



IDENTIFYING AND MITIGATING CUMULATIVE IMPACTS IN EJ AREAS

This model law addresses the issue of cumulative impacts by requiring the state environmental protection agency to identify areas most likely to be disproportionately burdened by environmental hazards and/or face social, political, and economic stressors that limit participation in public decision-making processes (EJ areas) and to regularly report on the ways these burdens impact the affected communities, promoting public awareness and regulatory solutions.

Pollution from a single source in isolation can have detrimental health effects for those who live, work, attend school, or recreate nearby. Even exposures to common pollutants can have a number of serious negative health problems, including:

- **CANCER**
- **ASTHMA**
- **INFERTILITY**
- **RESPIRATORY DISEASES**
- **NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS**
- **CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES**
- **DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS**

These effects are compounded when a person is exposed to multiple sources and types of environmental pollution. Often, these overlapping environmental burdens are more likely to exist in low-income communities and communities of color.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The potential for multiple sources of pollution and other environmental and public health stressors to exist in a community, affecting the health and well-being of residents in ways that may not be identifiable when examining the impacts of a single stressor or source of pollution.

IDENTIFY & MAKE ACCESSIBLE

- This model bill first requires the state EPA to identify and publish a list of EJ areas.
- Next, it will be required to make this information accessible via an interactive tool on its website that maps these areas, as well as the distribution & density of specific environmental hazards and locations where particularly vulnerable persons (children, the elderly, & those with underlying conditions) are likely to spend time.

CUMULATIVE IMPACT REPORT



Next, the agency must publish a cumulative impact report, which identifies different environmental hazards located in environmental justice areas and describes the health effects associated with those hazards. In addition to reporting on air pollution, traffic, and water contamination in environmental justice areas, the bill provides a comprehensive list of polluting facilities that must be included in the report, including waste processing and management facilities, chemical manufacturing facilities, agricultural operations, and a variety of facilities operating pursuant to federal permits that regulate hazardous waste and air and water pollution. For each identified source of pollution, the report must trace potential routes of exposure to the source's pollutants in the affected community.

ACCOUNTABILITY & MITIGATION

The agency is required to make recommendations to address hazards identified in the report and to explain its decision to implement or decline to implement each recommendation. The agency must also consider the map and report in its decision-making, and either resource may be used as evidence in proceedings related to siting and permitting of polluting facilities, providing a tool for community members and advocates challenging the development or operation of such facilities.

BENEFITS

By making this information publicly available in an accessible and interactive format, the agency can improve transparency, engagement, and accountability between the state agency and impacted communities.

Community members will be empowered to advocate about issues and concerns by highlighting the aggregate impact of overlapping sources of pollution and related public health issues that affect their quality of life

By soliciting public input throughout this process, which invites impacted communities to identify areas of concern that may have otherwise been overlooked by the agency and participate during the development of the report.