

From: viviana hilario [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, August 12, 2026 3:40 PM
To: Inquiries, DAC
Subject: Public Comment on 2026 Disadvantaged Communities Designation

EXTERNAL:

Dear California EPA,

I am a resident of the Bayview area of San Francisco writing regarding CalEPA's preliminary 2026 designation of disadvantaged communities and, specifically, the exclusion of several historically vulnerable San Francisco communities under CalEnviroScreen 5.0.

While census-tract-level data can be useful for understanding environmental burdens statewide, San Francisco illustrates some of the limitations of relying heavily on neighborhood averages. Gentrification can dramatically change the income and demographic profile of a census tract without eliminating the environmental burdens experienced by its longtime, lower-income residents. In neighborhoods where luxury developments and single-room occupancy hotels exist within the same census tract, an increase in higher-income residents can make a community appear less vulnerable statistically even though many residents continue to experience unsafe housing, pollution, and poor health outcomes.

I am particularly concerned about conditions that CalEnviroScreen does not fully capture. Residents of SROs may experience mold, inadequate ventilation, pests, overcrowding, and indoor air pollution, while unhoused residents face environmental exposures that are also difficult to represent through conventional census data. These conditions are significant environmental justice concerns, even when they do not translate neatly into the indicators used to calculate a census tract's overall score.

I respectfully urge CalEPA to reconsider how the final 2026 disadvantaged-community designation accounts for dense and rapidly gentrifying urban communities. In particular, I encourage the agency to consider additional safeguards for communities whose scores decline because of demographic change rather than meaningful reductions in environmental burden; incorporate more localized data and community knowledge where statewide datasets fail to capture conditions such as indoor air quality and housing-related environmental hazards; and engage directly with residents and community organizations in neighborhoods whose disadvantaged-community status is changing.

Thank you for considering my comment and for providing Californians with an opportunity to participate in the 2026 designation process. I hope CalEPA will use this public comment period to ensure that the final designation more accurately reflects the lived environmental conditions of San Francisco communities.

Sincerely,

Viviana Hilario

Bayview Resident