Civil Rights and Environmental Justice Unit

3/21/25

Below are key takeaways from John Adams' 10/25/2024 presentation and discussion regarding the data and statistical aspects of the Environmental Justice Focus Population (EFJP) Definition:

1. **Geographic Scale & Margin of Error**
    - The current EJFP definition uses census block groups, which often have small sample sizes and therefore large margins of error—particularly for income and language data.
    - Moving to larger geographies (e.g., census tracts) could reduce this margin of error but could result in less granular mapping.
2. **Threshold Challenges**
    - The 1% threshold for people who speak languages other than English is so low that, given the margin of error, it can yield inconsistent or unreliable designated EJFP areas.
    - The 6% threshold for Black, Indigenous and people of color was based on older data and is over-qualifying areas labeling 90%+ of the state as EJFPs.
3. **Alternatives & Data Sources**
    - Local data sets (e.g., housing or service-providing organization data) is important to incorporate rather than relying exclusively on census estimates.
4. **Metrics**
    - Because the EJ definition is "geographically tied," there's tension between using place-based metrics to ensure impacted people receive benefits wherever they reside.
    - Differing programs within Covered Agencies may benefit from different kinds of data or definitions.