

WITHOUT JUSTICE, THERE IS NO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE.



“Our state can’t have environmental justice without justice. The Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy’s mission is rooted in justice and the law. We come to this work with the perspective that all are equal before the law, and that facts and science will lead us to the truth.” - Kathryn Hoffman, CEO of MCEA

Much of our work in environmental justice is tied with the work of racial justice. The New York Times on June 5th, 2020 listed a plethora of articles and books that detail these connections, and discussed the roots of the environmental movement beginning with a protest against a trash dump site in an African-American community. In fact, **environmental issues like pollution affect communities of color at an astoundingly higher rate than white communities**, leading to higher chronic illnesses among people of color. Much of the work in environmental justice and racial justice are aimed at protecting the same disproportionately affected communities.

Additionally, environmental advocates and racial justice advocates use many of the same tools to advance important change -- tools like protest, lobbying, and challenges in court. As an organization rooted in law and justice, we protect these tools as much as our work, which is in part, why we support the POCI Caucus’s proposals on law enforcement reform. The POCI Caucus’s proposals not only affect the communities we aim to protect, but additionally support the very tools environmental advocates need to do their work.

The following chart details the bills introduced by POCI Caucus legislators during the 1st Special Session that are essential to protect all protesters, no matter the cause they are protesting for:

Bill Number and Author	Description	How This Protects Protesters
HF 42, Moran	Use of Force Reform	Changing the ways in which police officers can use force to protect protesters, who are often at the receiving end of unnecessary force.
HF 46, Richardson	Warrior Training Prohibited	Warrior training encourages law enforcement to see people as an inherent other, an enemy and a threat, rather than a person. This is amplified in protester conflict.
HF 4, Moran	Choke Hold Ban	Choke holds were used extensively against the most recent protesters and poses a serious life-threatening situation to any protesters with respiratory or heart conditions.

HF 43, Becker-Finn	Duty to Intercede	This bill tells law enforcement that any officer that witnesses another officer doing something wrong, has a duty to intervene. During many protests, officers commit unnecessary force, and are quick to use chemical weapons. This bill will reduce the amount of wrong-doing by peer accountability.
HF 3, Mariani	Data Collection and Regulatory Reform	This bill contains several pieces, including one that protects personal data from those arrested (like phone recordings from a protester), requiring third party oversight in jails, and incentivising release of jail inmates if they pose no threat to the public. All of these protect protesters from privacy invasion, abuse, and unnecessary holding.
HF 47, Noor	Cash Bail Reform	Eliminating the cash bail system supports protesters that are low income and cannot afford bail. Many protesters who are arrested stay in jail for extensive periods of time, simply because they cannot afford to post bail. Nobody should be in jail for exercising their right to protest and not being able to afford to pay their way out.

We ask you to please support the entire POCI Caucus package. In addition to the critical support many of these bills provide to protesters, they also protect the communities we fight for. **Without justice, there is no environmental justice.**

Source: NYTimes, June 5th, 2020, *Read Up on the Links Between Racism and the Environment*,
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/05/climate/racism-climate-change-reading-list.html>



Distributed and produced by the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
 Contact: Kara Josephson, Legislative Director
 kjosephson@mncenter.org, 651-285-4735