



August 14th, 2026

Yana Garcia, Secretary for Environmental Protection
California Environmental Protection Agency
1001 I Street, P. O. Box 2815
Sacramento, CA 95812

Re: Comments to Improve CalEPA's Preliminary 2026 Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) Designation

Dear Secretary Garcia,

We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on California Environmental Protection Agency's (CalEPA's) preliminary 2026 Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) designation.

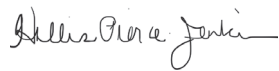
Literacy for Environmental Justice (LEJ) promotes ecological health, environmental stewardship, and community development in Southeast SF by creating urban greening, eco-literacy, community stewardship and workforce development opportunities that directly engage local residents in securing a healthier future.

LEJ was conceived in 1998 by passionate neighborhood youth. Our neighborhood is a mix of residential, and industrial zoning has caused residents to suffer unjust health disparities. LEJ transforms polluted brownfields into public parks, trains youth for green careers and connects communities with open space.

We highly support CalEPA's inclusion of carryover tracts from CalEnviroScreen (CES) 4.0; however, there must be additional efforts to accurately capture the increased need and vulnerability in communities across California, which are confronting affordability and climate crises, paired with an unprecedented retraction of federal investments. Instead of arbitrary cut-offs based on tools that systematically fail to reflect realities on the ground, CalEPA must prioritize expanding eligibility to protect access so communities of need aren't overlooked.

CalEnviroScreen has consistently failed to accurately capture environmental justice communities, particularly with the unique conditions in the Bay Area. Since CES 5.0 has been finalized without meaningful changes to improve representation in the Bay Area, we turn to CalEPA to swiftly make this designation work accurately for all Californians—including those in San Francisco and the Bay Area. We urge CalEPA to interrogate and adopt solutions to broaden the designation, for example increasing to top 35%, adding a ½ buffer around top tracts, including top 25% of population-burdened tracts, and/or carrying over 3.0 tracts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hollis Pierce-Jenkins".

Dr. Hollis Pierce-Jenkins
Executive Director
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