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## RE: Comments on Draft CalEnviroScreen 5.0

Dear Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment,

On behalf of the Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE), we are pleased to submit comments in support of the draft CalEnviroScreen 5.0.

CAUSE is a community-based organization that works alongside working-class and immigrant communities on California's Central Coast to advance environmental, economic, and social justice. We appreciate OEHHA's continued commitment to improving CalEnviroScreen as a critical tool for identifying cumulative pollution burdens and advancing equitable investment across California.

CalEnviroScreen remains an essential resource not only for allocating state funding, but also for supporting community-led advocacy, land use decisions, and policy development. The tool plays a key role in validating the lived experiences of frontline communities by grounding them in data and making inequities visible to decision-makers.

We are encouraged by how the draft 5.0 update more accurately reflects pollution burden across several Central Coast communities.

In **Oxnard**, the increase to 16 census tracts in the top 25% better captures the widespread and cumulative environmental impacts experienced by residents, particularly in neighborhoods long affected by industrial activity, transportation corridors, and agricultural pollution.

In **Ventura**, while Westside Ventura falls just below the top 25% threshold, we continue to recognize this area as a community experiencing significant environmental and socioeconomic burdens.

We also appreciate that **Santa Paula** now includes a census tract in its downtown core within the top 25%, and that the **Eastside of Santa Barbara** is newly reflected in this category. These updates represent an important step toward recognizing communities that have historically been overlooked despite clear indicators of environmental and health disparities.

Similarly, the identification of two disadvantaged census tracts in **Santa Maria** aligns with what residents have long experienced in terms of pollution exposure and limited access to resources.

At the same time, we note that **Guadalupe** and **Old Town Goleta** fall below the threshold in this version. While CalEnviroScreen provides a valuable statewide comparison, these shifts highlight the need to continue pairing the tool with

community-based knowledge to ensure that no impacted communities are overlooked in policy and funding decisions.

Overall, we believe the draft CalEnviroScreen 5.0 represents an improvement in capturing the cumulative impacts faced by Central Coast communities. We support its continued refinement and use as a tool to advance environmental justice and equitable investment.

Thank you for your ongoing work and for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,  
Lucia Marquez  
Policy Director  
Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE)