

## CalEPA TAC – April 2023: OEHHA Report

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) is the lead entity within the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) for assessing health risks posed by environmental chemicals.

### **Consultations:**

Consultations initiated during Q1: **1** new, **5** open

**Topics:** Designation of Disadvantaged Communities – additional Tribal lands (5), cyanobacteria in sports fish (1).

Consultations closed during Q1: **1** - cyanobacteria in sports fish

Open consultation topics and projects: **5**- Designation of Disadvantaged Communities – additional Tribal lands

### Tribal Activities Update

Highlights of OEHHA activities between September 2022 and December 2022 that may be of interest to Tribes come primarily from the following projects:

1. [Cyanobacteria in sports fish](#)
2. [CalEnviroScreen and DAC Designation](#)
3. [Fish Consumption Advisories](#)
4. [Indicators of Climate Change in California](#)
5. [Pesticide-related Illnesses](#)
6. [Contaminated Site Assessments](#)
7. [Trainings/Meetings](#)

1. Cyanobacteria in sport fish

Through the CalEPA TAC, OEHHA was contacted by the Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians in March 2023. We were asked about the possibility of extrapolating a 2012 level for cyanobacteria in sports fish to a tribal consumption level. Dr. Stanton (OEHHA) reached out to the Tribe (Sarah Ryan) in March and offered to meet and discuss the issue.

## 2. CalEnviroScreen and DAC Designation

- OEHHA continues to work with CalEPA to support work related to the [designation of DACs](#), which primarily uses CalEnviroScreen. Lands under the control of federally recognized Tribes are now eligible as DACs for climate investments. OEHHA is working with CalEPA on consultations with tribes requesting to add additional lands under their control.
- As of March 2022, five Tribes have requested lands to be added to the DAC map: the Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians, Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria, the Potter Valley Tribe, the Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria, and the Federated Indians of the Graton Rancheria.
- OEHHA is working with CalEPA Deputy Secretary for Environmental Justice and Tribal Affairs to review the requested lands and issue additional DAC determinations.
- With the Tribes' permission, OEHHA and CalEPA will update the map of the DACs for these tribes with DAC determinations by July 1, 2023.
- OEHHA staff also participate as a California state representative on the Tribal Boundaries Workgroup, which is a workgroup run by the US Census and Bureau of Indian Affairs to share best practices and knowledge about use of tribal lands and boundaries data.

## 3. Fish Consumption Advisories

[OEHHA's fish advisories](#) provide “safe eating guidelines” to help people choose the safest fish to eat and avoid fish species with high levels of chemicals in them. They are based on sampling results for common fish species that people catch and eat from California water bodies.

### Fish Advisories Published from December 2022 to date:

- [Castaic Lake](#) and [lagoon](#) – possible impacts for Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, and others
- [Pyramid Lake](#) – possible impacts for Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, and others

## 4. Indicators of Climate Change in California

OEHHA released its Indicators of Climate Change in California report in November 2022. As part of the report development, OEHHA worked with California Native American Tribes (both federally and non-federally recognized) and, with Tribal permission, incorporated information on the impacts of climate change on California Tribes into the report. OEHHA intends to continue collaboration with California Tribes.

Efforts include:

- Ongoing participation in meetings, workshops, conferences, and other forums discussing Tribal issues relating to climate change.
- Videos featuring Tribal members discussing climate change impacts and elevating Tribal voices, expected to be released in mid-2024 (OEHHA has a contract with California State University Sacramento for filming/video production); filming for the first two videos is scheduled as follows.
  - Middletown and Big Valley, April 2023
  - Owens Valley Tribes Fall, 2023
- Connecting with Tribes who may be interested in participating in the 2026 report.
- [Public Information on OEHHA's tribal outreach for the climate change report.](#)

## 5. Pesticide-Related Illnesses

In the Fall of 2022, OEHHA launched an initiative to engage California Native American tribes in a dialogue on pesticide-related topics and to partner with tribes in developing culturally appropriate educational materials on health risks associated with pesticide exposure. In January of 2023, OEHHA presented an update of its project at the Regional Tribal Operations Committee (RTOC) meeting and got feedback from participants. OEHHA has also been in contact with the California Rural Indian Health Board and will be giving a presentation to their staff later this Spring. OEHHA will be participating in an Earth Day event on April 21 at the Middletown Rancheria and is planning on attending two other events this summer (California Indian Basketweavers' Association's annual gathering and Tule Boat Festival). Ultimately, OEHHA is hoping to gather information from tribal communities, tribal environmental representatives, and tribal health representatives on tribal specific issues related to pesticide exposure. This information, together with the information provided in literature will be used to create materials that better serve health professionals working with tribal communities.

## 6. Contaminated Site Assessments

At the request of CalEPA, OEHHA has conducted a preliminary risk evaluation to assess the potential health impacts to the Cahto Tribe residing on the Laytonville Rancheria due to contamination from the nearby landfill. OEHHA evaluated existing data to estimate risks and hazards for the Rancheria residents, considering exposure parameters assumed to more closely reflect Tribal lifestyles than standard risk assessment values. The report is in the final stages of internal review.

## 7. Tribal meetings/Trainings

- National Tribal Resilience Data Workgroup (ongoing participation)
- Tribal Climate and Health Roundtable (ongoing participation)
- Tribal Health & Adaptation Peer-Learning Roundtable (ongoing participation)
- CA Tribal Climate Change Working Group (ongoing participation)