

Nov 2022

Environmental Justice Issue Paper and Delta Residents Survey

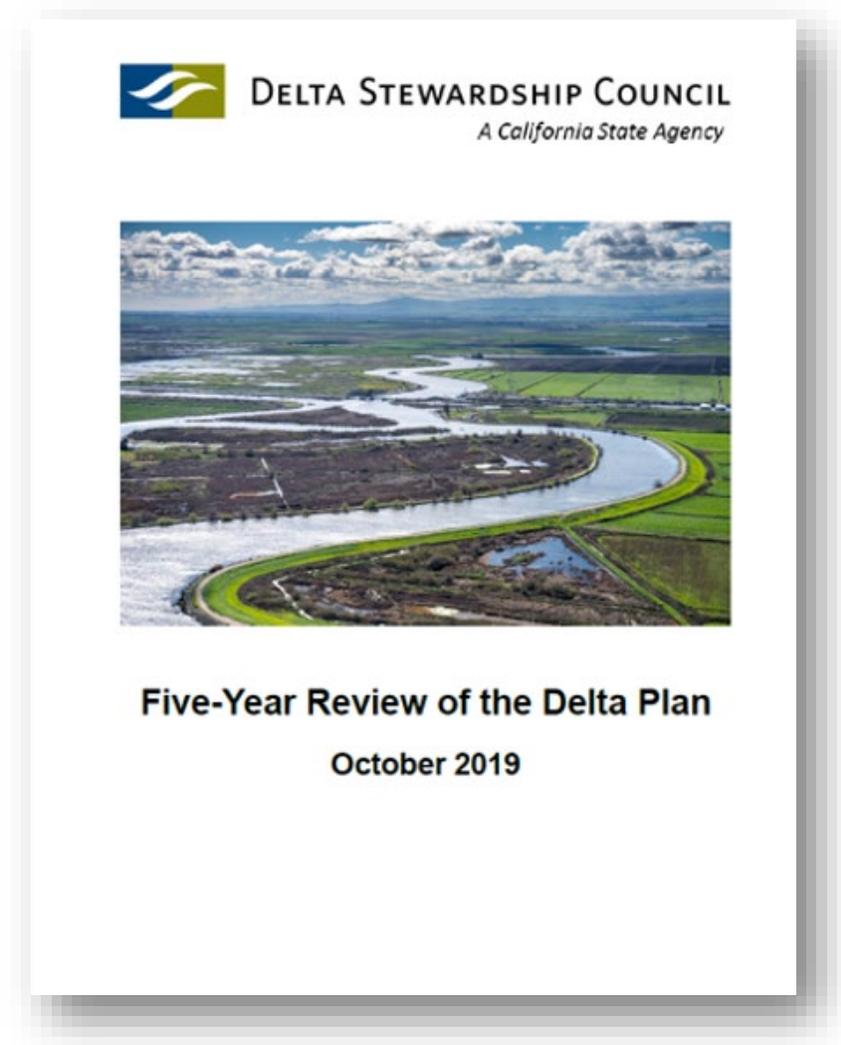


**Delta
Stewardship
Council**

A CALIFORNIA STATE AGENCY

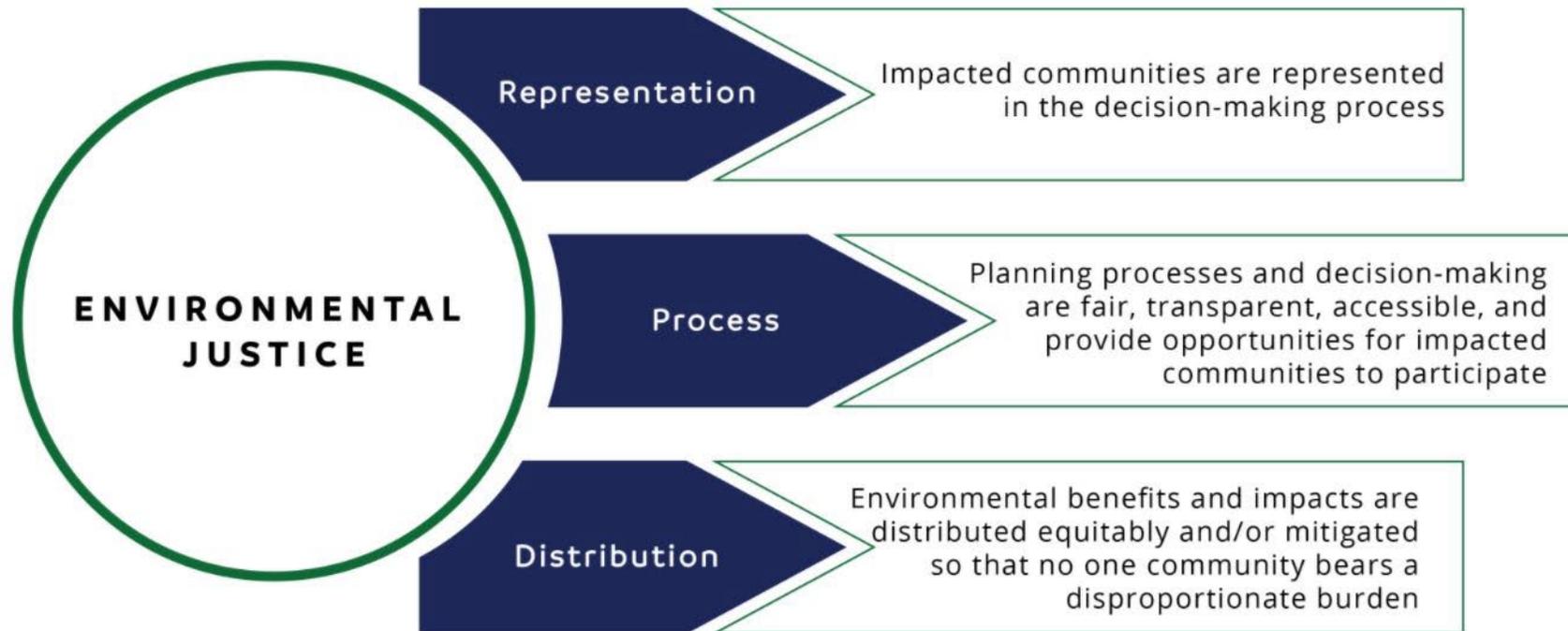
Purpose

- The Council's 2019 **Five-Year Review** of the Delta Plan...
 - Identified EJ as a key emerging issue.
 - Recommended that staff **prepare an issue paper** "to investigate the potential need for additional strategies or responses within the Delta Plan to address disadvantaged communities and EJ."



Environmental Justice (EJ)

- The fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. (Gov. Code, § 65040.12, subd. (e)).



Objectives of EJ Issue Paper



Build a network of community leaders and organizations to inform and support the Council's EJ work;

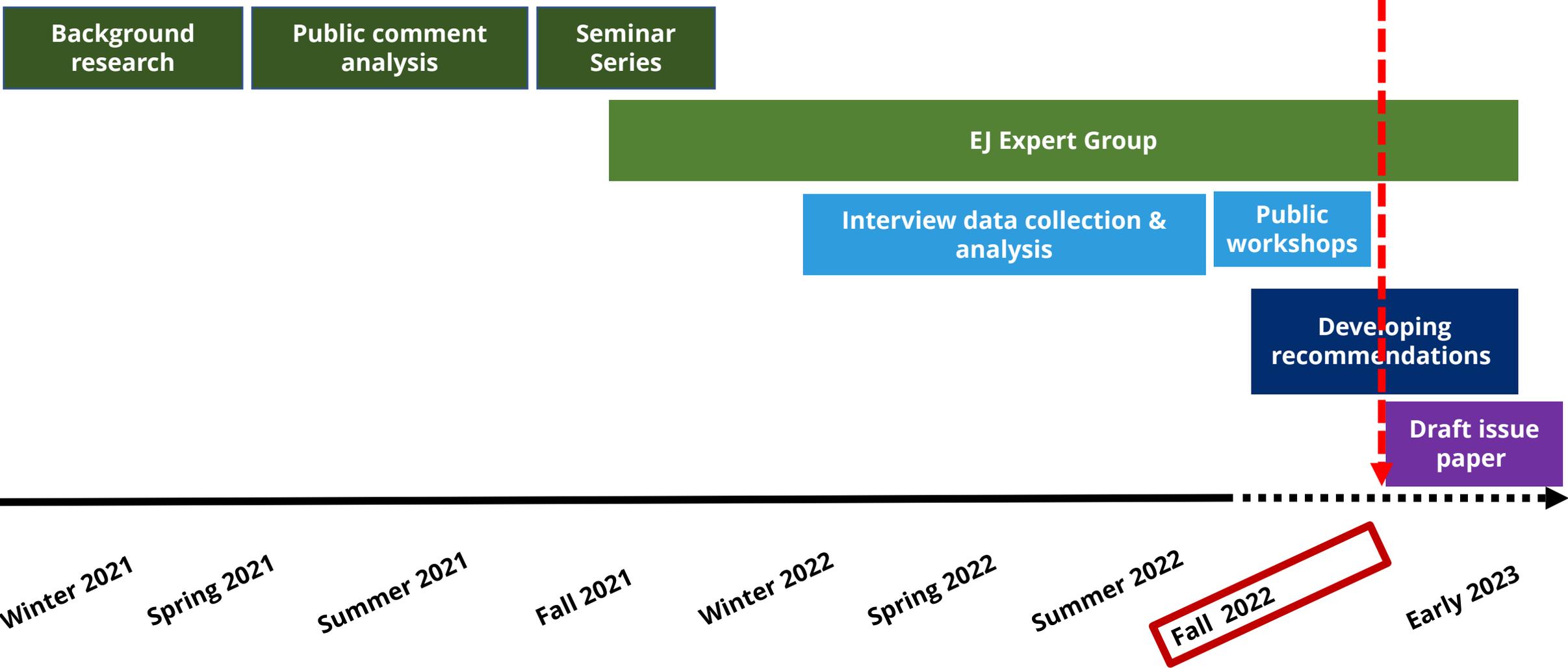


Identify environmental justice issues impacting communities in and around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta; and



Identify options to address those issues.

Progress to date



Expert Group

- **Barbara Barrigan-Parilla,**
Restore the Delta
- **Bob Erlenbusch,**
Sacramento Regional Coalition
to End Homelessness
- **Matt Holmes,**
Little Manila Rising
- **Sherri Norris,**
California Indian
Environmental Alliance

Overview of Interviews

- **22 interviews** with EJ and community-based organizations
- Targeted **issue diversity** and **regional geographic** coverage

Interviewees' focus areas:

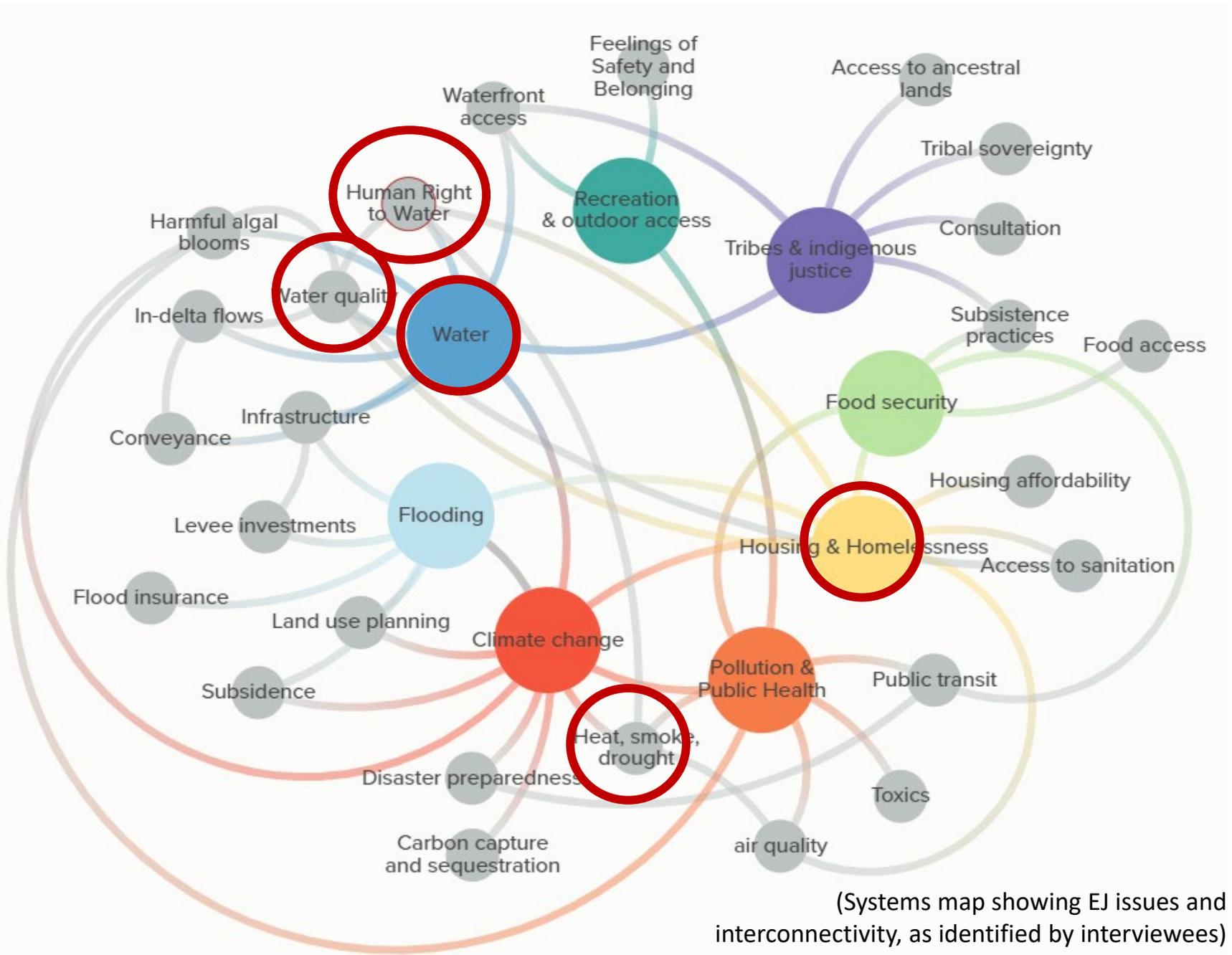
- General EJ
- Water
- Public health
- Jobs/ workforce training/ education
- Housing & unhoused communities
- Basic services (healthcare, food, housing)
- Latino/a advocacy
- Outdoor/ recreation access
- Tribes & indigenous groups
- Disability justice
- Local service providers

Geographic coverage of interviewees:

- Interior Delta (n = 2)
- Sacramento (n = 4)
- Stockton (n = 6)
- Contra Costa County (n = 4)
- Bay Area (n = 3)
- Statewide (n = 3)

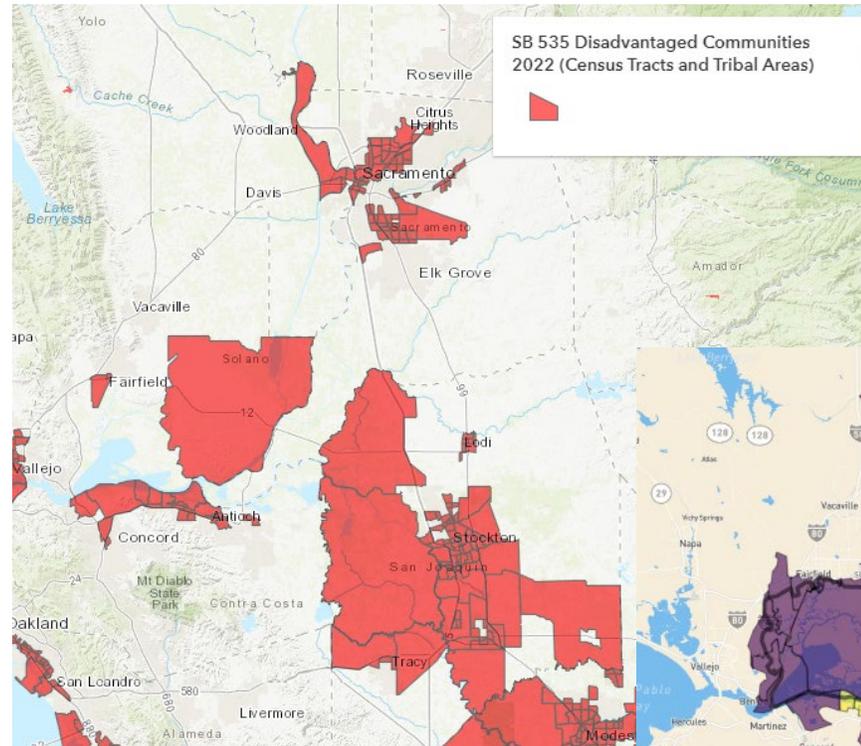
EJ issues from Inte

“Everything is **connected**. When you change one thing, it will change another. We must use that **intersection** to build [broader] community with groups that are **not explicitly focused on the issue at hand.**”

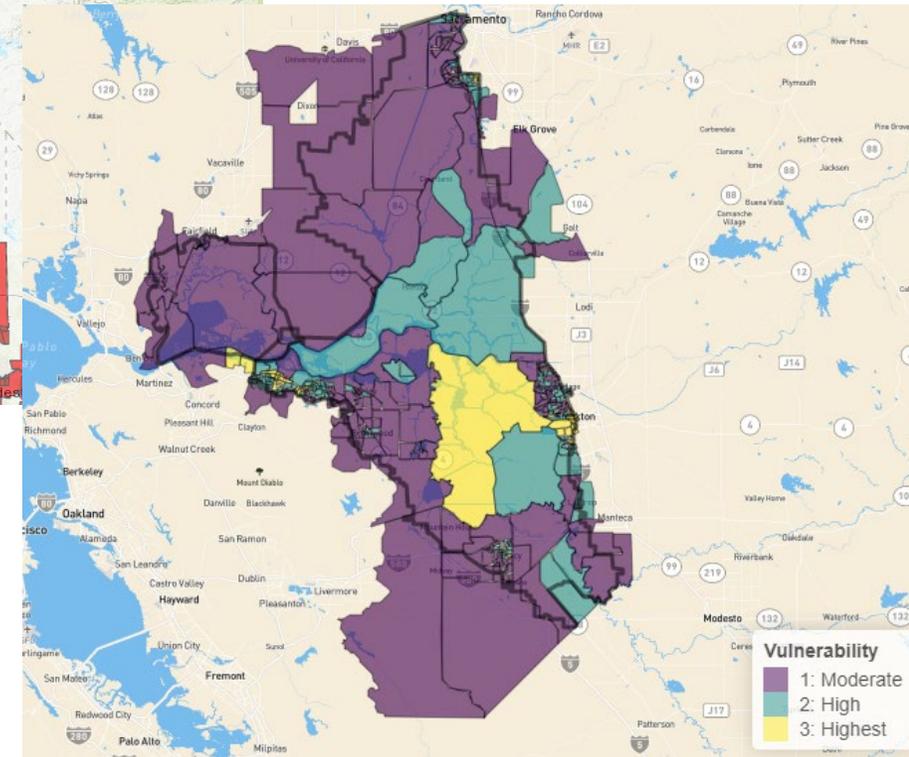


Representational Justice: Communities Impacted by EJ Issues in the Delta

- Minority communities/communities of people of color
- Low-income communities
- Tribes and Indigenous communities
- Immigrant communities
- Undocumented immigrants
- Renters
- Unhoused communities
- Food insecure communities
- Youth (youth at risk, foster youth)
- Elders/seniors
- People with disabilities
- LGBTQ+
- Delta legacy town residents

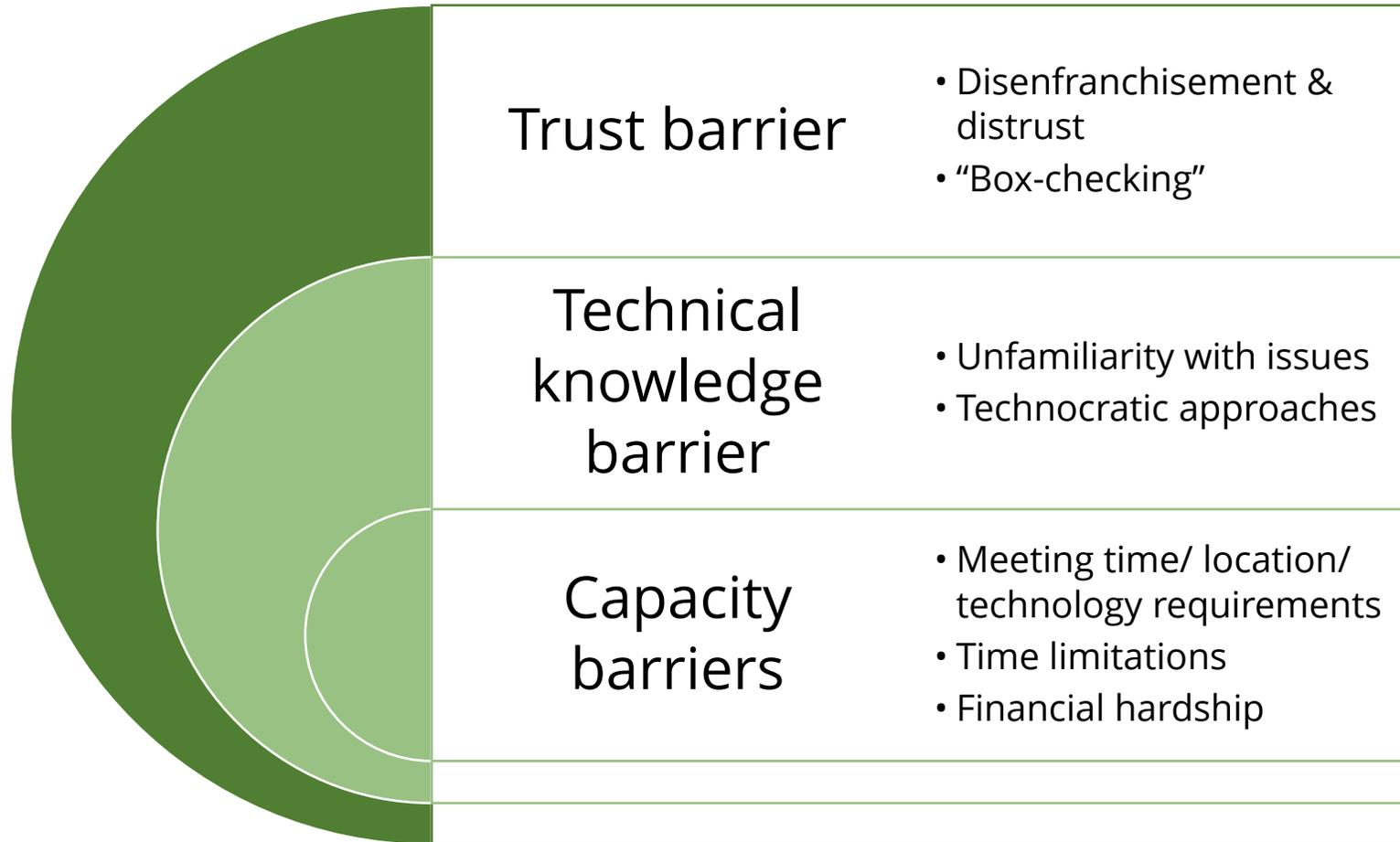


SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities: Census Tracts & Tribal Areas (CalEPA, 2022)



Social Vulnerability to Climate Change in the Delta (Delta Adapte, 2021)

Procedural Justice: Fairness, Transparency & Accessibility of Decision-Making Processes



“There’s so many agencies that want to help but it’s a lot of lip service or they just disappear. You can only have so many meetings before you think, “when is something tangible actually going to happen?”

“Meet people where they are. Address immediate issues [first], before people can care about bigger picture/longer-term issues. Bring together people that have trusted relationships with residents and trained organizers.”

Distributive Justice: Water

Water supply:

- Water rights priority system
- Insufficient in-Delta flows
- Impacts versus benefits of Conveyance

Water quality:

- Agricultural pollution and industrial contaminants
- Harmful algal blooms
- Poor groundwater quality

Water affordability:

- Water rates & rate structures
- Insufficient funding for water systems to address concerns

"...[We] send water away from the Delta, while communities in the Delta...[have] water barely above acceptable standards for drinking."

"A day will come when water is the highest cost commodity. Those who can afford it will, and those who can't will get substandard water to drink."

Key Takeaways

- **EJ issues in the Delta are wide-reaching, encompassing topics** very familiar to the Council, and areas traditionally outside of the Council's scope
- **EJ issues are extremely interconnected**; thus directions forward will need to be innovative, collaborative and multi-scale
- **EJ action is needed on multiple fronts**: government-community relations, public engagement, research, environmental monitoring and data collection in overburdened communities, analysis of policy options, planning, regulation, enforcement
- **EJ organizations were happy to share their experiences** and expertise and pleased to see Council's efforts starting with listening to communities

"We need champions to push for change from within the system."

Next Steps and Timeline

FALL 2022

- Finalize interview data analysis
- Community engagement and input on issues and recommendations
- Develop recommendations based on interview data and Expert Group

WINTER 2023

- Drafting of issue paper in collaboration with Expert Group

SPRING 2023

- Finalize issue paper, Council consideration of options



Delta Residents Survey

COMING JANUARY 2023

Goals of the survey:

1. Understand Delta residents social & environmental **well-being** and **sense of place**
2. Ensure **diverse perspectives** from all Delta communities – **urban, rural, and suburban** – are heard equally;
3. Pilot-test a research approach for potential **long-term studies** to understand how **well-being** and **way of life** for Delta communities are changing over time.

Who should participate?

- All residents in the interior rural Delta
- Sample of households in the urban Delta
- Invitations will arrive by mail in **January 2023**

All participants who respond will receive a \$5 gift-card as a thank you for your time!

Collaborative research team:



**Delta
Science
Program**

DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

More information at: <https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/social-science>

General questions to Project Lead Dr. Jessica Rudnick, *California Sea Grant Delta Extension Specialist*, (jrudnick@ucsd.edu | 916-902-6596)

Technical assistance questions to Project Coordinator Rick Mason, *Sacramento State University* (deltasurvey@csus.edu | (916) 278-2695)

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