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Natural Resources
Defense Council

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First National People of Color
Environmental Leadership Summit participants &
Environmental Justice activists and advocates

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I am writing to inform you that I am now working with the Natural Resources Defense Council as the Director of its Environmental Justice Initiative.

As many of you know I have been active within the environmental justice movement for several years as an activist in my own community, and together with two other activists co-founded West Harlem Environmental Action in 1988. I also served as a research assistant at the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice where I helped to write and produce the report Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States. I served as the facilitator for the Northeast Region at the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, and was a member of the drafting committee that produced the final draft of the Principles of Environmental Justice.

As one of the largest mainstream environmental organizations in the U.S., NRDC has come to understand the need to more fully integrate issues of environmental justice into the fabric of its work. The environmental justice initiative is a major step in the direction of institutional commitment on behalf of NRDC to the broader environmental justice movement.

Many of you may remember meeting Cathy Verhoff former Director of Operations at NRDC, and Ellie Goodwin former Program Assistant in the San Francisco office of NRDC, who deserve much of the credit for challenging the organization internally to begin to take up issues of environmental justice, and to reach out to the environmental justice community as it pursued a national/international environmental policy agenda.

Over the next several months, I will be working with NRDC's six programs to identify how to develop a more comprehensive environmental justice program at NRDC. I hope that you can assist us in this effort by communicating your concerns to us where you think we can be of some assistance to you and your community.