

San Bernardino Regional Public Workshop on the Draft California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen)

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The second regional workshop in San Bernardino attracted about 27 participants that included local residents and business and government representatives. Members of the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice, California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, San Bernardino County Farm Bureau and representatives from the offices of State Senator Bob Dutton and State Assemblyman Mike Morrell were in attendance. Also present were representatives from the Retail Development Advisors and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company.

Staff sought comments and suggestions related to the overall approach taken and specifically on proposed indicators, data sources, and the methodology. Numerous comments were made at the workshop and are grouped and described below. Comments made more than once were consolidated and placed in the most appropriate category.

Methods/General:

- Proximity to hazards is a major factor
- Should use most up-to-date data
- The interpreters have been wonderful, thank you for having them
- People's complaints should not be used to determine the range of scores
- Burdened communities need impacts to be mitigated
- Coachella Valley has significant cumulative impact concerns, would like to see focus on this region
- It seems speculative how the data is handled. When I talk to people I get information about the problem and get a database about the problem. I can get information for all of the houses; I have a database and a good sense of the problem in the communities
- By doubling the exposure score range, you are telling the private sector that you are doubling the impact. There is a misconception about what it means
- Level of pollution does not equal level of exposure
- Loma Linda is an example of community that experiences high pollution, but is not socioeconomically vulnerable
- Why was the range of scores disproportionately weighted for exposures? Doesn't this distort the outcome?
- Laws in existence are not being enforced
- LA smog comes in during the day; clear at 5 a.m. (not a problem of local origin)

- Looking under the lamppost metaphor (You're only looking at the problem from the data that you have, not the data that are important)
- EPA is a series of regulations (screening tool is inevitably going to become a regulation)
- Greenhouse gas reduction efforts are very costly and are only going to result in a tiny fraction of CO₂; people are the biggest source; retrofitting diesel engines was a waste of money
- Some areas historically zoned for industrial purposes and later people moved there
- Incentivize good behavior on part of businesses
- Environmental effects and exposures should be combined into a "level of pollution" measure (Pollution sources)
- How can we know rural communities are accurately represented?
- How is data gathered from communities that are difficult to reach?
- Find something to help, not hurt; job opportunities
- Should focus on driving up socioeconomic factors
- Can't get a clear picture; health outcomes are the best way to decide; Public Health should be the top indicator
- There are other effects on health, such as lower access to medical care
- Health education is important
- Fresh food and recreation are important
- Need collection of better data
- Must take into account that some information in the databases is not correct
- Loma Linda health study being published soon (asthma)
- Historical factors in communities are important; how they have changed over time; what was there before
- Socioeconomic vulnerability plays a role in the relationship between exposure and health -- agreement with the method
- The method is too driven by vulnerability and not pollution
- Averaging underrepresents the worst case scenarios for any one indicator
- Are the right questions being asked?
- Cannot understand rationale for chosen indicators and methodology

Potential for negative effects on businesses and communities:

- Targeting highly impacted communities. In the real world impact assessment will cost \$1 to 2 million more, but it's not clear what gains there are from doing it.
- Private capital sector cannot afford this
- Tool will create lawsuits when tied to CEQA

- Tool will harm communities--red-lining, impairing private sector
- Should bring private sector in, will enable people to afford better healthcare
- Businesses are leaving California already
- Need good paying jobs; this effort will make businesses leave; redlining will happen
- If industries leave, jobs leave
- If tied to regulations, could be problematic
- Will hurt business trying to grow there
- Guidelines will be a barrier to economic development, especially for the private side

Comparison to Environmental Justice Screening Method (EJSM):

- EJSM assesses diesel emissions and concentrations
- Tool not ready now, EJSM tested and ready to use now
- Wasting time developing this tool and not using EJSM

Geographic Scale and Mapping:

- ZIP code is too large, prefer census tract
- Why were some areas eliminated (non-census ZIP areas in Coachella Valley for example)?
- What are the differences between the census ZIP and postal ZIP codes?
- ZIP Code scale is small enough
- How do you prepare the polygons?
- ZIP codes are strange shapes and can be disconnected, this means different hazards in different areas of the ZIP
- Want to see Coachella area maps
- How can maps be translated to lay terms?
- Should be able to compare a highly impacted area to their regional impacts
- A statewide tool is problematic

Exposures:

- Diesel emissions should be included
- The rail yard should be included
- Idling trucks are should be included
- Include emissions from trains (intermodal station), data is not complete without it
- Ground contamination from trains should be included

- Pesticide uses are controlled and regulated; I have more concern about cleanup sites
- Dust from the train station is a concern
- Pesticide use does equal exposure
- Agricultural pesticide use is applied all year. Do we want to keep putting pesticides out there? That's all we have in Thermal.
- Question about the weighting--as long as we have an application of pesticides, maybe it's acceptable
- We don't want pesticides in the house; we have poverty and a lack of education on pesticide use
- Concerns over self-reported data, how accurate is it?
- Review ARB's health risk assessment from 2005 for more information on rail and diesel pollution
- Exposures are really potential exposures
- Exposure data cannot be linked to health data or else we would see higher cancer in whole SB area
- Use does not equate to a problem (regarding Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) data and pesticides)
- TRI database not updated

Public Health Effects:

- Need to control for variables such as diet, stress, prenatal care
- Should say 'health indicators' instead of 'health effects'
- Need definitions of terms for health effects
- Lower socioeconomic status communities do not use the emergency room for asthma
- Consider indoor air
- This community has high levels of spontaneous abortions
- This community has high levels of ischemic poisoning
- Consider exposure to aerosol gases-diesel
- Consider exposure to nanoparticles and ultra-fine particles
- Consider a person's workplace environment
- Consider genetic predisposition for certain health problems
- Consider lack of resources like health care
- A lot of clinics charge people and don't have interpreters
- Consider reproductive health impacts
- Consider neurological effects like autism, down syndrome
- Consider respiratory effects like COPD, bronchitis

- Heart disease indicator needs to be improved
- Asthma indicator needs to be improved

Environmental Effects:

- Sites causing air pollution should be in Environmental Effects component
- From field validation, some data incorrect (sites there/not there)

Socioeconomic Factors and Sensitive Populations:

- Consider linguistic isolation
- Socioeconomic factors drive vulnerability
- How does race factor into sensitivity?
- Industries target low income areas
- Other SES factors are more important than race
- Should not be dividing population into groups
- SES factors are a driver of pollution susceptibility
- People living in poverty may be unable to avoid risks
- Census tracts are related to low-income housing development
- Factor in food consumption and its effects on public health, poorer people eat lower quality food
- Poverty can affect a person's health in many ways
- These age maps seem incorrect
- Consider life expectancy
- Consider access to transportation
- Look at infrastructures of water, sewer, etc.
- Contamination of wells
- Consider housing quality
- Consider quality of life: noise pollution, blight, safety concerns

Use of Tool:

- Fear that tool may be incorporated into general plans
- Fear that tool can be tied to CEQA
- Don't know how it is going to be used
- Use to get regulated land use, better planning
- Don't know how to mitigate

- Fear that it will drive away private capital
- Job creators are essential to communities (fear tool will drive away)
- Hope that final tool will accurately measure health indicators
- Concerns over misuse for assessment/planning
- Money used for maps should be used to reduce regulations
- Concern over redlining
- Tool is a good idea- health conditions of communities are not improving
- Good idea to map
- A lack of regulation is decreasing community health
- Job creation in EJ communities is not all positive for the community
- Missing the point of the tool: to be good
- Tool can be useful in increasing good quality jobs
- Tool can help increase enforcement where it is currently lacking
- These type of studies are important for our children
- Environmental issues are racial- importance of tool
- Tool will be beneficial to help people understand what is going on in this/other EJ communities
- Ground-truthing is also important
- People who live in the community are there to help and improve the tool