

## **Sacramento Public Workshop on the Draft California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen), Version 2.0**

Thursday, May 1, 2014

Coastal Hearing Room, Cal/EPA Headquarters Building, Sacramento, California 94814

The first regional workshop in Sacramento focused on the updates to CalEnviroScreen since version 1.1. It attracted a group of about 30 participants that included government representatives, environmental consultants, industry representatives, and journalists.

Staff sought comments and suggestions related to the overall approach taken and specifically on proposed new indicator additions and updated methodology. Numerous comments and questions were noted 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:

- Why are Environmental Effects indicators half-weighted?
- Why are there no scores for certain communities?
- It is a very attractive tool to identify resources for EJ communities of concern.
- Why isn't pollution burden weighted more than population characteristics?
- What changes in the results occurred between versions 1.1 and 2.0?
- Are there any pollution burden indicators that were created specifically for SB535?
- Develop a way to deal with the tails of distribution to give tool more credibility.
- To what extent do high scores follow freeways?
- How does money go to EJ small grants?
- It seems as if all the funds will go to LA and the central valley.
- Distinguish between CES score and impact in the report. Media think they are the same.
- Is someone watching how the tool is being picked up and used?
- US EPA just released their EnviroAtlas tool--it has better water quality data than CES but CES has better environmental effects data.
- If purpose of tool is to direct investment into communities, it would help to know what communities need--more jobs vs. better transportation to where jobs are.
- Glad CES 2.0 is using census tracts.
- Scoring should be as accurate as possible to avoid data gaps. You don't want communities that need it to not get funding.
- How often will data be updated?

#### Use of the Tool:

- Some CalEPA boards and departments are using CES for enforcement even though that was not an intended use.
- How is the Strategic Growth Council using tool and where does its money come from?
- BAAQMD opposes CES for distribution of air money from state because it introduces factors that are not indicators of air pollution.
- Make it clear that the tool should not be used to target enforcement at facilities.
- Some entities are using CalEnviroScreen to require additional mitigations by businesses.
- Since this tool isn't to be used for CEQA, the overlap of poverty and unemployment isn't a huge concern.

#### Exposures and Environmental Effects:

- Is it true that EPA advised that RSEI not suitable for use when it was evaluated for CES 1.0? What has changed?
- Why are ozone concentrations under 8-hour ozone standard assigned zero values, but there is no cut-off for zeroes for other air contaminants?
- Percentiles smooth the data so outliers are hidden. Recommend taking absolute value of the score rather than percentile and give extra weight to outliers.
- Agree with the move to the CA ozone standard rather than the Federal standard
- Pesticide use is heavily weighted toward agricultural areas. Consider including urban and household pesticide use.
- Clarify the difference between PM2.5 and Diesel PM.
- RSEI and Ozone both rely on similar modeling which may yield errors.
- CalRecycle is developing polygons for solid waste landfills and will share them with us.
- Concern about double counting between Impaired Water Bodies and Cleanup Sites or Cleanup Sites and Drinking Water.
- Maybe double counting is okay because you can be exposed multiple ways.
- Some water body impairments don't affect health, e.g., sediments.
- Because of funding and NIMBY, facilities have to go in certain places.
- Large solid waste landfills should be assessed differently from composting facilities, especially if properly managed.
- Improvements to sites should be reflected in score.
- Facilities that are "green" and better for the environment should be weighted lower.
- What counts as a cleanup site?

#### Drinking water indicator:

- Does addition of water increase scores in the Central Valley?
- People on private wells don't show up in the indicator.
- How were treated water, untreated water and groundwater combined, given the differences in the reliability of the datasets?
- Why did we not use the compliance level in developing the indicator?
- How did the inclusion of drinking water from 1.1 to 2.0 change the high scoring tracts?
- Some communities fall within a drinking water service boundary but aren't being served by that provider.
- When you aggregate by census tract, small communities with drinking water problems will be diluted.
- Places with the least data may have the most problems. How was this addressed?
- What happens to the data when you take population-weighting out?
- Why is coliform weighted differently from other contaminants?
- Look at the coliform data in your sensitivity analysis. The dairy industry has dealt with environmental footprint issues
- Because CalEnviroScreen scores are relative, not absolute, improvements in drinking water quality may not change the rank of a census tract.
- Given the current business climate, how will an area with poor water quality attract new businesses?

#### Socioeconomic Factors and Sensitive Populations:

- Is there any analysis of correlation between unemployment and poverty?
- 2x federal poverty level may not be adequate. Cost of living is an issue.
- Percentage of AMI (area median income) may be better than poverty because it adjusts for cost of living differences.
- Different qualifications for low-income housing in different areas could be factored into the poverty indicator.
- Explain on maps and in report what 2500 grams is in pounds.
- Population Characteristics information seems accurate for West Sacramento.
- Explain in simple terms how Population Characteristics affect vulnerability to pollutants.
- The new unemployment indicator is good but should indicate who is left out.
- Look at seasonal differences in employment.
- The unemployment indicator represents another way in which people don't have control over how they deal with exposure to pollutants.

- Consider the employment opportunities in certain areas and whether they match the population needing jobs.
- Consider transportation options - this affects employment options.
- Why are 5-year averages used in census-related indicators?
- Are there other data sources beside the US Census that discuss trends in unemployment?
- The American Community Survey is better than data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics because it includes undocumented workers.
- Control for differences in the ways people use emergency services for asthma.
- Augment the asthma indicator by a measure of access to clinics.
- Weight poverty more heavily than the other indicators in this component.
- Include an indicator for housing quality that looks at unhealthy housing, crowding, plumbing issues, etc.
- Find another economic indicator, such as recent investment or business turnover.
- If the tool determines who gets affordable housing money, there should be an indicator related to housing.
- Include parcel data on real estate values, zoning, etc., available free from the state Department of Technology.
- Look at whether people's jobs are where they live.

#### Online Mapping Tool:

- Provide a Spanish interface.
- Provide maps for each indicator.
- Allow users to compare indicators side by side.
- Make the popups moveable.
- Allow printing of the popup box and the legend.
- Enable the share feature to allow sharing of a link to a location.
- Provide a link from the Excel file to a census tract on the online map.