Decision Point 3 Report

Oregon Environmental Justice Mapping Tool

Decision Points Background

By Eric Main

The 10 decision points for the EJC are based on best practices for building composite indices used to identify communities experiencing disproportionate environmental burdens, health and social disparities, and community benefits and opportunities.

The decision points include:
1. Domain selection
2. Geographic units
3. Geographic comparisons and community designations
4. Domain/indicator weighting
5. Domain aggregation
6. Data standardization
7. Indicator selection
8. Sensitivity analysis
9. EJ community threshold
10. Visualizations

FAQ Themes

By Hoang-Van Nguyen

Environmental Justice Council members come from diverse professional backgrounds that influence their contributions to the Environmental Justice Council. Four members participated in information sessions to learn about Decision Point 3.

The following themes represent the types of questions received:

1. Context
2. Impact Areas
3. Index Development
4. Implementation
5. Data Updates and Tool Enhancements
6. Indicator Selection
7. Tribal Communities

EJC Information Session Observations

By Eric Main & Hoang-Van Nguyen

The Environmental Justice Mapping Leadership team hosted two information sessions for Environmental Justice Council members on 6/4/2024 and 6/5/2024.

The Council members who attended were interested in how the community designations could impact index development, and wanted to better understand how capturing environmental burdens would be impacted.

We also learned that Council members desired more visual representations of the impacts of their adoption to future decision points. This feedback has been heard, and the EJ Mapping Leadership team strives to provide more examples when possible.

Council members also expressed interest in learning more about the nature of conversations occurring in various EJ Mapping Workgroups. More reference materials will be provided to the Council in future information sessions when possible.

Asks

By Hoang-Van Nguyen

The following list describes specific asks coming from the Environmental Justice Council as it relates to the Oregon Environmental Justice Mapping Tool:

1. Provide mapping examples of how decision points impact index development.
2. Create community designation for Micropolitan Areas.
3. Provide additional context information to assist with EJC decision making.

Frequently Asked Questions

The following frequently asked questions are organized by their respective themes.

Context

Q1: What are all the four USDA Remote and Frontier Designations?

A1: USDA Frontier and Remote Area Zip Codes:

- Level One FAR areas consist of rural areas and urban areas up to 50,000 people that are 60 minutes or more by car from an urban area of 50,000 or more people.
- Level Two FAR areas consist of rural areas and urban areas up to 25,000 people that are 45 minutes or more by car from an urban area of 25,000-49,999 people and 60 minutes or more from an urban area of 50,000 or more people.
- Level Three FAR areas consist of rural areas and urban areas up to 10,000 people that are 30 minutes or more by car from an urban area of 10,000-24,999, 45 minutes or more from an urban area of 25,000-49,999 people, and 60 minutes or more from an urban area of 50,000 or more people.
- Level Four FAR areas consist of rural areas that are 15 minutes or more by car from an urban area of 2,500-9,999 people, 30 minutes or more from an urban area of 10,000-24,999 people, 45 minutes or more from an urban area of 25,000-49,999 people, and 60 minutes or more from an urban area of 50,000 or more people.

Q2: Is it possible to create sample maps that can display how various decision points determinations can impact development of the Oregon Environmental Justice Mapping tool?

A2: The EJ Mapping Tool Leadership Team will strive to provide this information when possible. The Leadership Team also acknowledges the possibility of bias being introduced by maps being created prematurely.

Q3: Is it possible to provide sample maps to support conversation with communities during the mapping tool listening sessions?

A3: The EJ Mapping Tool Leadership Team will strive to provide this information when possible. The Leadership Team also acknowledges the possibility of bias being introduced by maps being created prematurely.

Q4: Is it possible to designate Micropolitan Areas as its own designation?

A4: Yes, adding a designation will be left to Environmental Justice Council discretion for Decision Point 3.

Q5: How will Decision Point 8 (Sensitivity Testing) impact subsequent decision points?

A5: The Environmental Justice Mapping tool project is an iterative process which will create more clarity as the project progresses. This decision point may also require revisiting previous decision points if the results of the sensitivity analyses reveal unintended consequences to previous decision points.

Impact Areas

Q1: Is it possible to extend the definition of Coastal to include offshore windfarms since they impact fishing communities? Currently it includes 3 nautical miles. International borders are 12 nautical miles.

A1: Impact areas can be beyond community designations. Indicator area of influence will be addressed during Decision Point 7, Indicator Selection.

Q2: Are remote designations considering cities in Idaho and Washington?

A2: Yes, cities in neighboring states have the potential to affect each designation.

Q3: How will the mapping tool consider environmental burdens that come from downstream effects of environmental burdens from other communities?

A3: Impact areas can be beyond community designations and will be addressed during Indicator Selection.

Index Development

Q1: What is the impact of having multiple indices apply to communities?

A1: This situation would apply if the Environmental Justice Council decides to proceed with a statewide index in addition to separate community designation indices. The impact is currently unknown since some state agencies may need to use a statewide index for their programs.

The potential community designation indices include:
- Large City vs Large City (Urban)
- Small City vs Small City (Micropolitan Area)
- Remote vs Remote
- Coastal vs Coastal
- Rural vs Rural
- Statewide

A2: State agency feedback is needed to provide more information. State agency focus groups will be facilitated by the EJ Mapping Leadership team and the feedback from these focus groups will be reported out to the Council in October 2024

Implementation

Q1: What happens after the first implementation of the Oregon Environmental Justice Mapping Tool?

A1: HB4077 allows for continuous development every 4 years with community listening sessions to assess future functionality and refinements. Current data gaps can be addressed as well.

Q2: How will statewide geographic designations impact Federal Justice 40 Initiatives Implementation?

A2: State agencies and local governments will need to assess how they can use the Oregon Environmental Justice Mapping tool to assess if their investments are going to at least 40% of vulnerable communities. The definition of environmental justice community in HB4077 can be compared to the federal definition. Eligibility for programs will need to be made on a case-by-case basis.

Q3: What types of guidance should the EJC consider for state agencies using the Oregon EJ Mapping Tool when they are deciding to use a statewide index vs a community designation index?

A3: State agency focus groups will be facilitated by the EJ Mapping Leadership team and the feedback from these focus groups will be reported out to the Council in October 2024.

Data Updates and Tool Enhancements

Q1: What happens after the first implementation of the Oregon Environmental Justice Mapping Tool?

A1: HB4077 allows for continuous development every 4 years with community listening sessions to assess future functionality and refinements. Current data gaps can be addressed as well.

Q2: Is it possible to display and report communities on the mapping tool based on what is familiar to communities? Examples could include counties, Senate Districts, Representative Districts, etc.

A2: Yes, counties and legislative districts can be displayed as a layer on the mapping tool and could also be used to create summary reports. This question will be addressed during decision point #10.

Indicator Selection

Q1: Is it possible to extend the definition of Coastal to include offshore windfarms since they impact fishing communities? Currently it includes 3 nautical miles. International borders are 12 nautical miles.

A1: Impact areas can be beyond community designations. Indicator area of influence will be addressed during Decision Point 7, Indicator Selection.

Q2: How will climate risks be considered as it relates to community designations?

A2: Differences in climate change risk across Oregon is one of the primary reasons for creating community designations. Community designations will allow us to select different indicators in the subdomains so a climate change risk like sea-level rise will likely only be present in the climate change risk subdomain for coastal communities.

Q3: How will the mapping tool consider environmental burdens that come from downstream effects of environmental burdens from other communities?

A3: Impact areas can be beyond community designations and will be addressed during Indicator Selection.

Tribal Communities

Q1: How are tribal communities being considered in community designations?

A1: WA treats tribal communities as environmental justice communities. HB4077 also designates tribal communities as environmental justice communities as well. Q2: How often is data updated for the index?

Q2: How will tribal communities be designated in the mapping tool?

A2: Recommendations will be provided to the Environmental Justice Council after tribal listening sessions for their determination.

REFERENCES

Note: The maps linked below only include layers to help the Methodology Workgroup visualize content under consideration. This information is being provided for Environmental Justice Council Member reference only.

Web maps:
Designations:
https://geo.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=a826306ee9e74a778ae701f2b6782459

Regions:
https://geo.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=ee17090435104feab8f7416c451071f8

National EJ Mapping Tools:
https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/7244cc28efd64213ad0f88fd394a92d6