

## **Oakland Regional Public Workshop on the Draft California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen)**

Thursday, September 6, 2012

Ira Jinkins Recreation Center, Oakland, CA 94603

The fifth regional workshop in Oakland attracted about 22 participants that included local residents and business and government representatives. Members of the Asian Pacific Environmental Network, the California Council for Environmental and Economic Balance, and the Bay Area Environmental Health Network attended, as well as some employees from a local scrap metal recycling facility. Representatives from the California Air Resources Board and the San Diego Association of Governments were also present.

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:

- What is the justification for weighting?
- Why are all indicators for exposures weighted more than those for other components when they are of unequal data quality? This puts undue emphasis on some and devalues others
- Consider weighting indicators individually instead of using categories
- What mobile sources of pollution are captured?
- Should validate methodology by picking a small geographic area, running the method and correlating with health outcomes
- Could back calculate: rank individual indicators based on quality, then set weights based on this ranking
- Curious about how results compare to those of other analyses, e.g. the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD)?
- Consider including Public Health Effects indicators under Sensitive Populations
- Should recruit community members for ground-truthing
- Multiplying factors is confusing
- Why different ranges for indicators?
- To what extent does the 1-3 range for population characteristics factor into the total score?

- Does it make sense if two communities both score maximum for pollution burden but then differ 40 vs. 120 given the minimum and maximum scores, respectively, for population characteristics?
- Might a score lead a community to say "we don't want any more poor people"?
- Emphasis should be to identify which communities need resources
- With a bill to divert 50% of Carl Moyer funds to low income communities, why do we need this tool?
- The more information we have the better
- Should consider incorporating population density into the model
- Pollution burden should drive the final score
- Population characteristics reflect real experience that people have; worth keeping
- Adopt EJSM
- What about using data not available statewide?
- Why is Livermore/Tracy looking more burdened than the East Bay? Adjustments might be needed
- Public Health Effects being placed under pollution burden suggests a relationship
- There is a need for ground-truthing- for example some studies show areas like Palo Alto as low-income because they're counting students
- Proximity to hazards should be factored in
- Could use radius from residence to facilities to get at proximity
- As a whole Bay Area is a lot lighter

#### Geographic scale/Mapping:

- In ZIPs vs. census tracts: some measures may play out differently
- Census tracts are more homogenous than ZIPs
- The fact that statewide screening results show Bay Area not as highly impacted indicates need for smaller scale analysis or need to show raw scores instead
- Is the method workable at a smaller scale?
- Although ZIPs are familiar to general public, it doesn't really resonate and many don't know where boundaries are
- Look at finer grain analysis; maybe just do in hot spots not statewide
- Should indicate where the air monitors are on the maps
- Why doesn't the Bay Area map include the 9 counties?
- How do you account for the different sizes of ZIP codes?
- Getting the data in the model down to the ZIP code level is wonderful

- Is there a reason the regional map is displayed the way it is and not in the traditional map displaying the 9-county Bay Area?
- What was the rationale for using a vector analysis in GIS and not a Raster analysis?
- Consider regional ranking instead of statewide scoring, e.g. by air basin, by counties, etc.

Exposures:

- Concern about different quality of data: Pesticide Use Report (PUR) not as reliable as ozone monitoring
- San Leandro is impacted by freeways, train, airport and is the same ZIP as Oakland- should use a smaller geographic scale
- There are distribution centers close to the airports that contribute to increased pollution
- ZIP codes in East Oakland cross the freeways and aren't representative
- Should look at meteorology, especially important when considering jet fuel impacts
- Consider diesel emissions. Very important to capture in the Bay Area
- Should population density be factored in? Should prioritize areas that have high pollution AND large population
- The traffic indicator does not capture type of traffic, e.g. diesel trucks
- In response to incorporating truck traffic, should consider that diesel retrofits are occurring, so counts alone are not indicative of pollution
- Location of air monitors is not capturing local pollution (e.g. the closest monitor is on Interstate-580 doesn't have to do with Interstate-880)
- Wood smoke may be driving the PM 2.5 indicator
- Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) database does not include small sources
- Are small businesses correlated with large facilities in TRI? In absence of data for small sources, understanding if there is correlation may help
- Should include ports, airports, distribution centers, trains
- Should factor in noise pollution
- Traffic should be weighted
- Are indicators weighted equally in this component?
- Can backup generators be included?
- Pesticide use data is not the same as exposure data
- TRI data is not the same as exposure data
- Use of more indicators is better than less
- Who reports urban use for pesticides?
- When do TRI updates happen? The data is usually several years out of date
- TRI is based off of use and this data does not reflect actual exposures to the community

- What about a well-run facility, that information should factor into the TRI indicator
- Are accidental releases captured in the data?
- The presence alone of a facility may pose a potential hazard and is reason for why it needs to be included
- Should consider best management practices in the TRI indicator, response agencies may provide good information
- This component has limited coverage of actual exposures- there are many more things that cause pollution in communities, like truck traffic
- Could use TRI releases to water only
- Should include NATA data
- Should include land use data at the level of EJSM

#### Public Health Effects:

- All cancer mortality is too broad; environmental causality differs for different sites
- Incidence may be better indicator than mortality for both cancer and heart disease; data available at ZIP level
- For heart disease, should look at ZIP where a person lived the longest, not where they died
- Would be interesting to check on low birth weight infants and track their health as they grow
- There are peaks in health issues after incidents like the Chevron refinery accident
- Should be looking at incidence; the data is available
- Should narrow the cancer indicator to specific cancers that are tightly linked to environmental factors
- Should consider life expectancy. Alameda County Health Department has a presentation on how to predict this based on ZIP
- Makes sense to move Public Health Effects indicators to vulnerability. Heart disease is more linked to vulnerability
- I have mixed feelings about how data is amalgamated from indicators. Averaging waters things down
- Heart disease would not be reported if the person hadn't died
- ZIP codes can be very diverse in their health effects
- Boundary lines between areas in SF served by 2 hospitals vs. 11 hospitals are roughly consistent with the boundaries of public health effects shown on the map; green space is also mostly on the side with more hospitals
- Obesity and diabetes are indicators of vulnerability

- High rates of low birth weight and asthma resonate with where people work
- Why base asthma on ER visits instead of incidence? A lot of people with asthma don't go to the ER
- Loma Linda University study on health effects close to rail yards found cancer rates were lower as you got close to rail yard; suggests cancer is maybe too broad a factor
- Use of low birth weight is surprising; don't think the science is as certain for this as it is for other health effects
- The map indicates that low birth weight rates in Oakland are relatively high in the hills where there is no industry; there is a disconnect between effects and location
- A lot of these indicators are vulnerability not exposures
- Just because the map isn't showing low birth weight in some areas doesn't mean it's not happening in other areas
- There tends to be focus on smokestack industries for public health studies but other kinds of industries pollute the environment
- Is the idea here that the public health indicators are trying to pick up on exposures? This approach creates a lot of work as you need to weed out non-environmental factors
- Can't ground-truth whose cancers are caused by what exposures, but if this category is moved to vulnerability, you don't have to analyze in such detail
- There is not a good correlation between health effects and exposures; stronger correlation between health effects and socioeconomics
- These should be indicators of sensitivity- if you know a lot of people are dying of heart disease, they are more sensitive to pollution
- With asthma, there is a strong correlation between exposures and effects
- Could look at pharmacy use data for asthma; many people manage condition with medication

#### Environmental Effects:

- Certified, Completed, and No Further Action (NFA) sites should not receive any score. If they're signed off by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) as safe for reuse, then they pose no threat
- Want clarification on what is considered a "major generator" of solid waste/hazardous waste
- What efforts are being made to rehabilitate old abandoned cleanup sites?
- Every industrial site owner is concerned about water bodies especially because of the current reformulation of wastewater run-off regulations that is being conducted by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). Will these new regulations be too stringent?

- Major generators of hazardous waste take precautions that the waste is properly being disposed of. If there is a well-managed hazardous waste generator posing zero threat to the community, how is that impacting the Environmental Effects component?
- How often are the data being input to the model being updated? What if remediation work is being done on a site?
- I'm concerned about using the right data to reflect which pollutants will really harm us. For example, just living by the Bay doesn't mean it will harm you, as long as you aren't fishing or swimming in it
- Seems that you are focusing on highly regulated hazardous waste sites, and not on solid waste sites, which are likely to be more of a health concern
- Are there plans to remediate any of the waste sites? It's great to identify where these sites are... but now what?
- SB 535, a recently passed cap-and-trade-related bill, could help identify what geographic regions to direct funds to
- Should consider incorporating unemployment rates into the model; this may get at accounting for how environmental pollutants affect economic development
- There should be weighting of the brownfield sites that correlates to the actual health hazard the sites pose
- There should be more transparency and explanation for what goes into the weighting and generating numbers used in the model
- Surprised that East Alameda and Contra Costa counties are as dark as they are and that Fremont looks cleaner than expected
- Are certain areas by the Bay dark because they border the Bay and the Bay is listed as an impaired water body?
- A person living 2 miles away from an impaired water body will likely be more at risk than someone living 5 miles away- proximity should be accounted for in the model
- Is there any double-counting reflected in the map (i.e. a facility counted as both a clean-up site AND a leaking storage tank)?
- Are the indicators supposed to be indirect indicators of exposure?
- When was the data for the model obtained; how "old" is it?
- If a site has been cleaned up, is it included on the map?
- Want clarification on whether a site that has been cleaned up is designated a score of 1 or zero
- There is nothing in this model capturing land use; this information could go into Environmental Effects possibly

### Socioeconomic Factors and Sensitive Populations:

- Consider linguistic isolation; people who are linguistically isolated have less access to information about protecting themselves from everyday hazards and emergencies
- Consider access to health insurance
- Why income and poverty together? Is there double-counting? Why not just income?
- How are undocumented people accounted for in Census and American Community Survey? Could be missing a ton of data on these communities
- Undocumented people may not be going to clinics/hospitals
- There should be ground-truthing to verify data- EJSM does it
- There is a relationship between race/ethnicity and language barriers
- Differing health effects based on race make it seem like it's biological rather than cumulative; need more explanation here
- Should move race/ethnicity to sensitive populations
- Component does seem to let most burdened communities pop up
- Should look at voter turnout
- Should consider immigration information
- Should consider disabled population
- Should use prevalence of youth (not just <5 years of age)
- Could consider length of time living in one place
- Look at violence/crime, safety, perception of crime
- Cost of living is not included. Can it be added?
- Rental rates matter. This should be added in
- Should look at housing prices
- Should look at transportation affordability/availability data
- Should consider people who don't have health care
- Consider location of schools, day care centers, hospitals. How to add them in?

### Use of Tool:

- Concern about new businesses that have a history of creating environmental concerns in other locations coming to an area that is poorly scored with the tool. How do we get local government to use the tool to inform decisions such as this?
- How will the data and numbers being used in this model ultimately impact quality of life for a given community?
- How will funds/projects be allocated when there is great disparity within a ZIP?
- In previous environmental work, lots of areas that need help don't get it, this could provide opportunity to give funding to new areas

- Use to prioritize cap and trade money
- Use for investment in environmental justice communities (SB 535)
- Use for regional planning, investment, transportation opportunities
- Regional and local agencies can give incentives to improve communities
- Invest in red zones to help them become green zones
- Use to inform policy and regulations and to increase/prioritize enforcement
- Can use for siting and permitting of new businesses
- Can inform community rights to know and increase access to resources
- Can be used to create businesses, such as green/clean energy investments
- Use as a source of power over local regulations
- Can empower permitting processes to say no
- Can look at correlations between exposures, health effects, and environmental effects
- Make sure that tool does not hurt communities if used for siting and housing
- Communities might not want to lower their score by allowing affordable housing- could harm communities over all
- Concern for misuse of tool if incorporated into CEQA
- Use to identify areas that need attention
- Can help fund programs; bottom-up approach for grant programs
- Regarding misuse: it's better to know what's really going on in these communities; specificity is better
- There is an opportunity to include in CEQA and use responsibly
- There should be an advisory group for implementation of the tool that is representative of California