

EJSCREEN: EPA's Environmental Justice Screening Tool

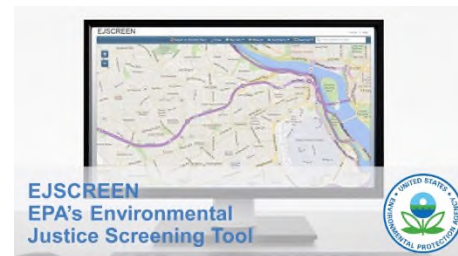
October 31, 2019

Q&A Session

The EPA has developed an [environmental justice mapping and screening tool called EJSCREEN](#) to help highlight places in an

Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement that may warrant additional consideration, analysis, or outreach because of the potential for environmental justice concerns. This webinar introduced and demonstrated the core functionality the EJSCREEN tool,

including how to: navigate EJSCREEN; screen for environmental justice; and analyze data. The web-based tool offers a variety of powerful data and mapping capabilities that enable users to access environmental and demographic information across the entire country with color-coded maps, standard data reports, and more. The webinar was presented by Tai Lung (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Environmental Justice).



This summary of the Question / Answer session of the webinar is not a transcription; questions and responses have been edited and reordered for clarity.

Does EJSCREEN layer the different maps, or does it only show one map at a time?

The tool does layer some maps – for example, various facilities (schools, hospitals, parks, etc.) can be layered, but there is currently not a way to layer multiple indexes because of the use of colors to represent each index. However, there is a side-by-side function within the tool which allows the user to bring up two maps simultaneous and look at different indexes on each map. When using this function, if the user scales one map the other map will scale in tandem.

How are the EJ index numbers calculated?

The EJ indexes combine low income and minority community data (the demographic index) with a single environmental indicator (e.g., proximity to a Risk Management Plan [RMP] facility). The result for any given census block is a percentile which indicates the percentage of blocks in the country that have a lower index score (i.e., an EJ index score of 60 indicates that 40 percent of the country has a higher intersection of low income, minority, and a given environmental factor – or that 60 percent of the country has a lower score).

Does EPA have plan to expand data to the U.S. territories?

More data was added to EJSCREEN for Puerto Rico last year, but is not currently compared to the rest of the country so that the entire island does not show up as an EJ community, which would skew the results of the tool.

The EJSCREEN team has also been discussing the possibility of expanding its data sources with its Office of Research and Development as well as its National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, not only for the U.S. territories but also for Alaska and rural parts of the contiguous U.S. that have limited available data. The Office of Environmental Justice at EPA doesn't create data; it relies on data other offices

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within EPA, as well as other federal agencies, and the data must have both national coverage and very fine geographic resolution to the census block level. In addition, all data input into EJSCREEN must be publicly available so that the tool can continue to be publicly accessible. If any USACE participants know of any data sources that might work well with the tool, they should e-mail Tai Lung or use the [Contact Us form](#) on the EJSCREEN website.

Can shape files (AOIs) be imported into EJSCREEN?

There is not currently a simple way to import shape files into the tool. However, a GIS expert can download the EJSCREEN datasets, open them into ArcGIS software, and then import the shape files they want to add (e.g., from a non-federal sponsor). Doing so essentially recreates the EJSCREEN tool in a more powerful ArcGIS platform rather than the online version. It is much easier to import maps that have already been published as a map service elsewhere as map/data layers into EJSCREEN.

Are the methods for the tool published?

The [Technical Information section of the EJSCREEN website](#) contains documentation regarding how the different indexes within the tool were developed, as well as other helpful information.