

Environmental Justice and Socioeconomics

16.1 Introduction

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) does not require consideration of potential implications to environmental justice or socioeconomics as a specific resource area. A number of state agencies, however, require that consideration be given to potential environmental justice implications of project implementation. Also, topical areas typically addressed under socioeconomics such as population and housing, public services, and growth inducement require assessment under CEQA. Therefore, in the interest of full disclosure, both environmental justice and socioeconomic resources are discussed here.

16.2 Methodology

The study area for this resource is defined as Los Angeles County, including the Val Verde Census Designated Place. This evaluation examined baseline population and housing data for these jurisdictions and analyzed potential impacts resulting from implementation of the Chiquita Canyon Landfill (CCL) Master Plan Revision (Proposed Project). Data utilized in this analysis consisted of current and forecasted demographic data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and City Data; data from the California Department of Education were also analyzed. The significance of the impacts was assessed in accordance with criteria presented in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines.

16.3 Regulatory Setting

16.3.1 Environmental Justice

There are currently no formal requirements or procedures to evaluate potential environmental justice impacts under CEQA. However, there is existing federal policy that addresses environmental justice. Additionally, several state agencies provide guidance regarding their environmental justice requirements and procedures. Existing federal policy and state environmental justice processes are discussed below.

16.3.1.1 Federal Regulations and Standards

Executive Order (EO) 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* (February 11, 1994), requires that each federal agency make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations. EO 12898 further specifies that federal agencies shall collect, maintain, and analyze information on the race, national origin, income level, and other readily accessible and appropriate information for areas surrounding facilities or sites expected to have a substantial environmental, human health effect, or economic effect on the surrounding populations.

In response to EO 12898, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a series of draft guidelines described in *Draft Revised Guidance for Investigating Title VI Administrative Complaints Challenging Permits (Draft Revised Investigation Guidance)* (EPA, YEAR) and *Draft Title VI Guidance for EPA Assistance Recipients Administering Environmental Programs (Draft Recipient Guidance)* (EPA, 2000). The purpose of these guidelines is to clarify for agencies and citizens the compliance requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. However, these guidelines have not yet been formally established.

16.3.1.2 State Regulations and Standards

Some state agencies have developed their own environmental justice guidelines, which are summarized below.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has taken steps to address environmental justice. CARB was the first state entity to adopt an environmental justice policy. CARB has taken various steps to implement the policy, including modeling best practices for public meetings, publishing a public participation handbook for agencies and the public in both English and Spanish, and developing an air quality handbook on land use. CARB has also convened a multi-stakeholder environmental justice group to serve as a forum to discuss its environmental justice program.

In October 1997, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) instituted a number of community initiatives to ensure environmental justice for all. SCAQMD initiatives include monthly public meetings, a comprehensive study of toxic hot spots, a more thorough review of environmental impact reports, creation of a task force to seek consensus on solutions to environmental justice concerns, and review of SCAQMD's toxic air containment rules.

In addition, the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle, formerly the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB)) has discussed enacting various policies related to environmental justice. These proposed policies include:

- Developing a proposal for incorporating environmental justice into its permitting process and submitting the proposal to the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) for its approval.
- Tracking demographic information for communities in which solid waste facilities are located, and making this information available to the public.

As of this writing, the CalRecycle has not enacted any standards or requirements relative to a policy on environmental justice in connection with its permitting process. However, Assembly Bill (AB) 1497, enacted into law in 2003, requires that for any revision of a solid waste facility's permit, an informational public meeting must be held, and environmental justice considerations must be considered in the permit meeting notice. Specifically, the enforcement agency shall consider environmental justice issues when preparing and distributing the notice to ensure that the notice is concise and understandable for limited-English-speaking populations.

No additional legislative or regulatory guidance has been adopted either by subsequent legislation or by regulation to determine the types and kinds of discussion appropriate for the public meeting process. Regulations to implement AB 1497's permit revision process requirements were adopted on June 27, 2012. The regulations do not contain any policy or other information concerning environmental justice matters.

CalEPA has established a model environmental justice program that involves an Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice and a multi-stakeholder Advisory Committee made up of 17 members to guide program and policy development and to develop an environmental justice strategy for the CalEPA. The interagency working group, which includes the Office of Planning and Research (OPR), will consider the recommendations as it develops its environmental justice strategy. Other entities within CalEPA have also engaged in environmental justice activities, such as the Department of Toxic Substances Control.

The California Resources Agency has finalized an environmental justice policy that includes a mission statement, background, policy statement, and a framework for its implementation program. In addition, the California Resources Agency convenes interagency meetings of environmental justice staff involved to discuss environmental justice efforts. OPR has provided consultation in its policy development and as it embarks on phase two of CEQA amendments to address environmental justice. Various departments within the California Resources Agency have also taken the initiative to address environmental justice.

The California Energy Commission (CEC) has conducted environmental justice analyses as part of its certification process for more than 50 large thermal power plants over the past 8 years, and also has been an active and long-term participant in the OPR environmental justice Steering Committee. The CEC has provided

presentations on its environmental justice approach at OPR environmental justice coordinating committee meetings and at various other environmental justice related forums sponsored by government and private entities. The CEC has made many improvements to its environmental justice analysis approach over the years, and has also begun providing in-house environmental justice training to its staff.

The California State Lands Commission (SLC) adopted an environmental justice policy in October 2002 after distributing an interim policy to 51 environmental justice and community organizations throughout California for comment. In its policy, the SLC “pledges to continue and enhance its processes, decisions, and programs with environmental justice as an essential consideration.” The policy also cites the definition of environmental justice in state law and points out that this definition “is consistent with the Public Trust Doctrine principle that the management of trust lands is for the benefit of all of the people.” The SLC was aided in its drafting efforts by OPR, which provided background information and examples of environmental justice policies and statements from both the public and private sector.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) released a Director’s Policy and a Deputy Directive in November of 2001, which lists specific responsibilities for various levels of staff to address environmental justice. Caltrans also administers an Environmental Justice: Context-Sensitive Planning Grant Program. The purpose of this environmental justice grant is to promote more public involvement by diverse and underserved communities in the planning of transportation projects to prevent or mitigate disproportionate, negative impacts of plans and projects while improving the mobility, access, equity, and quality of life of these communities. Outside state agency, staff also assists in reviewing these environmental justice grant applications, including the OPR. OPR has also assisted Caltrans in providing environmental justice training to local communities.

Other initiatives to ensure environmental equity have come in the form of legislation. In 1999, the former California State Senator Hilda Solis authored an environmental justice bill, Senate Bill (SB) 115, which required that CalEPA develop a model environmental justice mission statement for its boards, departments, and offices. The mission statement is as follows:

- To accord the highest respect and value to every individual and community, [CalEPA] and its Boards, Departments, and Offices shall conduct their public health and environmental protection programs, policies, and activities in a manner that is designed to promote equality and afford fair treatment, full access and full protection to all Californians, including low income and minority populations.

SB 115 also specified that CalEPA, in designing its mission for programs, policies, and standards, do all of the following:

- Conduct its programs, policies, and activities that substantially affect human health or the environment in a manner that ensures the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and income levels, including minority populations and low-income populations of the state.
- Promote enforcement of all health and environmental statutes within its jurisdiction in a manner that ensures the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and income levels, including minority populations and low-income populations in the state.
- Ensure greater public participation in the CalEPA’s development, adoption, and implementation of environmental regulations and policies.
- Improve research and data collection for programs within the agency relating to the health of, and environment of, people of all races, cultures, and income levels, including minority populations and low-income populations of the state.
- Identify differential patterns of consumption of natural resources among people of different classifications for programs within the agency.

A second California bill, SB 89, called for the formation of a working group on environmental justice that would be responsible for developing and implementing environmental justice strategies. The bill also made some minor changes to the provisions of SB 115 by adding the following items to the bulleted list above:

- Coordinate its efforts and share information with EPA.
- Consult with and review any information received from the Working Group on Environmental Justice established to assist the CalEPA in developing an agency-wide environmental justice strategy.

16.4 Regional Setting

CCL is located in the northwestern portion of unincorporated Los Angeles County approximately 3 miles west of the Interstate 5 (I-5) and State Route 126 (SR-126) junction. CCL is approximately 7 miles northwest of the City of Santa Clarita, 3.5 miles southwest of the community of Castaic, and approximately 0.5 miles southwest of Val Verde, which is an unincorporated community in Los Angeles County and the nearest existing community to CCL. The study area for evaluating potential environmental justice impacts consists of the census block group in which the landfill resides, which includes the community of Val Verde. Demographic data from the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau were used, in addition to other sources such as City Data.

16.4.1 Demographic Characteristics

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the County of Los Angeles had a total population of 9,818,605 persons in 2010. The U.S. Census population estimate for Los Angeles County is 9,889,056 persons as of July 1, 2011. According to the 2010 U.S. Census population, Val Verde had a population of 2,468 persons.

Selected demographic information for the County and Val Verde are provided in Tables 16-1 and 16-2.

TABLE 16-1
2010 Population Data

Category	Los Angeles County	Val Verde (CDP)
Total Persons	9,818,605	2,468
Families	2,194,080	534
Households	3,241,204	671

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Demographic Profile Data

Note: A family consists of a householder and one or more persons living in the same household who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption. A household includes all persons who occupy a housing unit (e.g., a house apartment, mobile home).

CDP = Census Designated Place (unincorporated community)

TABLE 16-2
2010 Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristic	Los Angeles County		Val Verde CDP	
	Total Persons	Percent	Total Persons	Percent
Total Population	9,818,605		2,468	
Not Hispanic or Latino:				
White alone	2,728,321	27.8	737	29.9
Black/African American alone	815,086	8.3	98	4.0
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	18,886	0.2	6	0.2
Asian alone	1,325,671	13.5	44	1.8
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	22,464	0.2	0	0.0
Other Race alone	25,367	0.3	6	0.2
Two or More Races	194,921	2.0	70	2.8

TABLE 16-2
2010 Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristic	Los Angeles County		Val Verde CDP	
	Total Persons	Percent	Total Persons	Percent
Hispanic or Latino:				
Hispanic Origin (of any race)	4,687,889	47.7	1,507	61.1
Total Minority Population	7,090,284	72.2	1,731	70.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Demographic Profile Data
CDP = Census Designated Place (unincorporated community)

The age distribution for the populations of Los Angeles County and Val Verde is shown in Table 16-3. The proportion of the population aged 19 years and younger is slightly higher in Val Verde than for the County as a whole, while the population aged 65 years and older is noticeably lower in Val Verde versus the County.

TABLE 16-3
2010 Population Age Distribution

Age Category (years)	Los Angeles County		Val Verde	
	Total Persons	Percent	Total Persons	Percent
0-19	2,711,958	27.7	785	31.8
20-34	2,228,519	22.7	573	23.2
35-54	2,799,273	28.5	743	30.1
55-64	1,013,156	10.3	243	9.8
65 +	1,065,699	10.9	124	5.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Demographic Profile Data

The estimated median household income per year for Los Angeles County for 2006 to 2010 was \$55,476; median family income was \$61,622; and per capita income was \$27,344. During the same period in Val Verde, the median household income was \$57,024; median family income was \$56,934; and per capita income was \$15,724 (2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). The poverty level for populations of Los Angeles County and Val Verde are shown in Table 16-4.

TABLE 16-4
2006-2010 Persons Below Poverty Level

Income Below Poverty Level	Los Angeles County		Val Verde CDP	
	Total Persons	Percent	Total Persons	Percent
Number of Individuals below poverty level	1,508,618	15.7	237	9.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey
CDP = Census Designated Place (unincorporated community)

Note: Los Angeles County poverty level estimate is based on a total population of 9,604,871;
Val Verde CDP poverty level estimate is based on a total population of 2,603.

16.4.2 Housing

The total housing stock for Los Angeles County in 2010 was 3,445,076 units, of which 3,241,204 were occupied and 203,872 were vacant, resulting in a vacancy rate of approximately 5.9 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The median value of owner-occupied housing units in the county for 2006 to 2010 was \$508,800. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), new housing units authorized for construction in Los Angeles County in 2010 numbered 9,895. Of these, 2,275 (23.0 percent) were single-family residences and 7,620 were multi-family residences.

Val Verde contained a total of 715 housing units, of which 671 were occupied and 44 were vacant, resulting in a vacancy rate of approximately 6.2 percent.

16.4.3 Schools

There are 93 school districts in Los Angeles County, a total of 2,162 schools. For the 2010-2011 school year, there were approximately 1,589,390 students. On average, there is about one full-time teacher for every 22 students. Average class size is about 24 students. CCL is located in the Castaic Union School District, which has elementary and middle schools. The Castaic Union School District employs 210 certificated, 152 classified, and 18 confidential/management personnel. There is approximately one full-time teacher for every 22 students. Average class size is about 27 students. The total number of students enrolled in kindergarten through eighth grade for the Castaic Union School District was 2,982 for the 2010-2011 school year. Students of high school age attend the West Ranch High School in the William S. Hart Union High School District.

16.5 Potential Impacts

This chapter evaluates the potential impacts that implementation of the Proposed Project could have on environmental justice and socioeconomic conditions in the vicinity of CCL.

16.5.1 Thresholds of Significance

16.5.1.1 Environmental Justice

As noted earlier, currently there are no formal requirements or procedures to evaluate potential environmental justice impacts under CEQA. CEQA is an informational statutory process that addresses impacts of a project that can or will potentially cause a physical change to the environment. However, the following assessment of potential disproportionate environmental effects to low-income and minority populations is consistent with the environmental justice guidelines for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) identified in the federal document: *Environmental Justice: Guidance Under the National Environmental Policy Act* (Council on Environmental Quality, 1997).

The criterion below is used to determine if the Proposed Project would result in an environmental justice impact:

- A project could have an environmental justice impact if high and adverse project impacts disproportionately affect a minority population or a low-income population.

16.5.1.2 Socioeconomics

Significance criteria for socioeconomics are based on CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G, Environmental Checklist Form. An impact would be considered significant if the Proposed Project would:

- Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)
- Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere
- Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere

16.5.2 Proposed Project

Potential impacts of the Proposed Project related to environmental justice and socioeconomics are described below with respect to the above standards of significance.

16.5.2.1 Environmental Justice

As defined in the EO and the CEQA Guidance, minority populations are defined using racial groups (American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black/African American) and ethnicity (persons of Hispanic origin). An environmental justice impact could be considered to exist where: (1) the minority

population of the affected area exceeds 50 percent; and (2) the minority population portion in the affected area is meaningfully greater than that in the general population or other appropriate geographical unit of comparison. For the purpose of this evaluation, because CCL is a countywide facility, the minority percentage of the general population of the County of Los Angeles is used as the basis for comparison in determining if a minority population is considered to exist.

As shown in Table 16-2, the percent of the 2010 Census Bureau population classified as minority in Los Angeles County is 72.2, and in Val Verde it is 70.1. Considering the two criteria above for determining if a minority population exists, it is evident the minority population of Val Verde does not exceed the minority population of Los Angeles County, which serves as the basis of comparison for this analysis. Thus, the Proposed Project, as determined using the above-stated criteria, would not disproportionately affect a minority population, and potential environmental justice impacts, if present, would be considered less than significant.

To assess low-income populations, the 2010 Census Bureau's poverty thresholds were used. The U.S. Census Bureau defined poverty as:

- One person, under 65 years: \$11,344
- One person, 65 years and over: \$10,458
- Two people, householder under 65 years, no children under 18 years: \$14,602
- Two people, householder under 65 years, one child under 18 years: \$15,030
- Four people, including two children under 18 years: \$22,113

As shown in Table 16-4, the proportion of persons living below the poverty level in Los Angeles County is 15.7 percent and in Val Verde it is 9.1 percent. This is less than 50 percent of the total number of persons in the respective areas. Additionally, the portion of the population of Val Verde living below poverty level is less than that of Los Angeles County, which serves as the basis of comparison for this analysis. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not disproportionately affect a low-income population, and no potential impacts associated with environmental justice are anticipated.

16.5.2.2 Socioeconomics

The Proposed Project would increase by approximately 25 full-time staff, for a total of approximately 50 full-time staff. The increase in staff is expected to be met by local persons and would not induce population growth in the area. Existing housing and school facilities are adequate to meet current demand. The Proposed Project would not directly or indirectly induce population growth because CCL is an existing operating facility. Additionally, the Proposed Project would maintain the intended land uses of the site and would not conflict with applicable land use plans or adopted policies. Because the Proposed Project would not directly or indirectly induce population growth and would not displace existing housing or people, no potential impacts associated with socioeconomic resources are anticipated.

16.6 Mitigation Measures

No significant adverse impacts to environmental justice or socioeconomic resources resulting from the Proposed Project are anticipated; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

16.7 Significance After Mitigation

The Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts associated with environmental justice or socioeconomics.

16.8 Cumulative Impacts

16.8.1 Potential Cumulative Impacts

The cumulative projects discussed in Chapter 3.0 would add a combination of residential, commercial, open space, public, and industrial uses within the vicinity of the Proposed Project. However, because the area

surrounding CCL does not have disproportionately minority or low-income populations, the cumulative projects are not anticipated to result in socioeconomic or environmental justice impacts to surrounding communities.

The analysis provided above in Section 16.5.2 shows that the Proposed Project would not result in a significant impact related to socioeconomics or environmental justice. Likewise, the Proposed Project, when combined with reasonably foreseeable projects in the project vicinity, is not expected to incrementally contribute to cumulative impacts related to socioeconomics or environmental justice.

16.8.2 Mitigation Measures Required for Cumulative Impacts

No cumulative impacts associated with socioeconomics or environmental justice would result from implementation of the Proposed Project; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.