



OEHHA CalEPA Tribal Advisory Committee Report Third Quarter Update July – September 2024

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.

As part of OEHHA's participation in the TAC, we submit a quarterly report to CalEPA informing Tribes of activities that may be of interest, consultations, and projects. Tribes are welcome to [contact OEHHA](#) at any time with questions or for assistance.

Consultations

Consultations during Q3: 0
Topic(s):

Tribal Activities Update

Highlights of OEHHA activities between January and June 2024 that may be of interest to Tribes come primarily from the following projects:

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

1. CalEnviroScreen and DAC Designation

OEHHA develops [CalEnviroScreen](#), an environmental justice mapping tool used to identify California communities burdened by multiple sources of pollution and vulnerable to its effects. The last update to CalEnviroScreen was in 2021. The forthcoming fifth update to CalEnviroScreen will use a co-design approach through partnerships with environmental justice community-based organizations and interested Tribes who would like to participate.

SB535 Map Updates

CalEPA uses CalEnviroScreen to designate [disadvantaged communities \(DACs\)](#), which are prioritized for the state's climate investments. Lands under the control of federally recognized Tribes are also eligible as DACs. The last update to the DAC designation was 2022.

The SB535 map for 2023/2024 is now live, incorporating additional Tribal lands. All Tribes have been notified of the newly added parcels, enabling them to apply for relevant funding. This update marks a significant expansion in the inclusion of Tribal lands within the CalEnviroScreen framework.

Tribal Water Systems Data

Efforts are ongoing to integrate Tribal water systems data into the drinking water indicator on CalEnviroScreen. The work will involve close collaboration with tribes and the USEPA to accurately map water system boundaries and include them in CalEnviroScreen.

2. HAB-related illnesses

The California Interagency HAB-related Illness Workgroup updated the HAB-related illness tracking webpages and factsheets for both freshwater and marine HAB events. OEHHA/CDPH/SWRCB/CDFW all serve equally in the workgroup and contributed to the updated materials. OEHHA hosts the marine pages and SWRCB hosts the freshwater pages. All materials include the recent 2023 data and are available in English and Spanish.

HAB-related Illness Workgroup updates

[California Cyanobacteria Harmful Alga Bloom](#) (CCHAB) Network meetings. CCHAB meetings are co-chaired by the Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians Environmental Protection Department head, Sarah Ryan, and are open to representatives of other California Tribal communities.

3. Fish Consumption Advisories

OEHHA's fish advisories provide "safe eating guidelines" that recommend how often people can safely eat fish caught from California water bodies. They are based on sampling results for persistent chemicals in common fish species that people catch and eat from California water bodies.

The advisories are available at <https://oehha.ca.gov/fish/advisories>.

New Advisories

The development of new fish consumption advisories is underway, with several advisories currently in the review process. These advisories are expected to be released soon, providing updated guidelines for safe fish consumption.

Upcoming Advisories

Lower Putah Creek and Lake Solano, and Lake Barryessa are scheduled to be released in September. QR codes will be incorporated into the advisory posters to enhance accessibility to information.

Science for Communities Workshop

The Delta Stewardship Council sponsored the [Science for Communities Workshop](#) at San Joaquin Delta College on July 12th. An OEHHA representative participated in a panel discussion titled, “Safe Fish Consumption” with partners from the CA Indian Alliance, (CIEA), the State Water Resources Control Boards, CSU-Water, SanaRem, and Stanford University. Updates to CIEA’s [“Eating Fish Safely”](#) pamphlet were presented at the panel discussion. These updates were developed during a series of meetings held prior to the workshop.

The workshop was designed to allow community and Tribal members an opportunity to engage directly with experts on the topics of interest relating to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. For more details on the workshop and related activities, please refer to the [event agenda](#).

OEHHA also participates in the following activities:

- Engages in the [Safe to Eat Workgroup \(STEW\)](#), which includes federal, state, regional, and local representatives, and provides guidance on fish tissue sampling efforts for both short-term data gaps and long-term monitoring priorities.
- Participates in the San Francisco Region Realignment which coordinates with community representatives, including Tribal representatives, to collect fish and shellfish of cultural and subsistence importance.
- Assists with the [Consumption Survey Questionnaire for San Francisco Bay Subsistence Fishers](#) to better understand fish consumption among people who feed themselves and families or friends on a regular basis.

OEHHA is considering strategies to proactively engage Tribes in the development of fish advisories by providing opportunities for involvement in data collection and sampling design. OEHHA is actively engaged with the development of the [Bioaccumulation Monitoring Training Series](#), which is focused specifically on Tribal communities. OEHHA staff will be presenting a training session in December covering the development of fish consumption advisories. The Fish Advisory team is also

exploring culturally appropriate presentation formats, such as videos and other media, to enhance understanding of fish advisories.

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 is continuing to collaborate with California Tribes.

Tribal Reports

OEHHA is planning to partner with several Tribes who will be contributing their first reports on how they have been impacted by climate change. OEHHA will also be inviting the original Tribal contributors to the 2022 report to update their Tribe-specific reports. These reports recognize the value of Tribal knowledges in broadening the understanding climate change and ways to address its impacts. To date, OEHHA has secured commitments from the Fernandefio Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, the Mono Lake Kootzaduka'a, and the Wiyot Tribes to contribute new reports; commitment from additional Tribes is pending.

Webinar and Outreach

As part of its *Indicators of Climate Change: Bridging Science and Action* webinar series, OEHHA has featured speakers who presented on climate change-related impacts on Tribes and Tribal actions relating to the following topics (1) wildfires and forest management, Frank Lake, US Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region Tribal liaison; (2) wildlife, Ben Saxon, Karuk Tribe; (3) oceans, Adam Canter, Wiyot Tribe; and (4) health impacts, Miguel Luna, Fernandefio Tataviam Band of Mission Indians. Among other goals, the webinar series aims to showcase state, local, community and/or Tribal efforts to address climate change impacts and illustrate how these actions are informed by science.

Climate Change Indicator staff continue to develop and strengthen working relationships with Tribes by participating in Tribal events and conferences that address Tribal issues. Examples include the Tule Boat Festival and the Clear Lake Integrated Science Symposium.

Tribal video series

California Tribes and Climate Change: Voices from the Frontlines

OEHHA is producing a series of videos in which Tribes tell their own climate change stories. Through these videos, OEHHA aims to help amplify Tribal voices and recognize the value of indigenous knowledge around climate change issues. OEHHA has a contract with California State University Sacramento for filming/video production.

The first video, featuring the Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians and the Middletown Rancheria, premiered in January 2024 at a symposium hosted by OEHHA. The video is

available from [OEHHA's Youtube channel](#). The second video, featuring the members of the Big Pine Tribe of the Owens Valley and the Bishop Paiute Tribes, is expected to be released before the end of the year. OEHHA is in the process of securing commitment from a Tribe to be featured in the third and final video.

5. Pesticide-Related Illnesses

OEHHA continues to offer medical education on pesticide exposure illness to health professionals and to offer outreach and resources to practitioners including those working with Tribes. OEHHA continues to attend various Tribal events such as the Tule boat festival (June 2024) to build relationships with Tribal members and raise awareness on pesticide issues. OEHHA also works with Sacramento State University and in collaboration with the Tribal Pesticide Work Group to create a toolkit on pesticide illness that tribal communities will be able to customize and offer to the health professionals that serve them.

Educational Materials

OEHHA worked with Jacky Calanchini, a Tribal artist, and Meyo Merrufo from the Tribal Pesticide Work Group to create a poster highlighting Tribal lifeways and potential pesticide exposure. OEHHA continues to work on a video with testimonials from Tribal members on Tribal specific pesticide exposures, illnesses, and prevention. These materials will be used as part of the health education toolkit for Tribes.

Region 9 Conference Proposal

A proposal for Think Tank session was submitted to the Tribal EPA Region 9 conference in October. If accepted, this think-tank session will showcase the work of the Pesticide Tribal Project, including the video and poster and will ask for feedback from attendees on the toolkit concept and content.

6. Contaminated Site Assessments

OEHHA is near completion of a draft risk evaluation of the potential health impacts to the Cahto Tribe of contaminants found at the Laytonville Rancheria. The risk evaluation was prompted by long-standing concerns expressed by Rancheria residents about contamination from the nearby landfill. The risk evaluation is under final review by OEHHA and CalEPA.

7. Community Science Model

OEHHA and CARB are working with community partners and Tribes to develop guidance on community science for CalEPA. Current work is focused on developing guidelines on addressing data sovereignty.

8. 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)

- Clear Lake Tule Boat Festival (OEHHA participated by bringing educational information on our pesticides, fish advisories, and other programs.)