http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/water-sampling-s5.jpg



Online tool will help users visualize data. Upcoming listening sessions help state develop tool with input from local communities.

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers announced Thursday the departments of Administration (DOA), Health Services (DHS), and Natural Resources (DNR), and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) are developing a comprehensive environmental and public health mapping system known as the Wisconsin Environmental Equity Tool which will analyze and visualize data online so users can pinpoint Wisconsin's most impacted communities, identify the environmental challenges, and prioritize investments to continue building healthy, resilient communities.



“Wisconsinites from Superior to Trempealeau to Stevens Point to Milwaukee have experienced the effects of climate change firsthand,” said Gov. Evers. “We cannot ignore the role environmental justice plays in building a state where every family in every zip code can be successful. We can do better, and we want everyone to be a part of our work to better understand and address the environmental and health inequities facing Wisconsinites every day and build a healthier, more equitable future for our state.”

In working to develop this resource, Evers Administration agencies are set to host a series of listening sessions in November to hear from communities about environmental and public health needs due to pollution, climate change, poverty, and other environmental hazards. Participants will have the opportunity to share their challenges and experiences, as well as what they hope to see in the new tool.

The virtual, public listening sessions will be open to Wisconsinites from every corner of the state. To ensure the mapping tool reflects the real-world experiences of real people, the sessions are also an opportunity to connect directly with underserved communities, which often face the greatest environmental and health consequences, such as Tribal Nations, communities of color, and low-income families. State agency staff and environmental health experts will facilitate the sessions' small group discussions. The three virtual listening sessions will be held on the following dates via Zoom and participants can also dial in using a toll-free phone number:

- November 2 at 7:00 p.m.
- November 4 at 4:30 p.m.
- November 6 at 10 a.m.

Registration is encouraged, but not required. Visit wedc.org/environmental-equity to register for listening sessions and access phone and Zoom connection information. Interpretation for the listening sessions will be offered in Spanish and Hmong by request. In-person listening sessions may be scheduled in the future when it is safe to gather indoors. People who are unable to attend the scheduled listening sessions are encouraged to provide written comments and sign up for project news at wedc.org/environmental-equity.