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DATE: November 4-5, 2026

TO: SJVUAPCD Governing Board



FROM: Samir Sheikh, Executive Director/APCO
Project Coordinator: Jonathan Klassen

RE: **ITEM NUMBER 12: RECEIVE REPORT ON
RECENTLY RELEASED CALENVIROSCREEN
5.0 AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE VALLEY**

BACKGROUND:

The California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) first published CalEnviroScreen (CES) in 2013 as a screening tool to assess the combined environmental and socioeconomic burdens facing communities throughout the state. OEHHA has refined the tool several times since its initial release, most recently with the 2026 release of CES 5.0, which refreshed the underlying data and introduced additional indicators for assessing and comparing communities. The District and other agencies throughout the state utilize CES as an important tool in identifying disadvantaged and priority communities for strategy implementation. Additionally, CES is commonly used by the state to determine the distribution of incentive and programmatic funding to air districts throughout the state. Given the importance of CES, closely following these changes will be important moving forward.

The purpose of this item is to trace the evolution of CES, provide information regarding the changes introduced in CES 5.0 relative to previous versions, and discuss the implications of these changes for the Valley.

DISCUSSION:

History of CalEnviroScreen Development

In 2010, the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) began to develop a framework to assess the cumulative

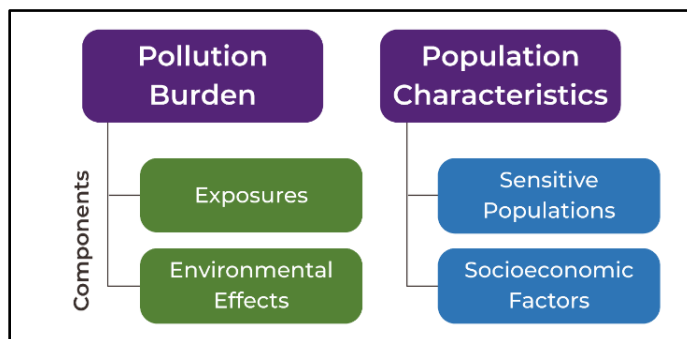
impacts of various environmental, health, and socioeconomic factors. This effort was based on collaboration among a statewide working group of scientists, academics, members of government agencies, and community-based organizations. Based on this framework, in 2013 OEHHA established the first version of the CES tool, providing the first method for the state to assess the cumulative impacts of environmental, health, and socioeconomic factors across all communities. Since CES 1.0, additional versions of the tool have been established by OEHHA, where 2.0 was released in 2014, 3.0 in 2017, and 4.0 in 2021. Most recently CES 5.0 was released in July 2026, which incorporated updates to its underlying data, and added additional indicators into its assessment.

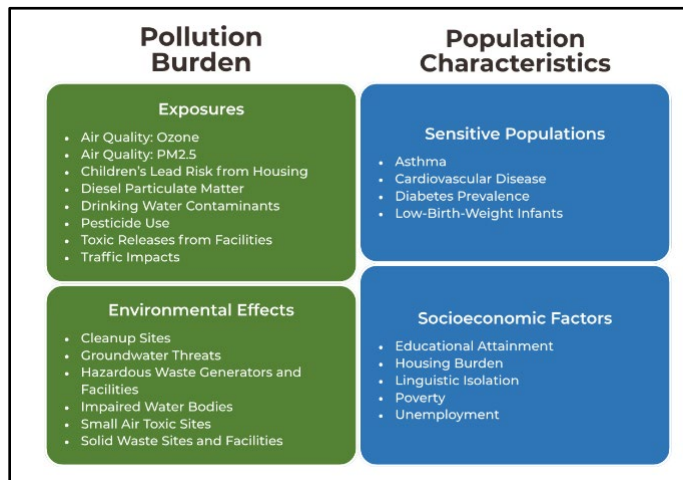
CES continues to help inform the District's efforts to prioritize resources, target incentive funding, and expand air quality improvement opportunities in underserved and disadvantaged communities throughout the Valley. For example, the District utilized CES as an important tool in the initial community identification and prioritization process for Assembly Bill 617 (AB 617), incorporating health indicators from CES alongside extensive air quality analysis and other socioeconomic factors. As CES continues to evolve, the District will closely evaluate these updates and their implications for ongoing efforts to improve air quality and direct resources to disadvantaged and priority communities.

Methodology of the CES Tool

The CES tool is built upon a variety of data layers that represent the nature of the communities across the state. From these data layers, a total of 23 indicators are quantified, where each fall into one of four main categories: (1) Exposures, (2) Environmental Effects, (3) Sensitive Populations, and (4) Socioeconomic Factors. These indicators include exposure to ozone, PM2.5, diesel particulate matter, and other pollutants, vicinity to hazardous waste and cleanup sites, health conditions among the population, and other social factors such as education level, poverty, and housing.

Figure 1: Main Components and Indicators of CES 5.0

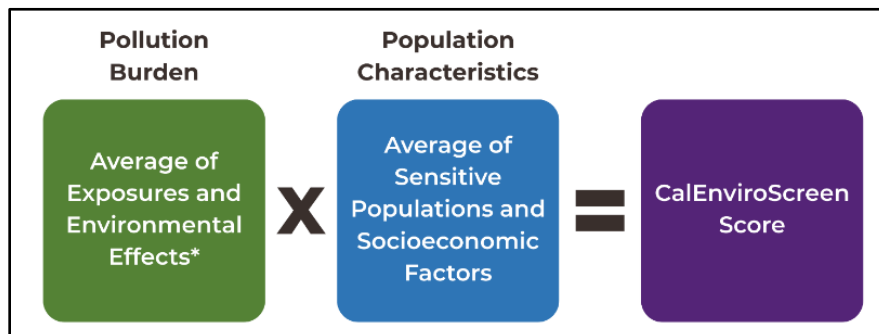




Source: OEHHA

Based on the data from these indicators, a quantitative pollution burden score and population characteristic score are calculated, which are then multiplied to result in an overall CES score for the community. This process is completed for all census tracts in the state, so that each census tract (or community) has an overall score and resulting relative percentile score calculated, which then allows users of CES to sort, rank, and investigate how the communities across the state compare. OEHHA has also made available a variety of online mapping tools to explore the census tracts across the state and their CES scores, making it easier for the user to understand how an area of interest may compare to other regions.

Figure 2: General Calculation of the Overall CES Score



Source: OEHHA

Comparison of Valley CES Results to Rest of the State

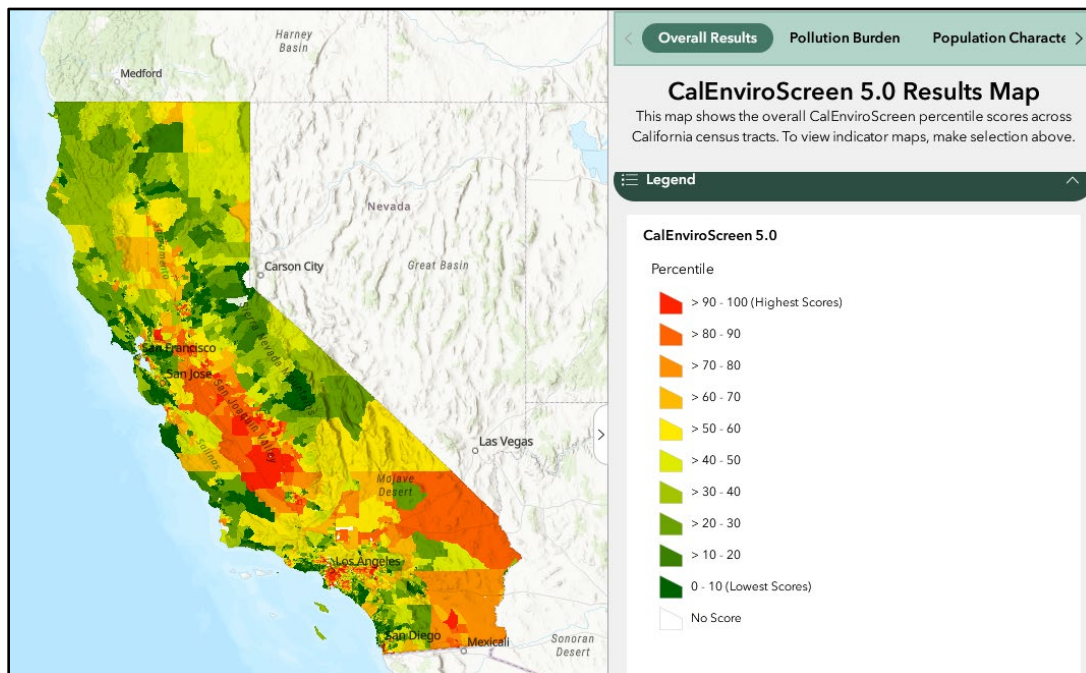
As the Valley continues to make progress towards meeting all of the federal ozone and PM2.5 standards, within CES the region often ranks high for population exposure to concentrations of pollution. Substantial heavy-duty truck activity through the transportation corridors of the Valley also affects the population exposure to diesel particulate and traffic impacts, both key indicators within CES. In addition, due to the

Valley's demographics and socioeconomic realities, the census tracts in the region commonly rank high for indicators such as asthma, poverty, housing burden, and unemployment.

Due to this, the Valley's census tracts have historically ranked high in their overall CES score, showing that the Valley is home to some of the most disadvantaged communities in the state. As an example, in the results of CES 3.0, 20 of the top 30 most disadvantaged communities in the state were from the San Joaquin Valley, while in CES 4.0, this same metric showed 7 of the top 10 were from the Valley.

In 2026, OEHHA conducted a public process to update the underlying data within the CES tool, as well as establishing new indicators within the model. OEHHA completed this process in July 2026 and released CES 5.0 for public use. In this update, OEHHA used the latest 2020 U.S. census data, assessed more recent air quality data, collected updated public health data across the state, and established the new indicators of "proximity to small air toxic sites", and "prevalence of diabetes". The following statewide map from CES 5.0 depicts how the Valley ranked in its CES scores compared to the rest of the state.

Figure 3: Statewide Map of Scores from CES 5.0

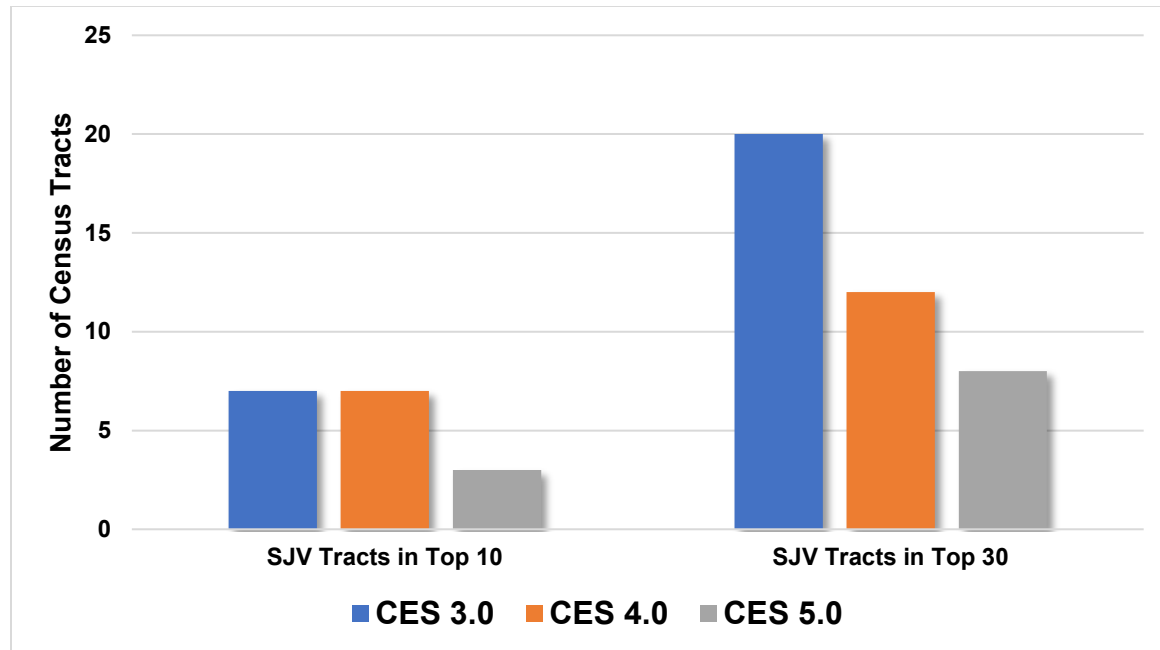


Source: OEHHA

Since the previous version of CES, the air quality in the Valley has improved significantly, for both ozone and PM2.5. Due to this, with CES 5.0 using more recent ozone and PM2.5 data, the Valley's communities improved for these pollution exposure indicators when compared to the past. In addition, based on the latest statewide health

data collected for this update, the overall health of Valley residents has improved relative to other areas of California. Due to these positive changes, the number of Valley census tracts appearing in the worst ranked CES census tracts across the state has declined compared to previous versions of the model. The following figure depicts how this has changed between CES 3.0, 4.0, and 5.0.

Figure 4: Frequency of Valley Tracts within Highest Ranked across CES Versions



Related Legislation and CalEPA Designation of Disadvantaged Communities

Through the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32), proceeds from the state's Cap-and-Invest Program are targeted for investment into disadvantaged communities throughout California. To support the distribution of these funds, SB 535 (De León) was established in 2012 to ensure that a minimum amount of Cap-and-Invest funding would be focused in Disadvantaged Communities (DACs). SB 535 also gave CalEPA the responsibility to designate DACs throughout California, and must be based on a number of factors, including:

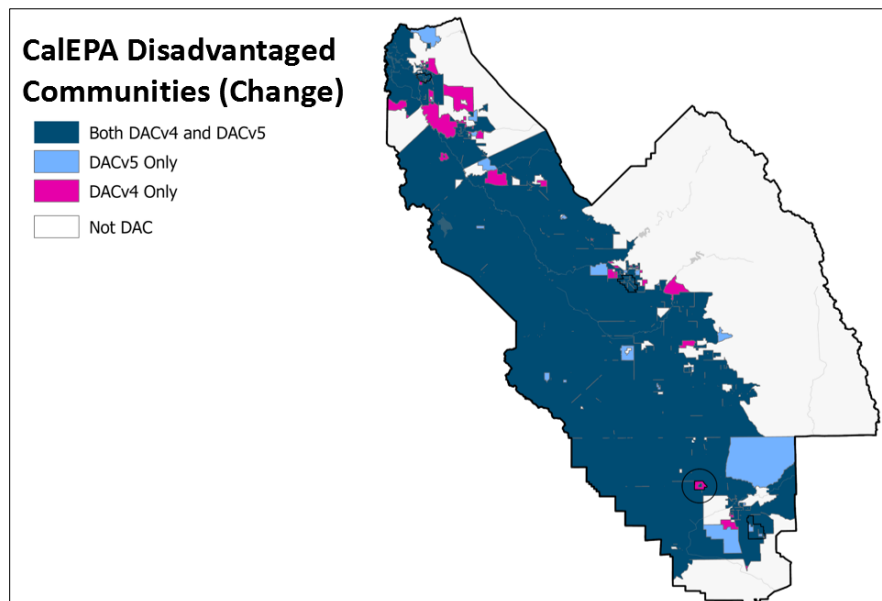
- Environmental pollution and other hazards
- Socioeconomic conditions
- Public-health considerations
- Low income and unemployment
- Housing burden and homeownership
- Sensitive populations
- Educational attainment.

To assist in its evaluation, CalEPA has regularly used CES as the tool to determine what communities across California should be designated as a DAC, and therefore providing guidance to state authorities on how to distribute funding for various programs. Previous CalEPA DAC designations occurred in 2014, 2017, and 2022. Most recently, in September 2026, and based upon the results from OEHHA CES 5.0, CalEPA issued its designated DACs based on the following criteria:

- Census tracts with the highest 25% of CES 5.0 overall scores
- Census tracts with the highest 5% of CES 5.0 pollution burden scores
- Census tracts that have at least 25% overlap with a 2022 DAC census tract based on CES 4.0
- Lands under the control of federally recognized tribes, with updated tribal boundaries data.

As discussed earlier, as the CES tool commonly results in many San Joaquin Valley census tracts being in the top 25% of overall scores and the top 5% of pollution burden scores, it follows that many communities in the Valley are designated by CalEPA to be DACs. Due to this, historically these designations have assisted the Valley in receiving funds from the state to support its incentive-based programs to support ongoing air quality improvements across its most disadvantaged communities. The following figure shows the change in designated DACs across California, as defined by CalEPA in 2022 and 2026, based on CES 4.0 and 5.0, respectively.

Figure 5: Change in CalEPA Designated DACs from 2022 to 2026



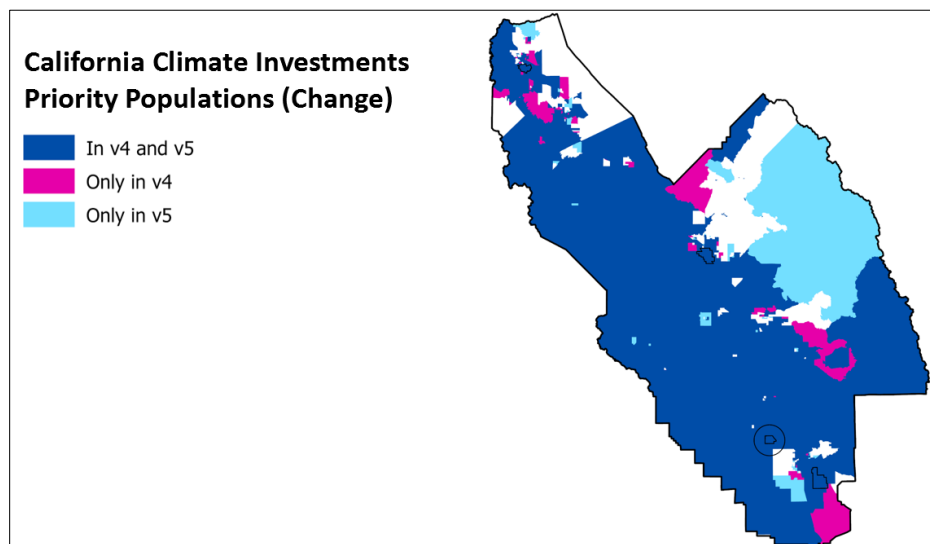
Between the two DAC designations by CalEPA in 2022 and 2026, the amount of the Valley's population that are within a designated DAC has declined by 6.1%. This decline is expected as the Valley's overall CES scores have also been reduced due to improving air quality and public health indicators in recent years.

To provide more direction, and based upon the DAC designations issued by CalEPA, AB 1550 (Gomez) was passed in 2016 to specifically define what the minimum funding levels should be when distributing the Cap-and-Invest funding across the communities of California. AB 1550 defined that:

- A minimum of 25% of funding should be allocated toward DACs
- An additional minimum of 5% of funding should be allocated to projects that benefit low-income households or low-income communities
- An additional minimum of 5% of funding should be allocated to projects that benefit low-income households that are outside of a designated DAC, but within ½ miles of a DAC, or to projects that benefit individuals living in low-income communities that are outside of a DAC, but within ½ miles of a DAC.

In addition to understanding how DAC designations have changed with the 2026 CalEPA actions, it is also important to recognize how the “priority populations” defined under the criteria within AB 1550 (Gomez) are shifting. With the results of CES 5.0 and 2026 DAC designations, the amount of the Valley's population within a priority population area has decreased by 5.6%. The following figure shows how these priority populations have changed between the latest updates to CES and DACs.

Figure 6: Change in AB 1550 Priority Population Areas from 2022 to 2026



Incentive and Programmatic Funding Decisions based on CES and DACs

As a number of air quality improvement funds are dispersed based on CES and CalEPA DAC designations, updates to CES and DACs have a direct impact on the amount of funding the Valley could receive. Key examples of funding sources that depend upon CES and DAC designations include:

- AB 617 Community Air Protection Fund, focused on supporting incentive projects to improve air quality in selected communities
- Carl Moyer Program, including projects focused on replacing heavy-duty trucks, off-road construction equipment, agricultural equipment, and other equipment
- Air Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) supporting the replacement of passenger vehicles, trucks, buses, and off-road equipment

As these example programs play a large role in the District's overall incentives strategy, continuing to track and advocate how the state and CARB use the updates in CES and DAC designations to distribute funds will be critical for the region to continue to progressively improve its air quality.

Next Steps

With CES 5.0 finalized by OEHHA in July 2026, and new DAC designations established by CalEPA in September 2026, it will be important for the District to understand how the state will use this information in making decisions on funding distributions. As the Valley still needs significant ongoing progress to meet all of the federal air quality standards, continued funding for the region will play a vital role in meeting this need.

District staff will continue to collaborate with OEHHA staff as they make future updates to CES, and as CARB updates any of their funding programs that depend upon the DAC designations. Your Board will be kept apprised should any substantial changes occur as the state uses these new tools and designations.