



UC Center Sacramento Policy Brief

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Planning for Food Justice: Advancing Equity through California's SB 1000

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SB 1000, which passed in 2016, required cities and counties with "disadvantaged communities" (as defined by SB 535 through CalEPA's CalEnviroScreen) to incorporate environmental justice policies into their General Plan. The requirement is triggered when these cities and counties concurrently update two or more elements of their General Plan. In May 2022, with support from the Berkeley Food Institute, I launched a research project alongside Susana Matias, Cooperative Extension Specialist in the Department of Nutritional Sciences and Toxicology at UC Berkeley, and Katherine Fallon, a graduate student in UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design, to track SB 1000 implementation across the state. While SB 1000 takes a comprehensive approach to environmental justice, our project looks more specifically at the food access policies to determine how effectively SB 1000 advances food justice.

By combining desk review of General Plan documents, quantitative data analysis, and in-depth interviews in the cities of Richmond and Gilroy, we tracked the statewide implementation and compliance of SB 1000. We compiled our data into a database of city and county General Plans, which can be viewed on the Berkeley Food Institute website. This database also assesses food access policies and determines how comprehensively these General Plans advance food justice according to six food policy goals: food access, nutrition outcomes, local food production, edible landscapes, protection of agricultural lands, and equity.

Based on this analysis, our research emphasizes the impact of explicitly targeting equity in environmental justice land use planning and offers recommendations to city planners and state legislators to improve SB 1000 implementation to better advance the law's food justice goals.

Recommendations for City and County Planners

- Implement a standalone environmental justice element rather than incorporate environmental justice goals throughout the General Plan.
- Involve public awareness and participation in drafting environmental justice goals, and communicate those goals to the public.
- Improve the follow-through and on-the-ground implementation of stated goals.
- Write food justice policies that are targeted, actionable, and specific.
- Prioritize racial equity in environmental and food justice planning, despite the fact that CalEnviroScreen does not include race in its analysis of disadvantaged communities.

Recommendations for the State of California

- Include USDA food access metrics when defining "disadvantaged communities."
- Clarify CalEPA's designation of Tribal communities as "disadvantaged" in SB 1000 to increase compliance in counties with federally recognized Tribes.

Implications

Often seen as separate social movements, environmental justice and food justice are deeply intertwined, with roots in equity and civil rights. Our research emphasizes this overlap. As cities and counties incorporate environmental justice into land use planning, SB 1000 provides an important avenue for advancing food justice policies at the local level throughout the state.

FIGURE 1. SB 1000 IMPLEMENTATION MAP

