

Press Release: CalEPA Updates Groundbreaking Environmental Justice Tool

Description

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CalEPA Updates Groundbreaking Environmental Justice Tool

En espa ol: [CalEPA Actualiza la Herramienta Innovadora de Justicia Ambiental](#)

For Immediate Release:

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SACRAMENTO â The California Environmental Protection Agency today released an updated version of CalEnviroScreen, a California innovation that has become the national gold standard of geospatial data tools used to drive more equitable decision-making.

Developed by CalEPA's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), CalEnviroScreen identifies California communities with the highest pollution burdens and vulnerabilities. State and local agencies, non-governmental organizations and business groups use CalEnviroScreen to better understand and address environmental concerns in California communities.

Since its initial release in 2013, CalEnviroScreen has helped state, regional and local policymakers prioritize activities and funding to assist communities that are disproportionately impacted by pollution. CalEnviroScreen is used to aid in administering environmental justice grants, promote compliance with environmental laws, prioritize site-cleanup activities and identify opportunities for sustainable development. Areas identified by CalEPA as "disadvantaged communities" based on CalEnviroScreen scores are eligible for a significant share of the California Climate Investments from the state's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund and other benefits from specific Climate Investment programs.



â Environmental injustice in California and throughout the

nation results in communities of color being exposed to significantly more pollution than their white counterparts," said Secretary for Environmental Protection Jared Blumenfeld. "By bringing visibility to these often-overlooked communities, CalEnviroScreen helps us focus funding, enforcement and attention where it is needed the most. Only by solving inequalities facing Californians will we achieve lasting environmental improvements."

The new CalEnviroScreen version 4.0 analyzes the latest data from 21 indicators of environmental, public health and socioeconomic conditions in California's 8,000 census tracts. These indicators range from air and drinking water contaminants to pesticide use, toxic releases, cleanup sites, low birth weight infants, poverty and unemployment. The latest version also features a new indicator on children's exposure to lead from housing. A [207-page report on CalEnviroScreen 4.0](#) is available online.

The new version also includes several improvements to existing indicators that expand on earlier versions to incorporate additional pollution sources affecting Californians. These include chrome-plating facilities, dairies and feedlots, and certain industrial and manufacturing pollution sources in Mexico affecting California communities along the southern border. The update also uses more localized air pollution data, as explained in OEHHA's [Summary of Changes in CalEnviroScreen Version 4.0](#).

A website mapping tool that allows the public to explore CalEnviroScreen results by [indicator](#) or by [individual census tract](#) is available on [OEHHA's CalEnviroScreen 4.0 webpage](#).

CalEnviroScreen uses rigorous science in order to advance environmental justice," said OEHHA Director Dr. Lauren Zeise. "We develop, refine and update the indicators so that they best reflect the various forms of pollution that may be present in our communities, and the factors that can cause people to be more vulnerable to pollution's harmful effects."

A supplemental analysis accompanying the CalEnviroScreen findings, [Analysis of Race/Ethnicity and CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Scores](#), shows the dramatic differences in the racial composition of the state's census tracts depending on their pollution burdens and vulnerabilities. The analysis found that the population of the top 10% of neighborhoods with the highest pollution burdens and vulnerabilities consist of 91% people of color, while the population of the 10% of neighborhoods with the lowest pollution burdens and vulnerabilities is 67% white.

OEHHA released a draft version of CalEnviroScreen 4.0 in February 2021. OEHHA solicited public comments on the draft at a March 2021 webinar and at six virtual public workshops in April 2021. A written public-comment period ran from February to May 2021. OEHHA and CalEPA are committed to continuing to update the tool through an open and public process. CalEnviroScreen 4.0 reflects the public input on the draft and previous versions.

NOTE: OEHHA's CalEnviroScreen experts are available to walk reporters through the maps and data upon request.

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CalEPA Boards, Departments, and Office

[California Air Resources Board News Releases](#)

[Department of Pesticide Regulation News Releases & Publications](#)

[Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery \(CalRecycle\) Newsroom](#)

[Department of Toxic Substances Control Press Releases](#)

[Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment Press Releases](#)

[State Water Resources Control Board News/Media Information](#)

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â³³Environmental injustice in California and throughout the nation results in communities of color being exposed to significantly more pollution than their white counterparts. By bringing visibility to these often-overlooked communities, CalEnviroScreen helps us focus funding, enforcement and attention where it is needed the most. Only by solving inequalities facing Californians will we achieve lasting environmental improvements.â³•

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â??CalEnviroScreen uses rigorous science in order to advance environmental justice. We develop, refine and update the indicators so that they best reflect the various forms of pollution that may be present in our communities, and the factors that can cause people to be more vulnerable to pollutionâ??s harmful effects.â?•

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