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# Environmental Justice: U.S. Department of Justice Announces Alabama Department of Health and Lowndes County Civil Rights Investigation

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The United States Department of Justice (“DOJ”) issued a November 9th news release stating it has opened an environmental justice investigation of the Alabama Department of Public Health and the Lowndes County, Alabama, Health Department.

The investigation is stated to involve their wastewater disposal and infectious disease and outbreaks programs.

The investigation will be conducted by DOJ’s Civil Rights Division.

DOJ states in the November news release that it will examine whether the Alabama Department of Health and Lowndes County Health Department:

. . . operate their onsite wastewater disposal program and infectious diseases and outbreaks program in a manner that discriminates against Black residents of Lowndes County in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI).

The investigation is also stated to examine whether the health department’s policies and practices have:

. . . caused Black residents of Lowndes County to have diminished access to adequate sanitation systems and to disproportionately and unjustifiably bear the risk of adverse health effects associated with inadequate wastewater treatment . . .

The news release notes that the investigation is the first Title VI environmental justice investigation for one of the department’s funding recipients. Title VI prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance from discriminating on the basis of race, color or national origin.

The news release states that DOJ has not reached any conclusions regarding the allegations.

A copy of the news release can be downloaded [here](#).