River site in Rochester, New York.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico and Trenton, New Jersey, we provided free Lead Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) program certification and lead-safe work practices training to 83 people.

We awarded the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe in New York one of the first pollution prevention grants under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

The more than **\$300,000** in funding will help the tribe better manage the use of road salt during winter months to prevent pollution on its lands.

# RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES



*We worked with the PR Department of Natural Resources to assess the state of landfills after Hurricane Fiona.*

The impacts and aftermath of Hurricane Fiona and lingering impacts of Maria and Irma illuminate the disparity and disproportionate impacts witnessed during Administrator Regan’s Journey to Justice Tour, as well as underscore the importance of furthering environmental justice for the residents of Puerto Rico.

In response to Hurricane Fiona, FEMA enlisted EPA’s support to conduct assessments to help make sure water was available and clean, the power grid was stabilized, and landfills were being properly maintained across the island.

## EPA CONTINUED ITS WORK TO RESPOND TO EMERGENCIES.

We required the owners of the oil refinery on St. Croix to remove dangerous chemicals from the facility after an inspection identified serious chemical safety concerns.



*Oil refinery on St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands.*



## COMBATTING CLIMATE CHANGE AND BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

EPA Region 2 organized the [Caribbean Climate Change 2022 Conference: Promoting Climate Justice and Climate Resilience in USVI and Puerto Rico](#). The Conference had more than 800 participants.

We hosted the 25th annual Region 2 Indian Nations meeting to strengthen our government-to-government relationship. Region 2 and the Nations agreed that health is a driver of equity, and that the impacts of climate change affect everyone. The Haudenosaunee Nations concluded with a powerful message for us all to keep in mind: “provide a world for our grandchildren so that they can be grandparents.”

Region 2 released an updated [Climate Adaptation Action Plan](#) for increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change. Developed with input from community members, the plan reaffirms EPA’s commitment to addressing the devastating impacts of climate change on communities while advancing environmental justice and equity.



*A virtual gathering of partners and colleagues at the 25th annual Region 2 Indian Nations meeting.*

# LOOKING AHEAD

2022 has been a truly historic year. This year EPA also received \$41.5 billion in appropriations from the Inflation Reduction Act—the largest investment in history to enhance our work in underserved communities and to combat climate change.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will continue to provide billions of dollars in game-changing funding to modernize the nation’s infrastructure, create good-paying jobs, combat the climate crisis, and advance environmental justice.

In 2023, we will continue to build on our progress using this unprecedented funding to invest in a healthier future for every community in our region!



Learn more and stay connected with

# EPA REGION 2



- 2022 -