



CALIFORNIA  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
JUSTICE ALLIANCE

# GREEN ZONES

## TRANSFORMING TOXIC HOTSPOTS INTO HEALTHY HOODS

### WHAT IS A GREEN ZONE?

Green Zones are a place-based strategy that uses community-led solutions to transform areas overburdened by pollution into healthy thriving neighborhoods. Green Zones are neighborhoods heavily impacted by pollution – most often low-income communities and communities of color – where residents are organizing to reduce industrial pollution and cultivate new, coordinated opportunities to implement community-based solutions.

Each Green Zone is a reflection of the specific needs, priorities, and environmental justice issues in the community, but all share common roots. By identifying Green Zones – communities that need to transition from toxic hotspots into healthy neighborhoods – we can direct a whole range of resources and programs into these areas.



Green Zones have developed from decades of organizing by groups working directly in low-income communities and communities of color to address the over-concentration of pollution sources and the cumulative impacts of toxic emissions. They have emerged from community efforts to re-configure the unhealthy, often discriminatory, land use patterns that have shaped how our communities look today.

### COMMON ROOTS

<b>Cumulative Impacts</b>	Green Zones struggle with a deadly combination of pollution, public health burdens, and socioeconomic stressors, and are located in some of the most highly impacted areas according to the CalEnviroScreen 2.0 that measures cumulative impacts.
<b>Unhealthy Land Use</b>	Green Zone communities demonstrate that land use planning can help address old problems while creating a path forward to implement solutions by leading community-based processes to develop specific plans for their neighborhoods.

### CORE PRINCIPLES

<b>Comprehensive</b>	Green Zones use a holistic approach to neighborhood transformation. They shift away from fighting community health threats one-by-one to a more comprehensive approach based on principles of justice and sustainability.
<b>Community-Led</b>	Green Zones lift up the voices and visions of residents first and foremost. By building long-term opportunities for community development, they ensure that long-time residents are protected and directly benefit from any new development.
<b>Solutions-Oriented</b>	Green Zones advance multiple solutions, including pollution reduction, transitioning off fossil fuels, affordable housing, local jobs, open and green space, increased access to healthy food, infrastructure equity, and preservation of community culture.
<b>Collaborative</b>	Green Zones seek to implement big changes, and no one organization can do it alone. From local coalitions to task forces and working groups that bring together local, state, and federal agencies, implementing Green Zones requires multi-faceted partnerships.

# ADVANCING GREEN ZONES ACROSS CALIFORNIA

Green Zones are not just an opportunity for low-income communities and communities of color to live in healthy, thriving neighborhoods. It is an opportunity for all of California and the country to begin implementing the just, sustainable policies that are needed to face the changing climate and changing world. Green Zones can become a model for strengthening local economies, environments, and democracies across California and the country.

For the California Environmental Justice Alliance, a statewide coalition that works in partnership with many organizations, Green Zones is about developing policies guided by community priorities. We strive to advance visionary statewide policies that move us away from environmental silos and towards the transformation of toxic hotspots.

We see three critical areas of work to help advance the overall movement for Green Zones:



## 1. Lift up the success of local Green Zones across the state

We honor the hard work of community-based organizations, the residents they work with, and believe the solutions being developed on-the-ground must be elevated to a statewide level.

## 2. Support statewide efforts to identify overburdened communities

Cumulative impact screening like CalEnviroScreen 2.0 can be critical tools to link overburdened communities to statewide resources, policies and benefits that support Green Zone solutions. In the future, CalEnviroScreen 2.0 can also be used for local, regional, and statewide environmental enforcement, permitting, and other regulatory decisions that help reduce toxic burdens in Green Zones.

## 3. Advance visionary policies that support all Green Zones

Grounded in the local organizing of Green Zones across the state, we seek to advance statewide policies that address the common roots and lift up the core principles of all Green Zones.

CEJA, our members, partners, allies, and hopefully more organizations and communities in the future, will continue to advance the transformative Green Zones model both on the ground and statewide. Through this multifaceted, coordinated approach we will strengthen the statewide movement to transform toxic hotspots into healthy, thriving Green Zones.

Please read our full "Green Zones Across California" Report at [bit.ly/GreenZonesAcrossCA](http://bit.ly/GreenZonesAcrossCA)

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