

Fresno Public Workshop on the draft CalEnviroScreen 3.0

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The seventh regional workshop on the CalEnviroScreen 3.0 draft in Fresno was an opportunity for the public to learn about updates to the tool and provide comments on these updates. The workshop attracted over 30 participants from community organizations, local and state government, as well as many residents.

Staff sought comments and suggestions related to the four major components of CalEnviroScreen—exposures, environmental effects, sensitive populations and socioeconomic factors. Comments from workshop participants are listed below. Similar or related comments were consolidated and placed in the most appropriate category.

General comments

- The multiplication of Pollution Burden and Population Characteristics scores is causing a problem and reduces the impact of population score.
- There should be trainings on CalEnviroScreen offered after the tool is finalized.
- Please provide information by ZIP code as well to make the tool easier to understand.
- Lanare/Riverdale areas would be good for ground-truth evaluation.
- The tool should distinguish more clearly between “threats” and “known contamination.”

New Indicator Ideas

- Include dairies/animal feeding operations in environmental effects:
 - Are unlined ponds associated with dairies included?
 - Dairies result in groundwater contamination, they generate waste, and they have impacts to air quality.
 - Dairies contaminate water and cows produce pollution. They should be imposed with stricter regulation, higher fines.
 - Holding ponds at dairies contribute to impacts.
 - Impacts from poultry farms. Should be considered due to smells, insecticides. Many are 24-hour operations.
 - Methane.
- Built environment
 - Some communities have no access to computers, no sidewalks, no parks, and are near freeways.
- Agricultural pollution.
- Digging new wells in the unincorporated area of Lemoore.
- Wildfires.
- Life expectancy.

- Pesticide odor.
- Formaldehyde.
- Methyl ethylene chloride.
- PM10 (e.g., agricultural burning, these operations kick-up dust and fires).
- Utilities/ housing:
 - Consider rates in bill, garbage (utilities)
 - How can you include an indicator for areas without basic amenities?
 - Homes with electrical problems.
 - How are trailer homes considered? How about crowding issue and people living in garages?
 - Include condition of homes, vacancy rates.
 - In Lanare, no lights, lack of trash service or sewage connection leading to contamination of fields, lack of drinking water source, no police, etc.
 - In Lanare, residents face impacts from having only septic tanks, which are pumped into fields. Residents pay more than \$600/year and don't have sewer service or street lights.
 - Develop and include an amenities index.
 - Availability of housing needs to be considered.
- Include access to health care, transportation, libraries, open/green space.
- Include indicators of migrant populations and homeless people and their impact on an area.
- Areas where roads are not safe – lack of sidewalks, child safety.
- Crime rate should be considered
- School lunch program can be a good surrogate for kids and vulnerability.
- Health insurance is a good indicator of vulnerability.
- Life expectancy.
- Cancer.

Exposures

- Does the tool have the ability to track the more threatening contaminants versus others?
- There needs to be an overlay where you can see safe drinking water. The drinking water in North Fresno is toxic because of lead contamination (lead in the corroding distribution pipes).

Environmental Effects

- Are irrigation canals eligible to be considered impaired in the Impaired Waters indicator? These canals in the Fresno area are contaminated.
- Are percolation ponds included in impaired waterbodies?
- Contamination from lead pipes in the North East side of Fresno.

- Impaired Waters are not comparable to Hazardous Waste so the indicators should not be weighted equally.
- Gravel facilities contribute to impacts. Nearby populations experience asthma and other illnesses.
- There are numerous truck parking areas where oil leaks into the ground in rural areas. Some in the city limits. Fueling occurs, too.
- Drilling wells for “new water” raises concerns if the water is clean or not?

Sensitive populations

- Cardiovascular disease indicator
 - Stroke should be considered in cardiovascular disease. In Madera, a large percentage of people who had cardiovascular disease also had strokes.
- Removal of age indicator
 - Regarding the dropping of the age indicator, we mapped the 2.0 data. Census tracts with the highest pollution burdens had the highest percentage of kids. I understand the argument for dropping the elderly but I’m not sure I get it for kids. There should be a children’s indicator.
- ZIP codes vs census tracts for health data
 - For the asthma and cardiovascular indicators, concerned about the accuracy of converting the data from ZIP codes to census tracts. There are four census tracts in mid-Fresno with the highest asthma rates in the state, and surrounding ZIP codes have much lower rates. Concern that the modeling dilutes the asthma and cardiovascular incidences and actually underestimates the asthma and cardiovascular rates.
- Discussion on using childhood asthma rates instead of all asthma rates
 - In the San Joaquin Valley, babies have the highest rates of asthma-related hospital admissions. As people get older, what you’re really measuring is access to the health care system. With babies, you’re looking more at actual asthma rates. I would prefer that the indicator be asthma rates for those under five years of age.
 - Another participant disagrees with the above comment. I see a lot of asthma throughout the population, it should all be counted.
- Emergency Departments (EDs) visits do not capture everybody.
 - Big data gap.
 - Rural clinics have shut down, and undocumented people don’t have health insurance, so they don’t seek treatment.
 - The asthma and cardiovascular indicators leave out rural communities. Is there a better way to account for that? Maybe you can measure asthma and cardiovascular-related visits to community clinics, or other kinds of visits.
 - The use of ED visits in the asthma and cardiovascular indicators is also problematic. People with private health insurance are much more likely than those with public insurance to be admitted into a hospital. Would prefer use of

hospital data rather than ED visits and feels hospital data is more accurate. People with private insurance will call their doctor and get admitted to the hospital without going to the ER, so our indicators miss them.

- Interest in why the indicator of low birthweight was chosen over pre-term births.
- Categorize asthma as a pollution factor and not like a health factor.
- Valley fever contributes to population vulnerability.

Socioeconomic Factors

- Rent adjusted income does not consider occupancy, number of people or crowding – a major issue in Fresno area.
- Percentage of renters should be considered.
- Poverty:
 - Two times the federal poverty level is not correct. There are areas where rents are high compared to poverty level and it is not being captured with income comparison at twice the federal poverty level.
 - Include extreme poverty in addition.