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Contact: Jennifer McNulty (831) 459-2495; [jmcnulty@ucsc.edu](mailto:jmcnulty@ucsc.edu)**UCSC team to share environmental justice expertise with state air board**

Environmental justice researchers are at the forefront of efforts to evaluate the risks posed by air pollution, particularly the disproportionate risks faced by residents of low-income and minority neighborhoods.

So it's good news that Manuel Pastor, professor of Latin American and Latino studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and a leading researcher in the field of environmental justice, will head up a team that will share its expertise with the California Air Resources Board (CARB).

With a grant for nearly \$700,000, Pastor and colleagues James Sadd of Occidental College and Rachel Morello-Frosch of Brown University will work toward improving the way the state integrates environmental justice issues into its work on air quality. The board needs to expand its scope to incorporate the cumulative impacts of air pollution exposure and socioeconomic vulnerability into its regulatory decisionmaking, said Pastor.

"Environmental justice has become a major policy issue in California, but there are gaps in the way the state conducts research," said Pastor. "We can help develop rigorous, trustworthy, and cost-efficient methodologies to identify and assist vulnerable communities."

Based on evidence that environmental hazards are concentrated in poor and minority neighborhoods, environmental justice advocates seek redress for victims who suffer disproportionate exposure to hazardous substances like toxic waste, air pollution, and industrial runoff. Pastor and his team have developed innovative measures of exposure and effect that they are eager to share. An interagency group is currently developing environmental justice implementation guidelines for the California Environmental Protection Agency.

"This is the time to work at the state level," added Pastor, codirector of UCSC's Center for Justice, Tolerance, and Community.

Specifically, the CARB grant will enable Pastor's team to fill some of the data-gathering and analytical gaps faced by state regulators. Pastor and his colleagues will conduct statewide and regional studies to identify the key factors that explain existing patterns of racial and ethnic disparities in lifetime cancer and other health risks associated with outdoor air toxics exposure. Those results will help Pastor develop measures of cumulative impact and community vulnerability at the neighborhood level, with an eye toward guiding policy regarding protection, community participation, and educational outreach about air pollution. The project will also include a community-based "validation study" in the Oakland area to identify sources of emissions that may have gone undetected by CARB.

Community participation is essential, according to Pastor, who said it builds trust in the process and the final outcome. He also noted that tools developed by outside researchers to assess environmental equity will be useful to state agencies as they respond to community concerns.

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For more on the environmental justice research efforts of Pastor, Sadd, and Morello-Frosch, see [review. ucsc.edu/spring04/exposure.html](http://ucsc.edu/spring04/exposure.html).

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