

Summary of SCAG's Draft Proposed Technical Approach for the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) – July 2015

Overview

For the 2016 – 2040 RTP/SCS, SCAG will be conducting an analysis to determine if the Plan results in any potential disproportionately high and adverse impacts to various environmental justice groups. For this round of the RTP/SCS, SCAG will build on the 2012 Plan and will also include new technical approaches and performance areas that have been requested by stakeholders through our outreach efforts.

The proposed performance areas to be included in SCAG's upcoming analysis are:

- Benefits and Burdens Analysis
 - RTP revenue sources in terms of tax burdens
 - Share of transportation system usage
 - RTP/SCS investments
- Distribution of travel time savings and travel distance reductions
- Jobs-housing imbalance or jobs-housing mismatch
- Accessibility to employment and services
- Accessibility to parks and natural lands
- Gentrification and displacement
- Air quality impacts along freeways
- Environmental impacts of plan and baseline scenarios
- Aviation noise impacts
- Roadway noise impacts
- Active transportation hazards
- Public Health Impacts
- Rail-related impacts
- Climate adaptation

Geographic Based Analysis

In measuring the outcomes of the plan, SCAG will conduct a regional analysis on all topics to identify any potential disproportionately high and adverse impacts from the 2016 Plan on various environmental justice groups. Adverse effects are defined by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in the 2012 Environmental Justice Policy Guidance for Federal Transit Administration Recipients as:

“the totality of significant individual or cumulative human health or environmental effects, including interrelated social and economic effects, which may include, but are not limited to: bodily impairment, infirmity, illness, or death; air, noise, and water pollution and soil contamination; destruction or disruption of man-made or natural resources; destruction or diminution of aesthetic values; destruction or disruption of community cohesion or a community's economic vitality; destruction or disruption of the availability of public and private facilities and services; vibration; adverse employment effects; displacement of persons, businesses, farms, or non-profit organizations; increased traffic congestion, isolation, exclusion or separation of individuals within a given community or from the broader community; and the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits of [Department of Transportation] programs, policies, or activities”.

Adverse effects are disproportionate when they are

(1) “predominately borne by minority population and/or low income population”, or (2) “will be suffered by the minority population and/or low-income population and is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that will be suffered by the non-minority and/or non-low-income population” (Federal Register Volume 77, Issue 137).

In order to determine if there are disproportionately high and adverse impacts to environmental justice communities, SCAG will conduct a regional analysis, and will also drill down into specific areas of concern to address the impacts of the 2016-2040 RTP/SCS for a selection of performance areas. This is a practice that was developed by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), and has been tailored to suit our region.

Specific areas of concern include:

- Environmental Justice Areas - Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs), which are similar to block groups, that have a higher concentration of minority OR low income households than is seen in the region as a whole (Figure 1). The inclusion of this geography helps to fulfill SCAG's Title VI requirements, along with other state and federal environmental justice guidelines
- SB 535 Disadvantaged Areas – Census tracts that have been identified by Cal/EPA as Disadvantaged Communities based on the requirements set forth in SB 535, which seek to identify areas disproportionately burdened by and vulnerable to multiple sources of pollution (Figure 2)
- Communities of Concern – Census Designated Places (CDPs) and City of Los Angeles Community Planning Areas (CPAs) that fall in the upper 1/3rd of all communities in the SCAG Region for having the highest concentration of minority population AND low income households (Figure 3)

Impacts will be judged for these geographies by comparing the outcomes of the Plan Scenario for the RTP/SCS against the Baseline Scenario for a selection of performance areas, which will be determined based on the availability of data. For example, if the average concentration of particulate matter (PM) is higher in Communities of Concern as a result of the Plan (Plan vs. Baseline), this could be an indicator that disproportionately high and adverse impacts are present and must be reduced, mitigated, or avoided.

Building on the analysis of the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS, SCAG will also continue to examine the impacts of the proposed Plan for areas that are known to have specific environmental vulnerabilities.

These include:

- Areas within 500 feet of highways and commercial rail roads
- Areas within a ½ mile buffer of existing rail transit stops (gentrification/displacement)
- Neighborhoods that fall within potential future emissions hotspots (based the RTP/SCS's modeled on-road emissions outcomes for PM and CO)

Potential impacts will be determined if the plan results in negative circumstances for these areas (Plan vs. Baseline), and if they have a greater concentration of environmental justice groups than is seen in the greater region.

Environmental Justice Groups

SCAG will assess the impacts of the Plan for the following environmental justice groups:

- Racial and ethnic groups (Asian/Pacific Islanders, African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Two or More Races/Others, and Whites)
- Households in poverty
- Households by ranked income quintiles (the lowest earning 20% of households, the next lowest earning 20% of households, etc.)
- Non-English speakers
- Households without vehicles
- Population without a high school degree or equivalent
- Disabled individuals
- Seniors, ages 65 and over
- Young children, ages 4 and under

Figure 1: Environmental Justice Areas

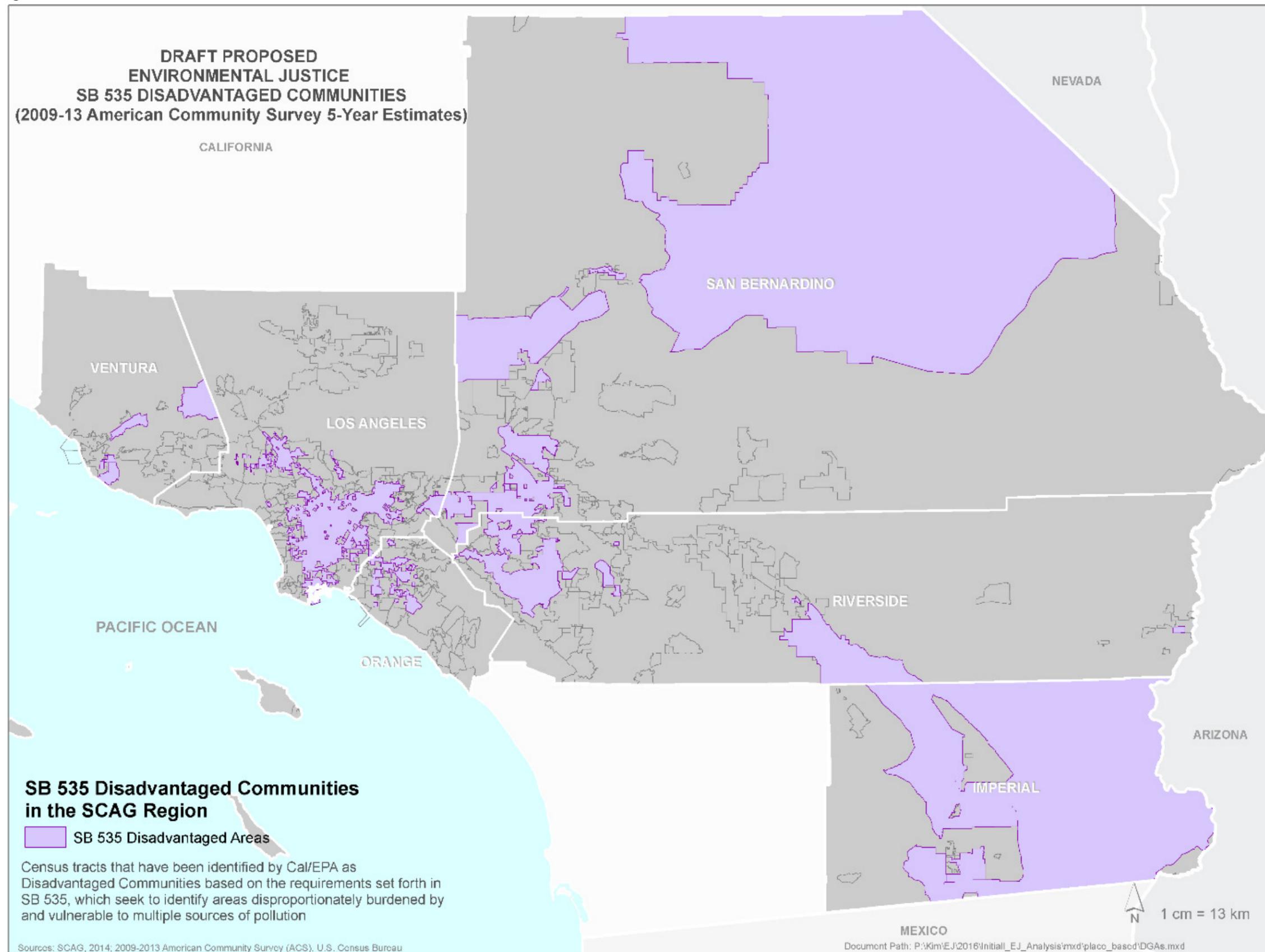


Figure 2: SB 535 Disadvantaged Areas

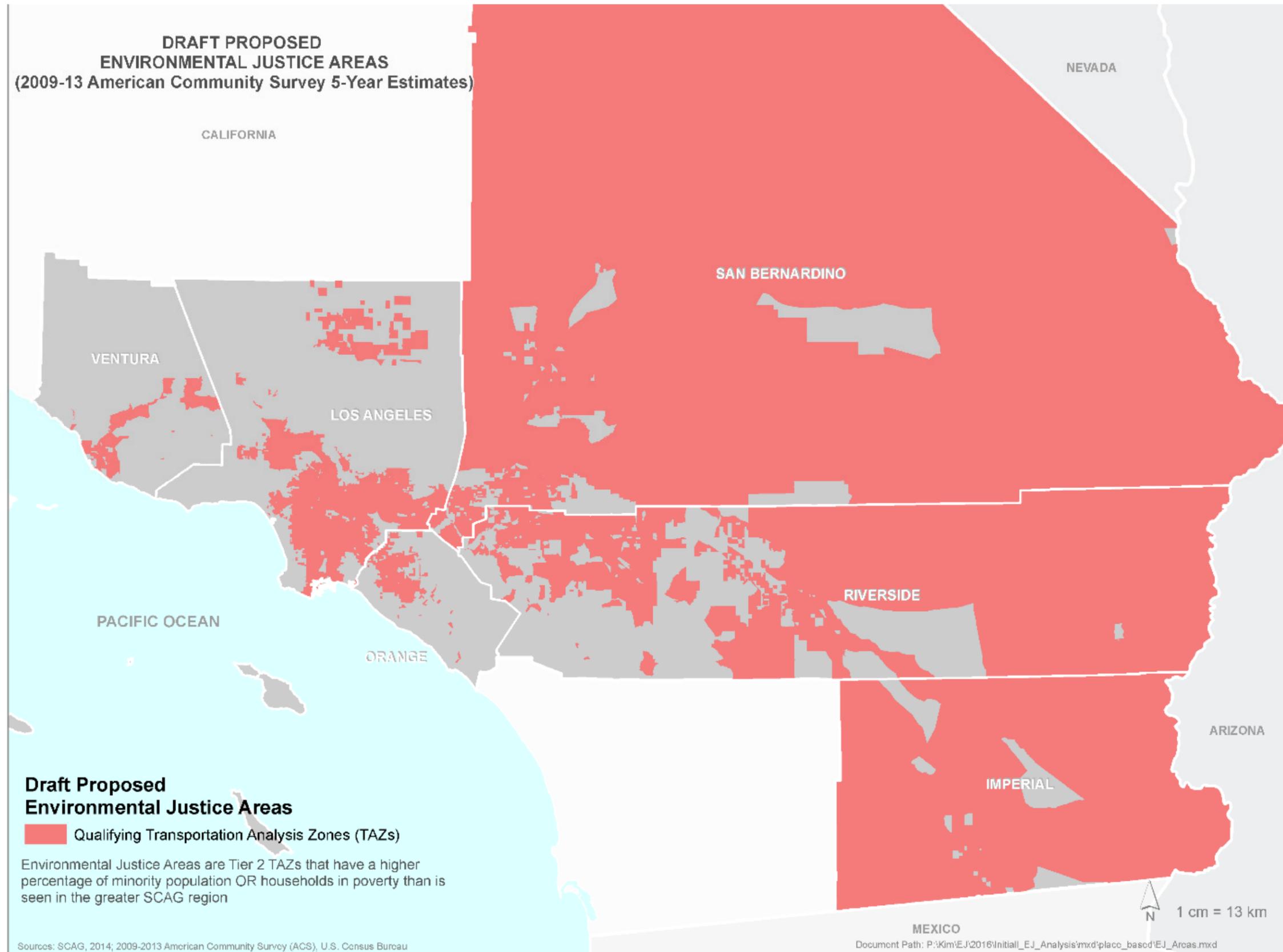


Figure 3: Communities of Concern

