

FORMAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Submitted to the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
Re: Draft CalEnviroScreen 5.0 — Public Comment Period (Closes April 1, 2026)

Submitted electronically via: <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/press-release/public-comment-period-calenviroscreen/get-involved>

Or by mail: CalEnviroScreen, OEHHA, 1001 I St., Floor 12, Sacramento, CA 95814

Submitted by:

Malik Washington

Co-Founder, Destination Freedom Media Group

Coordinator, Marie Harrison Community Foundation

Bayview-Hunters Point / Southeast San Francisco

Email: m.kwashington@sfmhcf.org | Phone: (719) 715-9592

Date of Submission: On or before April 1, 2026

THE “GREEN” RECLASSIFICATION OF HUNTERS POINT AND THE SYSTEMATIC
DOWNGRADING OF CALIFORNIA’S MOST BURDENED COMMUNITIES OF COLOR
IS SCIENTIFICALLY INDEFENSIBLE AND DEMANDS IMMEDIATE CORRECTION

PREFATORY STATEMENT

My name is Malik Washington. I am the Co-Founder of Destination Freedom Media Group and a Coordinator with the Marie Harrison Community Foundation — a co-lead partner with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) in the AB 617 Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP) process for Bayview Hunters Point / Southeast San Francisco. I submit this formal public comment on behalf of the Bayview-Hunters Point community. I state plainly and for the record: the draft CalEnviroScreen 5.0 “Green” reclassification of Hunters Point, San Francisco, is not supported by science, not supported by the data, and not consistent with the stated mission of OEHHA. Furthermore, the broader pattern of downgrading historically burdened communities of color across California must be publicly examined and answered.

PART ONE: THE CASE OF HUNTERS POINT — A “GREEN” CLASSIFICATION WITHOUT SCIENTIFIC BASIS

1.1 What CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Told Us

Under CalEnviroScreen 4.0, Bayview-Hunters Point ranked in the 90th percentile statewide for pollution burden. Individual indicators were unambiguous:

Diesel particulate matter: 99th percentile

Low birth weight: 99th percentile

Asthma prevalence: 98th percentile

Groundwater threats: 98th percentile

That is not a community trending toward “Green.” That is a community in crisis.

1.2 What Has Changed Since CalEnviroScreen 4.0?

The contamination burden at Hunters Point has not improved — it has worsened. In November 2024, the U.S. Navy confirmed the detection of airborne plutonium-239 — the same isotope used in nuclear weapons — in air-filter samples taken during asphalt-grinding operations at Parcel C of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. The measured concentration was approximately twice the federal action level. The Navy waited nearly eleven months before notifying the San Francisco Department of Public Health — a direct violation of its own workplan. Plutonium-239 has a half-life of more than 24,000 years; as little as one millionth of an ounce inhaled into the lung can cause cancer with statistical near-certainty. This is what is in the air at Hunters Point — and this community has been reclassified as “Green.”

1.3 What CalEnviroScreen 5.0 Cannot See — By Design

CalEnviroScreen does not measure radioactive contamination — not in version 3.0, 4.0, or the proposed 5.0. None of its 23 indicators captures the radiological contamination profile that defines the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard Superfund site. No indicator measures plutonium, strontium-90, thorium-232, radium-226, americium-241, cesium-137, cobalt-60, or europium-152 — the specific radioactive isotopes documented at Hunters Point by the Committee to Bridge the Gap (CBG). A tool that cannot measure the primary category of contamination at a federally designated radioactive Superfund site is not capable of rendering a credible verdict about that site. Applying it to produce a “Green” classification is the equivalent of testing for hearing loss to diagnose a broken leg.

1.4 The Magnitude of Contamination That “Green” Ignores

The independent scientific record is explicit and undisputed:

Cleanup standards are catastrophically weak: CBG Report 3 (2018) found plutonium-239 in soil allowed at levels 421 times higher than EPA remediation goals; thorium-232 at 974 times; radium-226 at 900 times; strontium-90 at 783 times; cobalt-60 in buildings at 3,925 times; uranium-235 in removable dust at 4,148 times EPA standards.

Cumulative cancer risk from Navy soil cleanup levels: 1 in every 380 people exposed. From building contamination: 1 in 37.

90% of the site has never been adequately tested: CBG Report 2 (2018) documented that approximately 90% of the property remains uncharacterized. Of the 10% tested, 90% of relevant radionuclides were not examined.

Contractor fraud: Tetra Tech EC fabricated or falsified radiological measurements at 90–97% of survey units. Two supervisors pleaded guilty to federal charges. In January 2025, Tetra Tech paid \$97 million to settle the federal fraud case.

The Navy covered contamination rather than removing it: CBG’s 2019 report From Cleanup to Coverup documented thin soil and asphalt covers over radioactive and toxic materials. The November 2024 plutonium detection was triggered by asphalt-grinding. Buried is not cleaned. Covered is not safe.

Human radiation experiments: A 2024 joint investigation by The Guardian and SF Public Press revealed that at least 1,073 people were subjected to radiation exposure through the Navy’s Cold War “Rad Lab” at Hunters Point.

PART TWO: THE BROADER PATTERN — SYSTEMATIC DOWNGRADING OF COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

2.1 Hunters Point Is Not Alone

OEHHA’s own environmental program manager confirmed to CalMatters in February 2026 that draft CalEnviroScreen 5.0 has resulted in the Bay Area and Central Valley decreasing in ranking, with approximately 20% of communities previously designated as disadvantaged losing that status. These are not random communities — they are disproportionately communities of color already designated under AB 617. When 20% of the most burdened communities in the state are simultaneously reclassified downward by a tool that omits cancer data, wildfire smoke data, radioactive contamination data, and climate vulnerability data, the question must be asked openly: What has actually changed in these communities? Or has the methodology simply changed in ways that make their burdens harder to see?

2.2 The Threat to AB 617 and the CERP

Assembly Bill 617 (Garcia, 2017) is California’s landmark community air protection law, directing localized protections to the neighborhoods most disproportionately impacted by pollution. Bayview-Hunters Point/Southeast San Francisco was formally designated as an AB 617 community in February 2023 — the most recently selected of the four Bay Area AB 617 communities. The Marie Harrison Community Foundation and Bayview Hunters Point Community Advocates, as co-lead partners with BAAQMD, have been actively developing the Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP) since January 2024. Before that CERP is complete, before the promised protections have been delivered — the foundational data tool that justified the AB 617 designation has reversed its verdict. That is not a data update. That is a betrayal. In pollution-burdened neighborhoods, delay is not neutral. Delay is exposure.

2.3 The Financial Stakes Are Not Abstract

Since 2015, California’s cap-and-invest program has directed at least \$5.8 billion to communities designated as disadvantaged under CalEnviroScreen. Under SB 535 and AB 1550, at least 25% of all cap-and-trade funds must be directed to these communities. Research from Johns Hopkins and Stanford Universities has estimated that the tool’s design choices implicitly determine the allocation of billions of dollars across California. The 20% of communities losing disadvantaged status under draft CalEnviroScreen 5.0 are not losing an abstract classification — they are losing access to billions of dollars in environmental remediation and public health investment. And they are not losing it because their environments became cleaner. They are losing it because the measuring instrument changed. That is not environmental justice. That is environmental abandonment.

PART THREE: THE METHODOLOGICAL FAILURES THAT PRODUCED THIS OUTCOME

3.1 The Tool Remains Blind to Radioactive Contamination

Despite five iterations, CalEnviroScreen 5.0 still contains zero indicators for radioactive contamination. For communities like Hunters Point — adjacent to a federally designated radiological Superfund site with documented weapons-grade plutonium in the air — this omission renders the tool categorically incapable of accurately measuring the community’s pollution burden. OEHHA should not finalize version 5.0 until this critical gap is addressed.

3.2 The Health Indicator Set Is Inadequate

CalEnviroScreen 5.0 tracks only emergency room visits for asthma, cardiovascular disease, low birth weight, and the newly added diabetes prevalence. Cancer, kidney disease, and radiation-related illness are absent. Research published in Nature (Huynh et al., 2024) found that approximately 16% of California’s census tracts could be ranked differently under alternative modeling choices — representing billions of dollars in redirected funding. The tool’s reliance on emergency room visits systematically undercounts communities where residents are less likely to seek emergency care. Every modeling choice, as Dr. Huynh observed, “implicitly decides who gets funding and who doesn’t.”

3.3 The Census Geography Change Creates Unaccountable Reclassification

The migration from 2010 to 2020 census tract boundaries may have fundamentally altered how pollution burdens are calculated without any actual change in the underlying pollution. Concentrated pollution hot spots can be diluted through boundary redrawing — a community constituting a single high-scoring tract under 2010 boundaries may be split across multiple lower-scoring tracts under 2020 boundaries. OEHHA has not provided a transparent, publicly accessible analysis of how this geography change specifically affected dramatically reclassified communities, including Hunters Point. That analysis is owed before any final version is published.

PART FOUR: FORMAL DEMANDS AND REQUIRED ACTIONS

The Marie Harrison Community Foundation, as a co-lead partner in the AB 617 CERP for Bayview-Hunters Point, and I, as a Coordinator with the Marie Harrison Community Foundation, formally demand the following actions from OEHHA:

1. Immediately suspend the “Green” classification of Hunters Point — and all associated census tracts pending a full scientific review accounting for: documented radioactive contamination at the Superfund site; fraudulent data underlying prior characterizations; the airborne plutonium-239 detection of November 2024; and the ongoing CERP process under AB 617.
2. Publish a full, transparent analysis — of how the shift from 2010 to 2020 census tract geographies specifically affected the scores of all communities that experienced significant downward reclassifications. This analysis must be publicly available before the comment period closes and before any final version is published.

3. Add a radioactive contamination indicator — to CalEnviroScreen before finalization of version 5.0. A screening tool that cannot detect the most dangerous category of contamination present in communities like Bayview-Hunters Point cannot fulfill its stated mandate. The omission must be corrected now — not in a future version with no committed timeline.
4. Add a cancer incidence indicator — to CalEnviroScreen before finalization of version 5.0. OEHHA has acknowledged this gap and promised to address it. Communities suffering from elevated cancer rates cannot wait for another version.
5. Establish an explicit safeguard — preventing AB 617-designated communities from losing Disadvantaged Community status without a community-facing, independently verified, plain-language explanation of precisely what pollution burden changed — and why.
6. Convene a public hearing — specifically on the reclassification of AB 617-designated communities under draft CalEnviroScreen 5.0, at which affected community members, independent scientists, and public health researchers can testify before the final version is released.
7. Provide a written response — to this comment, on the record, addressing each of the six demands above.

PART FIVE: THE QUESTION THAT MUST BE ANSWERED

2003 — The San Francisco Human Rights Commission formally documented environmental racism in Bayview-Hunters Point.

2004 — A comprehensive health assessment documented elevated cancer rates, abnormal asthma prevalence, and concentrated toxic exposure.

2018 — Federal prosecutors confirmed falsified radiological testing at the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard Superfund site.

2024 — The U.S. Navy confirmed airborne plutonium-239 in the community's air — and concealed it for nearly a year.

2025 — Tetra Tech paid \$97 million to settle fraud claims for falsifying site safety data.

2026 — The state's primary environmental screening tool reclassified this community as "Green."

If the evidence of contamination is mounting — if the fraud is documented and adjudicated — if the health data is worsening — if radioactive contamination is confirmed in the air — then what, precisely, is "Green" about Hunters Point?

That is not a rhetorical question. It is a governance question that demands a factual answer. The residents of Bayview-Hunters Point — who have lived beside this contamination, breathed this air, buried their neighbors, and watched their children develop asthma and cancer in numbers no other San Francisco community experiences — deserve to hear that answer spoken clearly, on the public record, before April 1, 2026. The legacy of Marie Harrison was never about protest

alone. It was about protection — of children, community, and dignity. This comment stands in that tradition.

Respectfully submitted,

Malik Washington

Co-Founder, Destination Freedom Media Group

Coordinator, Marie Harrison Community Foundation

Bayview-Hunters Point / Southeast San Francisco

Email: m.kwashington@sfmhcf.org | Phone: (719) 715-9592

SOURCE LIST

Supporting the factual claims made in the above Public Comment

I. COMMITTEE TO BRIDGE THE GAP — PRIMARY RESEARCH REPORTS

S-1. Committee to Bridge the Gap. CBG Statement on the Navy's Airborne Plutonium-239 Detection at Hunters Point. November 19, 2025.

<https://www.committeetobridgethegap.org/2025/11/19/cbg-statement-on-the-navys-airborne-plutonium-239-detection-at-hunters-point/>

S-2. Committee to Bridge the Gap. Report 2: The Great Majority of Hunters Point Sites Were Never Sampled for Radioactive Contamination. October 2018.

<https://www.committeetobridgethegap.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/HuntersPointReport2.pdf>

S-3. Committee to Bridge the Gap. Report 3: Hunters Point Shipyard Cleanup Used Outdated and Grossly Non-Protective Cleanup Standards. October 2018.

<https://www.committeetobridgethegap.org/hunters-point-reports/updated/Report%203%20-%20Final.pdf>

S-4. Committee to Bridge the Gap. From Cleanup to Coverup. August 2019.

<https://www.committeetobridgethegap.org/hunters-point-reports/FromCleanupToCoverup.pdf>

S-5. Committee to Bridge the Gap. Critique of the Navy's Draft Fifth Five-Year Review of Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. May 2024.

<https://www.committeetobridgethegap.org/2024/05/08/critique-by-cbg-of-the-navys-draft-fifth-five-year-review-of-hunters-point/>

S-6. Committee to Bridge the Gap. Hunters Point Naval Shipyard Reports Overview.

<https://www.committeetobridgethegap.org/hunters-point-reports1/>

II. CALENVIROSCREEN — OEHHA OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

S-7. OEHHA. Draft CalEnviroScreen 5.0 — Overview Document. January 28, 2026.

<https://oehha.ca.gov/sites/default/files/media/2026-01/calenviroscreen50overview12226.pdf>

S-8. OEHHA. Draft CalEnviroScreen 5.0 — Technical Report. January 28, 2026.

<https://oehha.ca.gov/sites/default/files/media/2026-01/calenviroscreen50techreportd12226.pdf>

S-9. OEHHA. Draft CalEnviroScreen 5.0 — Public Comment and Participation Page.

<https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/press-release/public-comment-period-calenviroscreen/get-involved>

S-10. OEHHA. CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Final Report. October 2021.

<https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40>

III. AB 617 AND BAYVIEW HUNTERS POINT DESIGNATION

S-11. Bay Area Air Quality Management District. State Approves Bayview Hunters Point/Southeast San Francisco for AB 617 Program. February 27, 2023.

<https://www.baaqmd.gov/news-and-events/page-resources/2023-news/022723-bvhp-ab-617>

S-12. Bay Area Air Quality Management District. Bayview Hunters Point / Southeast San Francisco — AB 617 Community Emissions Reduction Plan.

<https://www.baaqmd.gov/community-health/community-health-protection-program/bayview-hunters-point-community-emissions-reduction-plan>

S-13. Bay Area Air Quality Management District. Annual Report, 2023.

<https://annualreport.baaqmd.gov/2023/introduction.html>

S-14. BAAQMD Board of Directors, Community Equity, Health and Justice Committee Agenda. March 11, 2026.

<https://www.baaqmd.gov/>

IV. NAVY FRAUD, FEDERAL PROSECUTION, AND PLUTONIUM COVER-UP

S-15. U.S. Department of Justice. United States Joins Lawsuits Against Tetra Tech EC Inc. Alleging False Claims.

<https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/united-states-joins-lawsuits-against-tetra-tech-ec-inc-alleging-false-claims-connection>

S-16. Committee to Bridge the Gap / San Francisco Chronicle. Ex-Contractor to Pay \$97 Million Over Fraud Claims at S.F. Hunters Point Shipyard. January 20, 2025.

<https://www.committeetobridgethegap.org/2025/01/20/ex-contractor-to-pay-97-million-over-fraud-claims-at-s-f-hunters-point-shipyard-sf-chronicle/>

S-17. KQED. Navy Apologizes for 11-Month Delay in Reporting Radioactive Material at Hunters Point. 2025.

<https://www.kqed.org/science/1999631/navy-apologizes-for-11-month-delay-in-reporting-radioactive-material-at-hunters-point>

S-18. The Guardian. US Navy Accused of Cover-Up Over Dangerous Plutonium in San Francisco. November 27, 2025.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/nov/27/us-navy-san-francisco-plutonium>

V. HUMAN RADIATION EXPERIMENTS

S-19. The Guardian / SF Public Press / Committee to Bridge the Gap. Revealed: How a San Francisco Navy Lab Became a Hub for Human Radiation Experiments. November 25, 2024.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/nov/25/san-francisco-navy-lab-human-radiation>

VI. COMMUNITY HEALTH DATA

S-20. Inside Climate News. How San Francisco's Bayview Neighborhood Is Battling Toxic Air. November 2021. — Cites 2006 SFDPH survey: 86% of babies born in Bayview developed severe asthma before kindergarten.

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/27112021/air-pollution-bayview-hunters-point-san-francisco/>

S-21. City and County of San Francisco. The State of the Environment in Bayview Hunters Point. 2004. — Documents cancer rates above regional averages; chronic disease hospitalizations approximately 3x the statewide average.

S-22. San Francisco Human Rights Commission. Environmental Racism: A Status Report and Recommendations. December 2003.

S-23. San Francisco Health Improvement Partnership (SFHIP). Summary of Data Findings. — Documents asthma and COPD hospitalizations for Black and African American residents at approximately 10 times the rate of white San Franciscans.

<https://sfhip.org/chna/community-health-data/summary-of-data-findings-by-section/>

S-24. Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice. Bayview Hunters Point Comments — CalEnviroScreen 4.0. September 30, 2021. — Documents Bayview-Hunters Point at 90th percentile for pollution burden in CalEnviroScreen 4.0.

<https://greenaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Greenaction-BVHP-Mothers-and-Fathers-Committee-and-Marie-Harrison-Community-Foundation-Comments-to-CCSF-September-30-2021.pdf>

VII. CALENVIROSCREEN METHODOLOGY CRITIQUES

S-25. CalMatters. Why New CA Pollution Tool Let Down Environmental Justice Groups. February 2026. — Confirms Bay Area decreased in ranking; approximately 20% of communities losing DAC status.

<https://calmatters.org/environment/2026/02/cal-enviro-screen-pollution-funding/>

S-26. CalMatters. CA's Flawed Tool Could Deny Billions to Polluted Communities. February 2024. — Cites Johns Hopkins/Stanford research: 16% of census tracts could be ranked differently; tool omits cancer and kidney disease.

<https://calmatters.org/environment/2024/02/california-screening-environment-communities/>

S-27. Huynh, Benjamin Q., et al. "Algorithmic Fairness in Environmental Justice Screening Tools." Nature Machine Intelligence, 2024.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s42256-024-00793-y>

VIII. MARIE HARRISON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

S-28. Marie Harrison Community Foundation. Environmental Justice Programs.

<https://www.canwelve.org/environmental-justice>

S-29. Malik Washington. "They Knew: San Francisco's 23-Year Reckoning with Environmental Racism in Bayview-Hunters Point, Part 1." Davis Vanguard, February 2026.

<https://davisvanguard.org/2026/02/they-knew-san-franciscos/>

S-30. Malik Washington. "Fund the Oversight — Or Answer the Question: Part 2 of San Francisco Environmental Racism Investigation." Davis Vanguard, February 2026.

<https://davisvanguard.org/2026/02/oversight-reduction-bayview-hunters-point/>

This is the end of my public comment
Malik Washington