



April 1, 2026

Secretary Yana Garcia
California Environmental Protection Agency
1001 I Street, P.O. Box 2815
Sacramento, CA 95812

Dear Secretary Yana Garcia,

Our coalition represents 32 community-based organizations and local governments in the greater Bay Area that serve and represent environmental justice communities. For decades, our organizations have worked on housing, parks, education, workforce development, community

organizing, renewable energy installation, food security, social services, and much more.

Since 2013, CalEnviroScreen (CES) has been used to map “Disadvantaged Communities” (DACs) across the state, and this definition shapes more than \$12.8 billion in funding with 27 state agencies through 117 programs.¹ Due to repeated use in state legislation and regulatory policy, this mapping tool and definition have evolved from targeting equity in cap-and-invest funding to being the de facto state definition applied to many equity-oriented policies far beyond the environment. Against a backdrop of federal funding cuts, philanthropy also sometimes uses this flawed mapping tool and DACs designation, meaning financial impacts can extend well beyond government investments.

Unfortunately, the newly proposed Draft CES 5.0 worsens inequality and access to state resources and programs for the greater Bay Area’s communities of need. For instance, East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, Marin City, Canal area of San Rafael, Alviso, key communities in Contra Costa County (Bay Point, Pacheco, portions of Monument Corridor), East San Francisco (South of Market, Chinatown, Mission District, Tenderloin, Bayview Hunters-Point), and parts of East and West Oakland are left out of the DACs designation, despite being widely known as communities in need of investment.

We call upon the California Environmental Protection Agency and California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment to improve Draft CES 5.0 to reflect the extraordinary need of our communities across the Bay Area. **We request that CalEPA delay the finalization of CES 5.0 to allow for more public input and to better understand the tool’s shortcomings.² Before finalization, this map must be fixed so that it reflects environmental injustices unique to the Bay Area region.** In order for state agencies to address equity, we should work to accurately map our frontline communities and recognize their existence accordingly.

Sincerely,

¹ California Climate Investments: 2025 Annual Report Factsheet. California Air Resources Board, 2025. https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/auction-proceeds/cci_2025ar_factsheet.pdf.

² Three to six additional months would allow adequate time for data scientists from academic institutions, government agencies, and community-based organizations to better understand and weigh in on specific indicators that map the Bay Area as a region more accurately and subsequently engage OEHHA on its methodological choices.

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Omar Carrera, CEO
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