

RCW 43.70.815 Environmental health disparities map. (1) In consultation with the environmental justice council established in RCW 70A.02.110, the department must continue to develop and maintain an environmental health disparities map with the most current available information necessary to identify cumulative environmental health impacts and overburdened communities. The department may also consult with other interested partners, such as the University of Washington department of environmental and occupational health sciences, other academic partners, members of overburdened communities and vulnerable populations, and other agencies. The environmental health disparities map must include tools to:

(a) Track changes in environmental health disparities over time in an interactive, regularly updated display; and

(b) Measure the link between overall environmental health disparity map ranks, environmental data, vulnerable populations characteristics, such as race and income, and human health data.

(2) In further developing and maintaining the environmental health disparities map, the department must:

(a) Solicit feedback from representatives from overburdened communities and vulnerable populations through community engagement and listening sessions in all regions of the state and provide opportunities for public comment; and

(b) Request assistance from:

(i) State universities;

(ii) Other academic researchers, such as the Washington state institute for public policy, to perform modeling and create evidence-based indicators and to conduct sensitivity analyses to assess the impact of new indicators on communities and determinations of overburdened communities; and

(iii) Other state agencies to provide applicable statewide environmental and sampling data for air, water, soil, polluted sites, toxic waste, pesticides, toxic chemicals, and other applicable media.

(3) The department must:

(a) Document and publish a summary of the regular updates and revisions to the environmental health disparities map that happen over time as the new data becomes available, in order to help the public understand different versions of the map as they are published;

(b) At least every three years, perform a comprehensive evaluation of the map to ensure that the most current modeling and methods available to evaluate cumulative environmental health impacts are being used to develop and update the environmental health disparities map's indicators;

(c) Develop technical guidance for agencies that includes an online training video detailing a description of how to use the environmental health disparities map's features, access source data, and explanation of map and indicator limitations; and

(d) Provide support and consultation to agencies on the use of the environmental health disparities map by Washington tracking network staff.

(4) (a) By November 1, 2022, the Washington state institute for public policy must conduct a technical review of the measures and methods used in the environmental health disparities map. The review must, to the extent possible, address the following:

(i) Identify how the measures used in the map compare to measures used in other similar tools that aim to identify communities that are disproportionately impacted as a result of environmental justice issues;

(ii) Compare characteristics such as the reliability, validity, and clinical importance of individual and composite measures included in the map and other similar tools; and

(iii) Compare methodologies used in the map to statistical methodologies used in other similar tools.

(b) The department of health and the University of Washington must provide technical documentation regarding current methods to the Washington state institute for public policy and must consult with the institute as needed to ensure that the institute has adequate information to complete the technical review.

(c) By November 1, 2022, the Washington state institute for public policy must submit a report on their findings to the office of the governor, the appropriate committees of the legislature, and the environmental justice council. [2021 c 314 s 19.]

Conflict with federal requirements—2021 c 314: See note following RCW 70A.02.005.