Research-to-Policy Priorities for 2020 EHSC Pilots & EHSC Community Stakeholder Advisory Committee

The Environmental Health Sciences Center works with a dedicated group of non-profit organizations and state agency staff we call our Community Stakeholder Advisory Committee (CSTAC). The CSTAC works with the EHSC to guide our research priorities, connect researchers with communities experiencing some of the country’s worst environmental pollution, and participate as research collaborators.

The following is a list of policy-relevant priority areas that our CSTAC organizations and their networks are focused on now, along with examples of opportunities for research that contributes to these priorities. Many of these have potential as EHSC pilot projects, and we encourage pilot applicants to consider these topics for developing a pilot proposal. Please connect with the EHSC’s Community Engagement Core to learn more about how you can collaborate with Community-based organizations around these topic areas. Contact Aubrey Thompson at abthompson@ucdavis.edu.

A meeting will be scheduled for Mid-October for those interested in pursuing a pilot application to meet with members of our CSTAC to discuss your application and potential collaborations. Contact Aubrey Thompson at abthompson@ucdavis.edu.

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<th>Pesticide Regulation</th>
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<td><strong>Policy priorities:</strong></td>
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<td>Right-to-know regulations for pesticides: establishing required notification of pesticide spraying near communities and sensitive locations within communities. Rulemaking for 1,3-dichloropropene (1,3-D, or Telone): The Department of Pesticide Regulations is working on a new process to regulate this heavily used pesticide following a court judgement to do so. <strong>Californians for Pesticide Reform</strong> and other organizations are focused on influencing these regulations to protect the health of workers and nearby communities.</td>
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<td><strong>Monitoring alternatives to Chlorpyrifos:</strong> Because of the recent ban on Chlorpyrifos, Department of Pesticide Regulations will release a list of alternative pesticides. Californians for Pesticide Reform are monitoring these proposed alternatives for pesticides of concern.</td>
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<td><strong>Potential Research Contributions:</strong></td>
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<td>Assessing and Communicating about alternatives to Chlorpyrifos As the state of California releases a list of alternatives to chlorpyrifos for agricultural use, more information on the known health impacts and existing research on those alternative pesticides would be a useful tool for advocacy organizations.</td>
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Evaluating Right-to-know policies in place: As notification of pesticide spraying is tested out in a few communities, organizations want to know about the effectiveness and potential health impact of these notifications.

Right-to-Know Confirmation: Developing a testimony or written justification of the need for Notification of pesticide application for the purpose of scientific research.

Air Quality Monitoring and regulation

Policy Priorities:

Air Quality Notifications: CSTAC Organizations are advocating for culturally-appropriate and timely notices about air quality and recommendations for air quality safety.

AB 345 Establishment of Oil and Gas Setbacks: CSTAC organizations are supporting legislation to establish 2500 foot setbacks around oil and gas wells in California. Continued research is needed on the local and regional human health impacts of oil and gas operations in various settings.

AB 617 Community Air Protection Program: Many community organizations in the CSTAC are closely involved with AB 617 and continue to organize communities to participate in local air monitoring and advocate for improvements to the regulation. Major issues the organizations are focused on are connecting air quality regulations with land use planning and land use authority and determining human exposure to local sources of toxic and criteria pollutants and precursors.

Potential Research Contributions:

Air quality notifications: Research can better clarify how much and for how long developing bodies and sensitive populations can be exposed to various criteria and toxic pollutants before experiencing short and/or long term health consequences. New research or analysis of existing research can help inform the development of these notifications, along with appropriate steps to protect oneself and one’s family.

Adequacy of setback distance: Regarding setbacks of oil and gas drilling, community organizations need to know what a safe distance is from oil and gas operations in order to protect the health of residents.

Quantifying Community Health Impacts of Climate Action and Air Quality Regulation: Applied research or data quantification of local and regional health impacts (benefits and unintended harms) associated with climate actions and policies and air quality mitigation efforts, to support or inform relevant work being done by local health departments and other community health partners.
### Water Quality and Quantity

**Policy Priorities:**

- **SB 200 Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund:** With the recent passage of SB 200, advocacy organizations are now working to ensure the fund reaches communities most in need. Environmental health research can help support the fund’s goals.

- **SB 971 Drought Resilient Communities:** CSTAC organizations are supporting legislation to better coordinate drought preparedness for small and rural communities.

**Potential Research Contributions:**

- **Drought Resilience:** Research can bring forward new ideas and technology that might better prepare and sustain rural communities during future drought events, including how to protect water quality.

### Hazardous Waste Disposal

**Policy Priorities:**

- **Hazardous Waste Disposal:** Residents of Kettleman City and other communities impacted by hazardous waste facilities are working to influence California’s new permitting framework for hazardous waste disposal. They are focused on issues of setbacks, violations, and community engagement within the permitting process.

### Improving CalEnviroScreen

Unlike the other policy priorities on this list, this priority is technical in nature. However, CalEnviroScreen is used as a tool amongst agencies and community organizations to determine funding and regulatory rule-making, so it has direct impact on environmental health policy.

CalEnviroScreen is a tool that is becoming more widely used by state and local agencies, but there is a need to improve its accuracy and utility. Needed improvements include adding additional information beyond the current set of indicators (e.g. socioeconomic status, pollution), ensuring data utilized is the most current, and assessing the impacts of different numbers of indicators in each category that influence their individual weight on the final cumulative impact score. In addition, there are needed improvements in how a community’s environmental hazard “score” is calculated to improve how budgeting, land use and permitting decisions are made using information from CalEnviroScreen.
**Needed Research Methods**

In addition to advising on specific topical priorities, our CSTAC has also advised us on types of research projects that can be most useful for them to use to build evidence-based cases for health-protective policies.

**Health Risk Assessments**

The key question the public have around many environmental pollutants is, “Should I be concerned about this?” **Environmental Health Risk Assessment** is focused around the methods used to evaluate exposure, predict health risks and outcomes, and inform decision-making to control or otherwise respond to exposures to environmental hazards. The work requires multidisciplinary teams to take on the assessments. Many of the topics we talked about today could be ripe for these health risk assessments.

**True Cost Accounting**

True Cost accounting is often used in sustainable agriculture to talk about the externalities associated with growing food. Our CSTAC has really emphasized the importance of incorporating health economics and the true cost of environmental pollution into research they partner on. The CSTAC emphasized the importance of incorporating health economics and the true cost of environmental pollution into research they partner on. They specifically asked the Community Engagement Core to facilitate relationships with more UC Davis health economists.

**Regulatory Watchdogs**

Following the implementation of environmental regulations, community-based organizations see a great need in knowing whether those regulations are being followed/enforced, and whether they are having an impact on environmental quality and ultimately, human health.