



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT:** Julia Robey Christian, PIO, (202) 741-0842 desk, (202) 450-7878 cell, [julia.christian@dc.gov](mailto:julia.christian@dc.gov)

### DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ANNOUNCE ENVIRONMENTAL ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

*Students from seven DC schools honored for excellence in creative writing  
with a focus on the environment*

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, December 9, 2016** — Today, DC's Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) and the U.S. Department of Justice (USDJOJ) honored the ten winners of the [DC Environmental Essay Contest](#), which challenged students to think critically and write creatively about a local environmental topic of concern.

A total of 125 essays were received from 14 different schools in the District. Each essay was reviewed by a panel of judges made up of professionals in the fields of education and the environment. With topics ranging from invasive species in the Anacostia River to air quality issues affecting asthmatics, student writers illustrated a strong grasp and bold enthusiasm for the environmental issues they found most important in the District.

Each winner was recognized at an awards ceremony hosted by Assistant Attorney General John Cruden and DOEE Director Tommy Wells, in the Great Hall of the USDJOJ, where they received an award, a solar backpack, and an educational riverboat tour of the Anacostia River for the entire class.

"I had the pleasure of reading many of the essays, and really enjoyed hearing how young scholars in the District see and think about the environment around them," said DOEE Director Tommy Wells. "I was so impressed with how most of the students are already taking personal responsibility for improving and protecting the environment and are envisioning a greener, healthier city. I invite every student and their classmates to come out on the Anacostia River this spring to continue observing and learning about the District's natural environment."

The winners of the DC Environmental Essay Contest are:

- Fiona Bishop, Oyster Adams Middle School;
- Alyssa Kim Oacan and Arsema Gossaye, Center City Public Charter-Brightwood;
- Jade Gregoire, Hardy Middle School;
- Reniya Colman, Calvary Christian Academy;
- Hazel Wartchow, Eliot-Hine Middle School;
- Eliana Patterson and Tori Davis, St. Anthony Academy; and
- Jaida Nutall and Gabriel Loza, School Without Walls at Francis Stevens.

DOEE will feature the winning essays on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) throughout the next week.

###