



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **EPA's EJSCREEN Tool Helps Decisionmakers Consider Needs of Communities Impacted by Hurricane Ida**

Media contacts: [R6Press@epa.gov](mailto:R6Press@epa.gov) or [Press@epa.gov](mailto:Press@epa.gov)

**DALLAS** – (Sept. 10, 2021) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) encourages decisionmakers to consider the needs of communities with environmental justice concerns experiencing effects from Hurricane Ida. [EPA's EJSCREEN tool](#) can help federal, state, local, Tribal, and private-sector responders determine which communities may bear a larger burden from environmental exposures or other factors following the hurricane.

As communities move from the initial response to a natural disaster such as Ida into what will be a years-long recovery effort, there will be a constantly growing potential for both negative impacts to accumulate and greater benefits to be realized. Decisions such as storage and ultimate disposal of wastes accumulated, the rebuilding of housing and infrastructure, the ongoing protection of health from things such as mold and heat, are all opportunities to advance equity and justice. Screening for the communities to identify those where we must prioritize engagement to understand their realities in addition to prioritizing the allocation of resources and responsiveness is critical.

Decisionmakers can use EJSCREEN as a first step to screen for areas that may be candidates for additional consideration, analysis or outreach during response and recovery activities. The tool can help users identify areas with minority and/or low-income populations, potential environmental quality issues, a combination of environmental and demographic indicators that is greater than usual, or other factors that may be of interest.

In order to better meet the Agency's responsibilities related to the protection of public health and the environment, EPA developed an environmental justice (EJ) mapping and screening tool called EJSCREEN. It is based on nationally consistent data and an approach that combines environmental and demographic indicators in maps and reports. EJSCREEN allows users to access high-resolution environmental and demographic information for specific locations for comparison with the rest of the state, EPA region, or the nation.

EJSCREEN uses maps and reports to present three kinds of information: Environmental indicators, demographic indicators and EJ Indexes. An EJ Index summarizes how an environmental indicator and demographics come together in the same location. Screening is a useful first step in understanding or highlighting locations that may be candidates for further review. However, it is essential to remember that screening-level results do not, by themselves, determine the existence or absence of environmental justice concerns in a given location; do not provide a risk assessment; and have other significant limitations.

EPA's website provides more information on how to use and apply EJSCREEN and understanding results. To learn more, please see <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>.

EPA continues to provide response updates and safety information in multiple languages to non-government organizations, environmental advocacy groups and communities with environmental justice concerns. Representatives should contact Region 6 EJ Coordinator Gloria Vaughn at [vaughn.gloria@epa.gov](mailto:vaughn.gloria@epa.gov) for more information.

Additional information about EPA's efforts can be found at <https://response.epa.gov/HurricaneIda>.

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