July 25, 2023

Beta Release and Comment Period Open for Connecticut Environmental Justice Mapping Tool

On July 17, the University of Connecticut's Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) jointly released a beta version of the state's first environmental justice (EJ) screening tool for public comment. The intent of the tool is to identify the cumulative impacts of pollution sources, socioeconomic disparities and health sensitivities on communities, defined by census tract, to inform policy- and decision-making. The mapping tool attempts to numerically quantify the EJ impact on a given community using a series of factors which fall into two main categories "Pollution Burdens" and "Sensitive Populations." Those two factors are further broken down as follows:

- A community's Pollution Burden is comprised of potential pollution sources, (e.g.: proximity to polluted property and wastewater discharges) and potential pollution exposure (e.g., ozone and diesel emissions).
- A community's Sensitive Population is calculated by averaging socioeconomic factors (e.g., poverty levels and ethnic/racial makeup) and the health sensitivity of the population (e.g.: asthma emergency rates and cancer risk).

Each indicator has a ranking for each census tract, from 0 to 10, that represents a particular type of pollution, health or social impact. The map is color-coded, with the darkest areas corresponding to higher EJ scores. The tool is anticipated to provide insight to all stakeholders, including advocacy groups, government agencies and the regulated community regarding the degree to which a community, by census tract, is burdened by environmental harms and impacts. The tool may prove helpful with regard to the review of proposed development projects by facilitating dialogue and collaboration between policymakers, community members and the regulated community. The beta version of the mapping tool is available in both English and Spanish, and is hosted on CIRCA's website. Also available on the website is CIRCA's July 17 webinar on the mapping tool. The comment period is open now and closes on July 31. Access the comments or leave your own via this webpage. If you have questions about the growing field of EJ laws, regulations and ordinances which apply to businesses, the government and private citizens, please reach out to one of the attorneys in the sidebar.

Authors



Harold M. Blinderman

Partner

Hartford, CT | (860) 275-0357

hmblinderman@daypitney.com



Elizabeth C. Barton

Of Counsel

Hartford, CT | (860) 275-0371

ecbarton@daypitney.com