ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: LEGAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

3RD EDITION

by

Barry E. Hill

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW INSTITUTE

Washington, D.C.
Let America Be America Again

Let America be America again.
Let it be the dream it used to be.
Let it be the pioneer on the plain
Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed—
Let it be that great strong land of love
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme
That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,
But opportunity is real, and life is free,
Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There’s never been equality for me,
Nor freedom in this “homeland of the free.”)

****

We, the people, must redeem
The land, the mines, the plants, the rivers.
The mountains and the endless plain—
All, all the stretch of these great green states—
And make America again!

—Langston Hughes
African American poet and author

This textbook/handbook is dedicated to my parents, James Henry and Cecelia Naomi Hill, who instilled in their seven children the importance of obtaining a quality education, and to my mentor, D.C. Court of Appeals Judge Inez Smith Reid, who inspired me to expand my horizons as a student, lawyer, and teacher.

Barry E. Hill
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Biography

Barry E. Hill is an Adjunct Professor of Law at Vermont Law School, where he has taught an environmental justice and sustainable development course for 20 years. Mr. Hill is Senior Counsel for Environmental Governance, Office of International and Tribal Affairs, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Previously, Mr. Hill was Director of EPA’s Office of Environmental Justice from 1998-2007. Prior to that, he was the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Associate Solicitor, Division of Conservation and Wildlife, and the Director, Office of Hearings and Appeals. Prior positions include: Of Counsel to the law firm of Dickstein Shapiro, LLP, where he practiced environmental law; Project Manager of the Superfund Business Unit of ICF International, an international consulting firm; Special Counsel to the Attorney General of the District of Columbia; Legal Counsel to the Inspector General of the U.S. EPA; Law Secretary to the Deputy Administrative Judge of New York City (Criminal Division); and an Assistant District Attorney in Brooklyn, New York.

Mr. Hill has been a Visiting Scholar at the Environmental Law Institute from 2010-2012. Mr. Hill has lectured in the Middle East, Africa, South and Central America, and the Caribbean on the following topics: establishing an environmental law and policy framework for national governments; environmental justice and sustainable development; capacity-building training in environmental law for judges, prosecutors, government regulators, citizens, and the bar; citizen involvement in the environmental enforcement process; and the impact of global warming on indigenous populations. In 2011, Mr. Hill delivered the Distinguished Lecture for the Trinidad & Tobago Environmental Commission, and the Supreme Court of Trinidad & Tobago.

In 2011, Mr. Hill was presented the “Distinguished Alumni Award” by Brooklyn College of the City University of New York for his “commitment to environmental justice and sustainable development, and pioneering leadership in the field of environmental law and policy in the U.S. and abroad.”

In 2001, Mr. Hill was presented the “Award for Distinguished Achievement in Environmental Law and Policy” by the American Bar Association for his work—teaching, research, and leadership—in the areas of environmental justice and sustainable development, and environmental law and policy.

Since 1999, Mr. Hill has been a Fellow of the American Bar Association’s American Bar Foundation in recognition of his professional accomplishments, distinguished service, and commitment to the study of law and legal research.

Mr. Hill received his B.A. degree in Political Science from Brooklyn College; M.A. degree in Political Science from Howard University; and a J.D. degree from the Cornell University Law School. In 2012, Mr. Hill received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the Thomas Jefferson School of Law, since he “steadfastly fought environmental injustice by taking action to decrease environmental risks and to raise awareness of these issues, and by providing communities with the appropriate tools needed to address serious environmental problems.”
Acknowledgments

I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the Environmental Justice Movement activists, advocates, and scholars who have inspired my keen interest and work in this area.

I am deeply indebted to the various authors and publishers who have granted me permission to reproduce excerpts of their work in this textbook/handbook.

Special recognition must be given to my colleagues on the American Bar Association’s (ABA’s) Standing Committee on Environmental Law—particularly, Dinah Bear, Hope Babcock, David Baker, Tommy Wells, and Elissa Lichtenstein. We made history. Through our efforts, in 1993, the ABA became the first mainstream organization in the United States to recognize and seek to address the issue of environmental justice. The resolution on environmental justice that was unanimously adopted by the House of Delegates became official policy of the ABA. Since then, the ABA has embarked on a myriad of progressive initiatives such as identifying lawyers, law school clinics, and legal services organizations nationwide who agreed to provide pro bono legal services to community-based organizations; and conducting 50-state surveys to identify what states are doing with respect to addressing the issue through legislation, regulations, and policies, as well as supplemental environmental projects that address the environmental and public health concerns of communities.

I am indebted to the talented team of attorneys and other professionals that comprised the District of Columbia Bar Association’s Coalition on Environmental Justice—notably, Fran Dubrowski and Leslie Turner. Through our efforts, in 1995, the D.C. Bar became the first state bar association in the country to pass an environmental justice resolution and to embark on a number of groundbreaking initiatives to seek to address the issue of environmental justice in the nation’s capital.

I gratefully acknowledge the help and encouragement of the team at the Environmental Law Institute—specifically, Scott Schang, Rachel Jean-Baptiste, and Bill Straub—for their efforts, support, and advice in publishing this textbook/handbook.

My sincere appreciation is extended to my sister, Sherry Yvonne Hill, whose expert typing skills and patience contributed immensely to the successful completion of this book.

Finally, I am grateful to my beloved family and dear friends who helped me more than they could ever imagine as I spent countless hours researching and writing in the lonely confines of my study. When I would emerge periodically, they were always there. Thank you all.

Be Well; Be Balanced; and Be Happy!!!

Barry E. Hill