

July 31, 2023

University of Connecticut, Avery Campus  
Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation

## RE: Comments on Connecticut Environmental Justice Screening Tool

Dear Dr. Yaprak Onat:

Acadia Center appreciates the unique opportunity to provide comments on the Connecticut Environmental Justice Mapping tool. [Acadia Center](http://www.acadiacenter.org) is a nonprofit research and advocacy organization pushing for equitable climate solutions and a transition to clean energy that benefits all communities in Connecticut.

We are pleased to see version 1.5 of the state's Environmental Justice Screening tool and the invitation to provide comments on the tool. As an organization, we have closely worked with and supported the efforts of the Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3) and are eager to contribute further by providing comments on the screening tool.

We acknowledge the broad data categorization and the extensive enumeration of factors in the Environmental Justice Index including *Pollution burden* and *Sensitive Population*. We understand that the screening tool is unable to give an individual exposure level to pollution. However, we understand the value of taking advantage of the data and factors in the tool to provide specificity on the group's susceptibility to pollution. Acadia Center advises designing the tool to explore how specific combinations of socioeconomic factors in the *Sensitive Population* category of the Environmental Justice Index can present varying the environmental justice index score of specific groups within a census tract (for example race and poverty level alone). An incorporated update of this recommendation in Version 2.0 will help census tracts and communities understand their socioeconomic disadvantage with the supported data to seek out opportunities to better their communities and close gaps of inequalities that result from such factors. This accommodation will further close the limitation of the tool in providing individual-level exposure and vulnerability to pollution in a census tract.

We would like to also acknowledge the various advisory teams that have contributed to shaping this tool to create the current version. We commend the University of Connecticut research group for its collaborative effort in creating the tool. Acadia Center is eager to provide additional support to see the finalization and adoption of the state's Environmental Justice tool.



# Acadia Center

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Sincerely,

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