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[Climate Justice Working Group - June 15, 2021](#)

By Jeff Jones

Pressure on the CJWG to propose a working definition of disadvantaged communities (DAC), as required by the CLCPA, is growing as the Climate Action Council begins to evaluate proposals from various advisory panels. Staff advised the working group in relation to the CLCPA implementation timetable. To meet its schedule, the CAC needs draft scenarios by early August. This is to accommodate the need for the council's scoping plan, which is due in early 2022, to go through a mandatory 120-day public comment period.

Meeting for just one hour on June 15th, the working group focused on a report from the Illume consultant team – Alex Dunn and Amanda Dwelley -- on the progress of their mapping project and recommendations.

In essence, working with existing census tracts maps as a baseline, the consultants are developing working definitions that will help define what is a DAC. Illume is providing a list of some 40 indicators, plus a formula that evaluates them in terms of the range of impact and intensity of risk, including socio-demographics, health impacts and burdens, and housing, mobility and access to communications. Specific examples of categories of risk include: area median income, percent of federal poverty line, unemployment rates, single parent households, race and ethnicity and English proficiency; asthma ER visits, percentage without health insurance and percentage of those 65 and older; and renter-occupied homes, housing costs, cost and access to affordable energy sources, mobile homes and homes without internet access.

Consultants are asking working group members to look at current maps they have provided that begin to evaluate communities and areas as a “groundtruthing” exercise.

Another emerging issue is how to divide up the state. A significant majority of potential DACs appear to be in NYC, with smaller pockets in other areas. Should DAC's be defined solely by their poverty and vulnerability status or should quotas be assigned to various regions of the state?

The next meeting of the CJWG will be scheduled for next week.