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**CalEPA and OEHHA Finalize Major Update to  
Environmental Health Screening Tool**  
*CalEnviroScreen 3.0 to help guide investment in disadvantaged  
communities across the state*

SACRAMENTO – State environmental officials today released an [updated version](#) of California’s groundbreaking environmental health screening tool, CalEnviroScreen 3.0.

Reflecting extensive public input, the science-based tool is used to help implement a variety of state programs aimed at reducing pollution and providing a healthier environment in California’s most disadvantaged communities. Among its applications is in targeting communities for investments with state cap-and-trade funds to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

“CalEnviroScreen helps us prioritize our efforts to revitalize disadvantaged communities, whether it’s through investing cap-and-trade auction proceeds or by improving compliance with environmental laws,” said CalEPA Secretary Matthew Rodriguez. “The latest update demonstrates our determination to continue refining this critical tool and advancing environmental justice.”

As of March 2016, half of cap-and-trade investments statewide – \$469 million of \$912 million – went to projects providing benefits to disadvantaged communities identified using CalEnviroScreen, and more than a third of those investments – \$356 million – went to projects located within those communities.

“California is committed to continuing to lead the nation in its environmental policies, and the state’s commitment to environmental justice is no exception,” said California Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León, author of SB 535, which requires CalEPA to identify disadvantaged communities. “This groundbreaking scientific tool is key to getting investments to the communities that need them the most.”

CalEnviroScreen identifies the communities most burdened by multiple sources of pollution and that are especially vulnerable to its effects. The tool ranks each of the state’s 8,000 census tracts using data on 20 indicators of pollution, environmental quality, and socioeconomic and public health conditions.

“CalEnviroScreen exemplifies our commitment to providing policymakers with a science-based examination of pollution burden and population vulnerability across the state,” said OEHHA Director Dr. Lauren Zeise. “We are grateful to all of the Californians—many of whom are



residents of highly-burdened communities—who have participated in our workshops and aided in the development of this tool.”

In addition to informing the allocation of cap-and-trade funds, CalEnviroScreen is used by CalEPA and its boards, departments and office to target environmental justice grants, promote greater compliance with environmental laws, prioritize site-cleanup activities and identify opportunities for sustainable economic development in heavily impacted neighborhoods.

"Our efforts to confront climate change must fairly provide aid to communities disproportionately burdened by pollution," said Assemblymember Phil Ting of San Francisco. "Creating a tool to impartially identify them is tough but this update to CalEnviroScreen is a move in the right direction."

The new version of the tool adds two new indicators, which measure high housing costs and cardiovascular health. The housing-cost indicator shows the fraction of each census tract's low-income households that pay over half of their income for housing. The cardiovascular health indicator shows the rate of visits to emergency departments for treatment of heart attacks. Other refinements include several additional data sources:

- The groundwater threats indicator has added data on "produced water" ponds from oil and gas operations.
- The solid waste facilities indicator has added information on scrap metal recyclers.
- The drinking water contaminants indicator has added improved data on the areas served by drinking water systems, and three additional chemical contaminants.

Lastly, CalEnviroScreen 3.0 incorporates updated data for each of the indicators, as well as additional information on pollution originating in Mexico that affects California's border communities.

"California's border communities face unique environmental challenges that impact the health of its residents," said Luis Olmedo, Executive Director of Comite Civico Del Valle, Inc., an Imperial County non-profit organization. "By incorporating more information about pollution from both sides of the border CalEPA and OEHHA have improved CalEnviroScreen to more accurately reflect these challenges. We look forward to working with CalEPA to further refine its understanding of pollution near the border."

CalEnviroScreen 3.0 was developed through an extensive public review process. After releasing the initial draft in September, CalEPA and OEHHA held seven workshops across the state, and two webinars, to solicit public comment on the draft. OEHHA and CalEPA are committed to continuing to revise and refine the tool through an open and public process.

OEHHA released the first version of CalEnviroScreen in 2013, followed by the updated CalEnviroScreen 2.0 in 2014. It is the nation's first comprehensive, statewide environmental health screening tool.

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