

NOVEMBER 15, 2019

DUCKWORTH, DURBIN ANNOUNCE \$60,000 TO IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN ILLINOIS

[WASHINGTON, D.C.] – U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), a founding member of the Senate’s Environmental Justice Caucus and Dick Durbin (D-IL), today announced a total of \$60,000 in federal funding to two organizations, Legal Aid Chicago and Legal Council for Health Justice, to help address environmental justice issues. Today’s funding is part of more than \$1.5 million being awarded to 50 different organizations working to address environmental injustice nationwide, half of which will use the funding to promote and improve environmental justice in economically-distressed, federally-designated “Opportunity Zone” communities.

“Illinoisans should not have to worry that the air they breathe or the water they drink might put their health or the health of their children at risk,” Duckworth said. **“That’s why I’m proud to continue working with Senator Durbin to secure investments like these to improve environmental justice and reduce health risks in underserved communities across Illinois.”**

“Too often we see lower income communities and neighborhoods of color face a disproportionate amount of environmental hazards that we know hurt public health,” Durbin said. **“Breathing clean air and using clean water shouldn’t be a privilege for the few. That’s why Senator**

Duckworth and I will continue fighting for these federal resources that help vulnerable populations improve and maintain a safe and clean environment.”

A \$30,000 award is intended to help Legal Aid Chicago’s Migrant Legal Assistance Project educate workers on pesticide awareness, investigate possible violations or worker illness from pesticides, as well as issuing a report aimed at improving the health of Illinois’s migrant farmworker population. In addition, another \$30,000 award is intended to help Legal Council for Health Justice develop a blueprint for an app that would provide users with education on preventing lead poisoning, particularly in children. Today’s funding comes from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Environmental Justice Small Grants program, which aims to support organizations in mitigating environmental injustice challenges in underserved communities.

Earlier this year, Duckworth and U.S. Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Tom Carper (D-DE) created the Senate’s first-ever Environmental Justice Caucus to raise awareness of the many environmental and pollution issues that have created public health challenges, which disproportionately impact low income communities and communities of color, including lead poisoning. Durbin and Duckworth also helped introduce the *Environmental Justice Act of 2019* earlier this year to require federal agencies to mitigate environmental injustices through agency action and would strengthen the legal protections of those affected by environmental injustices.