Summary of data indicator working session part II

November 13, 2024, at Humboldt High School, St. Paul, MN

This document includes a summary of the feedback heard from attendees at the Cumulative Impacts working session on November 13, 2024, and does not constitute the decision(s) by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) for the final Cumulative Impacts rule.
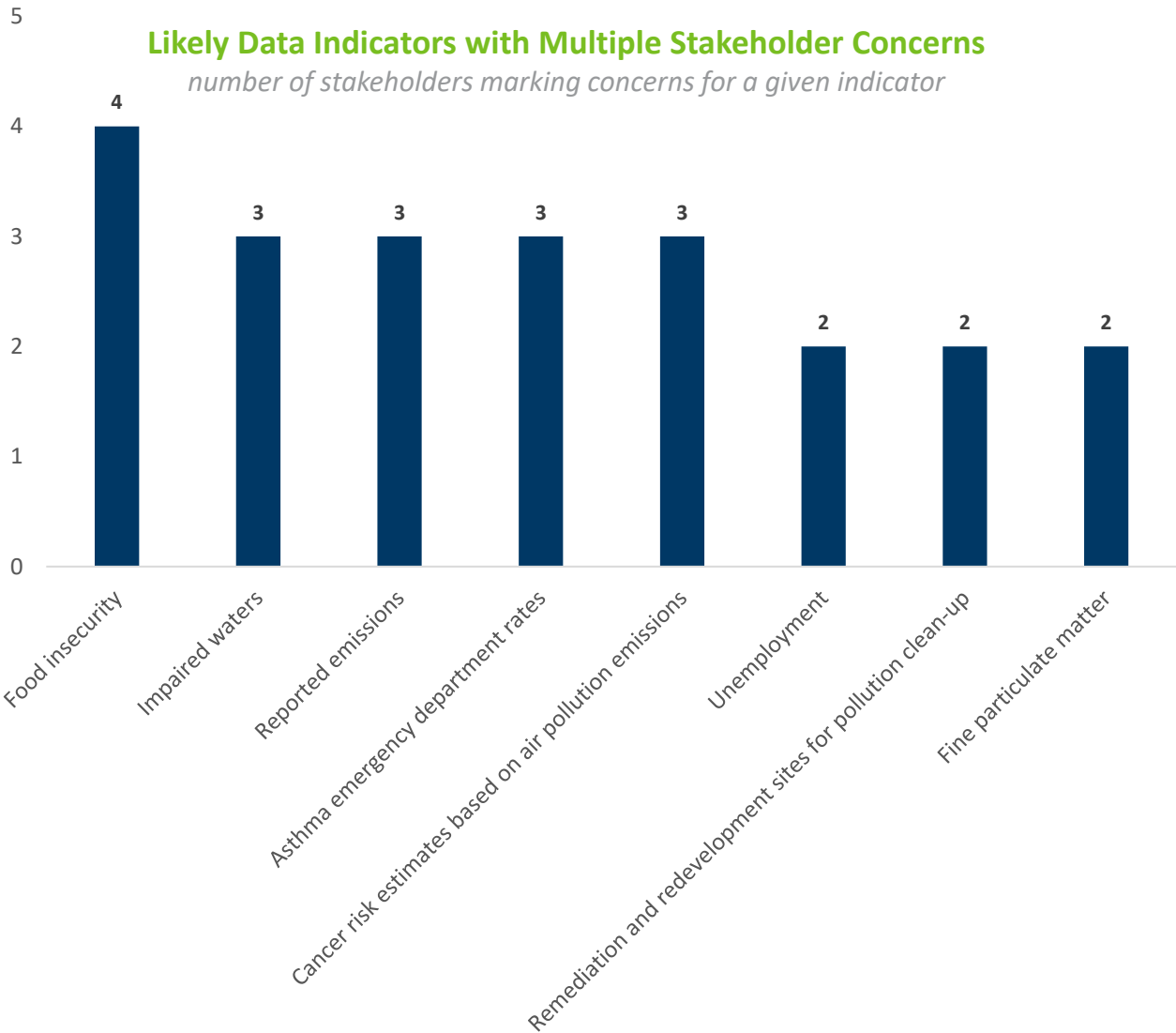
Participation

On November 13, 2024, the MPCA hosted a working session for the Cumulative Impacts Rulemaking at Humboldt High School in St. Paul, MN. Approximately 30 community members attended this event and shared their feedback and ideas with MPCA staff. These attendees included staff from environmental advocacy groups, representatives for regulated facilities, community members from Minnesota, and individuals from other states.

MPCA also received five separate comments (two additional commentors also attended the in-person session) on data indicators through the Smart Comment webpage between November 15, 2024 and December 13, 2024.

What data to include – likely, potentially and unlikely

Community members were given a facilitated exercise to provide feedback on data indicators that we could include for a cumulative impacts analysis to help start determining potential substantial adverse impacts from pollution. This will be a publicly available, geographic information system (GIS) based web mapping tool that will incorporate these data indicators. Community members were given a presentation on best practices from other state and federal environmental justice data indicator tools to provide background information for these conversations.

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January 2025 | aq-rule2-25j
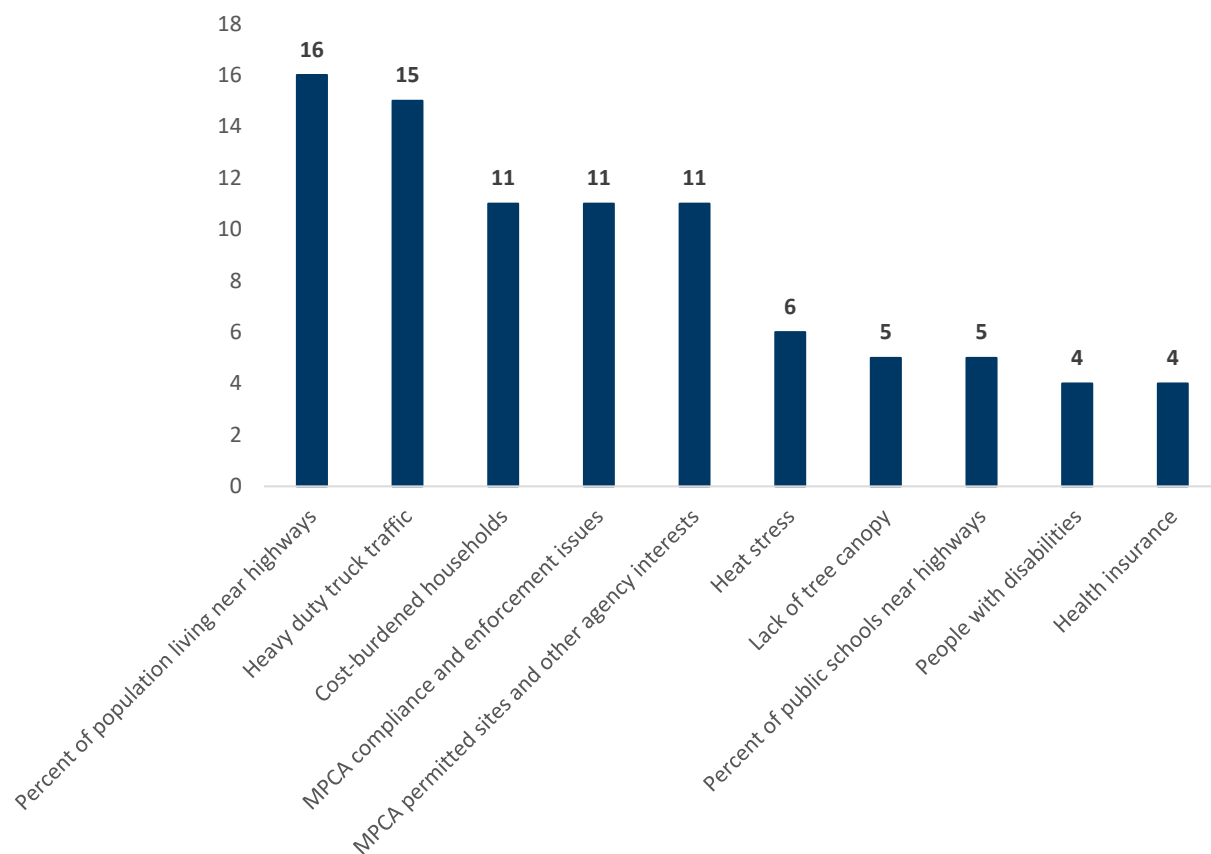Available in alternative formats

Out of the data indicators likely to be included, these ones were raised as having concerns from stakeholders through a 'dotmocracy' voting exercise:

Likely Data Indicators with Multiple Stakeholder Concerns
number of stakeholders marking concerns for a given indicator

Bar chart showing number of stakeholders marking concerns by indicator:
- Food insecurity: 4
- Impaired waters: 3
- Reported emissions: 3
- Asthma emergency department rates: 3
- Cancer risk estimates based on air pollution emissions: 3
- Unemployment: 2
- Remediation and redevelopment sites for pollution clean-up: 2
- Fine particulate matter: 2

Out of the data indicators to potentially be included in a publicly available GIS mapping tool, stakeholders were able to choose their top five to include:

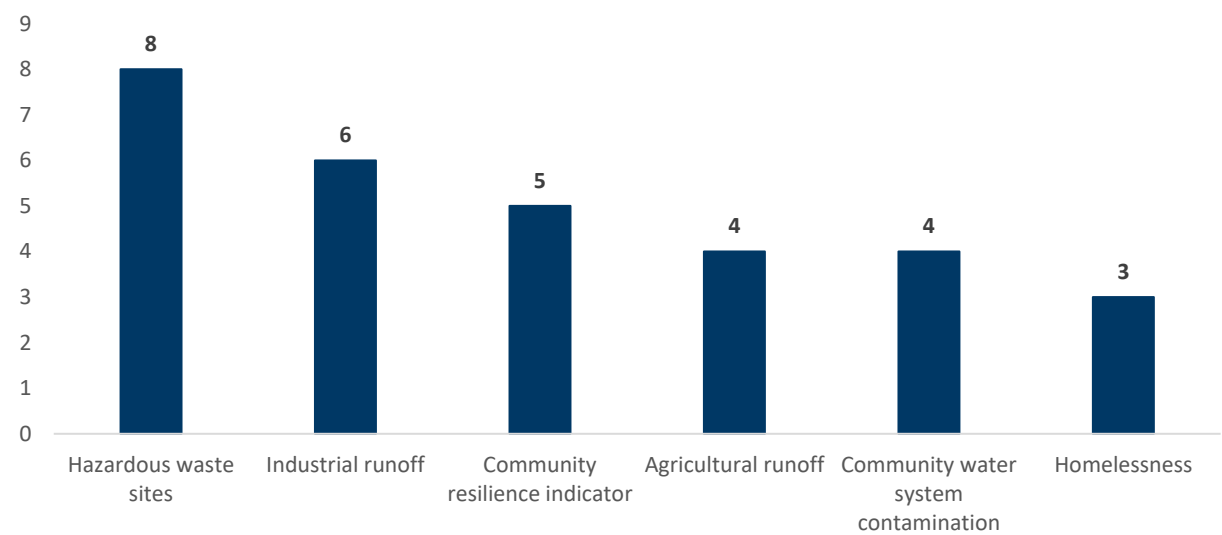### Top 10 Potential Data Indicators to Include
number of votes for a given indicator

Indicator	Votes
Percent of population living near highways	16
Heavy duty truck traffic	15
Cost-burdened households	11
MPCA compliance and enforcement issues	11
MPCA permitted sites and other agency interests	11
Heat stress	6
Lack of tree canopy	5
Percent of public schools near highways	5
People with disabilities	4
Health insurance	4

Out of the data indicators unlikely to be included in a publicly available GIS mapping tool, stakeholders were able to choose indicators that should still be considered for this:

Unlikely Data Indicators with Multiple Stakeholder Dotmocracy Votes

number of stakeholders marking support for including a given indicator

Indicator	Votes
Hazardous waste sites	8
Industrial runoff	6
Community resilience indicator	5
Agricultural runoff	4
Community water system contamination	4
Homelessness	3

Conversation highlights on the data indicators

In addition to voting or flagging concerns for data indicators, stakeholders had conversation in the working session while written comments were also accepted after the session. Several themes emerged to help us create this GIS mapping tool that will be publicly available in this rulemaking process:

Clarification & refining the indicators

Data availability – Stakeholders brought-up concerns with data being available in the future. We will need to consider alternative data sources if federal datasets are removed from their websites, or if the federal Census Bureau stops conducting the American Community Survey.

Data gaps and Incomplete Information – Some of these data indicators had issues brought-up by community members. This includes:

- *Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Compliance & Enforcement Issues* – stakeholders mentioned that we do limited inspections & may be unaware of facilities out-of-compliance with their permit requirements. Complaints or issues from facilities may also show-up in city government data or through other government agencies.
- *Food insecurity* – a metric that considers the ability to afford food and have access to healthy food. Considering both would be beneficial.
- *Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Remediation and Redevelopment of sites* – there is support for this indicator, but will there be any data on housing that has contaminated pollution like lead pipes, soil with pollution, etc.? Will there be a way to provide funding to remediate these sites?

- *Income inequality* – would this indicator look at inequality just within a community/census tract? How does this consider communities that generally have less income without wealthier residents?
- *Low to medium income renters* – what about energy inefficient buildings? Rental households that don't have property owners investing in their homes can be a major issue, and property owners have a big influence on renters' quality of life.
- *Heat stress* – what about lack of heating when it is cold outside? This is a very Minnesota-specific issue that other states may not be dealing with like us.
- *Community resiliency & related indicators* – Does this indicator consider flooding and the FEMA flood risk maps? Could parts of this indicator or some of the FEMA information be included?
- *Private wells* – More of an issue for Duluth & Rochester versus the Twin Cities.

Substantial adverse impacts & applications for this tool

Net Impacts from pollution– There are questions on if we are including data and framing the indicators as just negative impacts to public health, or if we would consider positive factors in communities as well. An example was brought-up around tree canopy, roadways and industrial land use. This land use could be impacting the lack of tree canopy in the first place, and communities would have more pollution with less vegetation to filter or capture that pollution.

Interaction across indicators - There was also discussion around whether there will be a larger score versus keeping the indicators separate, and how we will avoid addressing pollution in silos. This session presented different approaches from state and federal agencies before the discussion, and this will be explored further in 2025 engagement sessions.

Prioritizing issues within this data tool - Stakeholders have provided their priorities for data indicators in past sessions and community engagement. Further conversation continued in this working session, and particular data indicators were discussed reflecting bigger public health issues for residents including:

- Historical pollution – communities that have had more pollution over time and have seen reduced lifespans compared to other areas of Minnesota.
- Traffic pollution and impacts –
  - Issues with growing food in high-traffic areas.
  - Areas with higher population and traffic density.
  - Vehicles not meeting current emission standards.
  - Heavy vehicle traffic & port traffic brought-up as causing health issues like Asthma and affecting children in environmental justice communities.
- Childhood exposure to pollution – stakeholders supported the childhood lead exposure indicator & it was brought up that we could consider kids not having access to green spaces.
- Environmental Justice areas – this screening tool and cumulative impact analyses are for environmental justice areas. Consequently, there will be indicators that do not focus on income, race, and limited English-speaking abilities. It is already a baseline assumption that we are working in communities with less economic means, more people of color and our tribal partners.
  - We can make this clearer with our engagement and communication on this rulemaking.

Applications and further engagement

Stakeholders are eager to know the applications of this tool like when a cumulative impact screening versus full analysis will be required, how regulated facilities can act on this information as well as how we will work to involve more community perspectives in this rulemaking.

- These working sessions are not reflective of all impacted environmental justice communities, and several more organizations have been provided for further engagement.
  - Reconciliation group in Rondo, Urban Farmers Alliance, Green Zone organizations and communities, Project Sweety Pie, Midwest Farmers of Color Collective, Asian Media Access were specifically shared.
  - Our agency has new community engagement capacity, and we will have staff going to community events to do more proactive outreach. Working sessions are not a format for everyone, and engagement in 2025 will provide additional ways to engage on this rulemaking.
- These indicators and topics have not been a part of past permitting decisions.
  - Some stakeholders appreciate this change and want facilities to consider larger community context.
  - Other stakeholders are concerned that facilities can't impact all of these issues directly, and the goal should be to limit and reduce pollution versus displacing companies.