Summer 2020 Webinar:

Alternatives Assessment and Environmental Justice: Current State of Practice, Challenges and Opportunities

Wednesday, July 29, 2020
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM PT
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM ET
Today’s A4 webinar:

Alternatives Assessment and Environmental Justice: Current State of Practice, Challenges and Opportunities

Priority questions for today:

• How do we ensure that the voices of vulnerable and disproportionately impacted populations are adequately heard and addressed in our alternatives assessment methods and practice?

• How do we also ensure that these populations do not bear the impact of trade-offs that are made?

• Where is there opportunity for improvement?
Today’s Speakers

José Bravo  
Executive Director  
Just Transition Alliance

Veena Singla  
Senior Scientist  
Natural Resources  
Defense Council
Webinar Logistics

- Due to the number of participants on the webinar, all lines are muted.

- If you wish to ask a question, please raise your hand or type a question in the Q&A box located in the drop down control panel at the top of the screen.
  - We want to encourage discussion on this webinar and will attempt to unmute lines of those who have their hands raised.

- Questions will be answered at the end of the panel discussion.

- The webinar is being recorded and will be posted with the slide deck on the A4 website: www.saferalternatives.org.

- At the end of the webinar, we will launch a short evaluation survey to help us with future webinars.
Environmental Justice and Cumulative Impacts

TOPICS IN
ALTERNATIVES ASSESSMENT

José Bravo
Executive Director
Just Transition Alliance
Environmental Justice and Cumulative Impacts

Just Transition Alliance

www.JTAlliance.org

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@JTAlliance
Environmental Justice

• Environmental Justice (EJ) communities are those that have been disproportionately impacted from the “legacy contamination” of polluting energy
• EJ communities lack access to affordable healthcare and healthy food, and are in neighborhoods with a lack of zoning laws that place them at the fenceline to hazardous facilities.
Cumulative Impacts

• People of color and low income communities are impacted by environmental harms from many different areas
• EJ community members are often affected from air pollution, workplace hazards, poor water quality, toxic chemicals in essential products and more
• The lifecycle that plastics go through is just one example of the environmental hazards EJ communities face
Bring EJ Voices to the Table

• Because EJ communities are underrepresented and disproportionately impacted by environmental harms, it is time to bring EJ leaders to the decision making table

• EJ leaders and communities need to be included in not only environmental decision making, but also when it comes to the economy and health, and all aspects of our well being
Local Economies

• We need to move to local and regional economies, reducing transportation pollution and costs
• Create renewable energy sources out of nontoxic, sustainable materials
• Bring workers and EJ communities together as natural allies
Legacy Chemicals

- Lead, cr6+, PFAS, PCBs, benzene, flame retardants, BPA
Incorporating health equity into alternatives assessment frameworks: Perspective from pilot interviews

TOPICS IN
ALTERNATIVES ASSESSMENT

Veena Singla
Senior Scientist
Natural Resources Defense Council
Incorporating health equity into alternatives assessment frameworks

Perspectives from pilot interviews

Veena Singla
MISSION STATEMENT
To safeguard the Earth: its people, its plants and animals and the natural systems on which all life depends.
June 2017 discussion draft: starting the conversation

- Fact sheet
- Executive summary
- Full discussion draft

Project collaborators

Kathryn Alcantar
CHANGE

Ann Blake
Environmental & Public Health Consulting

Sally Edwards
U Mass Lowell
Regrettable substitutions have harmed vulnerable populations

Butter flavoring: diacetyl $\rightarrow$ 2,3-pentanedione

WORKERS

Microwave bag: C8 PFAS $\rightarrow$ other PFAS

COMMUNITIES
Regrettable substitutions have harmed vulnerable populations

Butter flavoring: diacetyl → 2,3-pentanedione

WORKERS

Microwave bag: C8 PFAS → other PFAS

COMMUNITIES

2018 study found PFAS in 100% of microwave popcorn bags tested
Two types of elements influence AA process and decisions

- **Data driven**
  - Data on hazard endpoints

- **Based on value judgements**
  - Degree of disclosure/ transparency
  - Process of stakeholder engagement
  - How to consider data gaps
  - How to consider trade-offs

NASEM, 2014
“Values heavily influence final decisions.

“What is deemed safer...ultimately reflects a set of personal, corporate, legislative, or other values.”

NASEM, 2014
...but values not explicated in AA frameworks

“What is deemed safer…ultimately reflects a set of personal, corporate, legislative, or other values.”

“Many frameworks also do not consider the decision-making process or decisions rules used for resolving trade-offs…or the values that underlie such trade-offs.”

NASEM, 2014
How can values from **environmental justice** and **public health** inform AA decisions?

- Overarching principle and goal: Health equity
  - Racial equity is central
- **Vulnerable populations**: disproportionately impacted by toxic chemicals and excluded from decisions that affect them
Key informants for interviews

Ogonnaya Dotson-Newman  
JPB Foundation

Jose Bravo  
Just Transition Alliance

Ernie Pacheco  
Communication Workers of America

Catherine Porter  
Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative

Vi Waghiyi  
Alaska Community Action on Toxics
Three key themes

- Information quality and access/ transparency
- Accounting for trade-offs
  - Consideration of life cycle and cumulative impacts
  - Who decides?
- Genuine stakeholder engagement
Life cycle and cumulative impacts
Genuine stakeholder engagement

- Over the life cycle, who is most impacted by the toxic chemical and potential alternatives?
- Engage in AA from scoping > post-implementation
- Decision making on trade-offs
- Source of information: chemical uses and exposures; social and economic impacts
What does success look like?

Butter flavoring: diacetyl $\rightarrow$ 2,3-pentanedione

WORKERS

Microwave bag: C8 PFAS $\rightarrow$ other PFAS

COMMUNITIES

Alternative removes hazards by removing need for butter flavor and grease-proofing in product

CAMPAIGN FOR Healthier Solutions

¡Vamos a hacer palomitas seguras y deliciosas!
Initial guidance for AA practice
Thank you!

And an invitation to continue the discussion
Poll # 1
Questions?
Comments?
Poll # 2
Resources

Just Transition Alliance’s infographics: www.JTAlliance.org/materials

The Louisville Charter for Safer Chemicals: https://comingcleaninc.org/louisville-charter/about-the-louisville-charter-for-safer-chemicals


Commons Principles: https://www.bizngo.org/resources(entry/commons-principles-for-alternatives-assessment

PBS Documentary – Mossville: When Great Trees Fall: https://www.pbs.org/video/mossville-when-great-trees-fall-se2q8k/
Announcements

Mark your Calendar!

Current Practices and Future Prospects
Virtual Symposium – October 27-29, 2020

For program information visit: http://saferalternatives.org/2020-virtual-symposium/
JOIN THE A4!

A new professional association solely dedicated to advancing the science, practice, and policy of alternatives assessment and informed substitution.

Working collaboratively to accelerate the use of safer chemicals, materials, processes, and products.

www.saferalternatives.org
THANK YOU