

Care for Creation

2022 Toolkit for Parish Ministry



Introduction

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis gave voice to the concept of integral ecology which emphasizes the deep connections between our relationships with each other and the Lord Jesus as members of His One Body, as well as all creation. We are called to rediscover in awe and wonder the beauty of creation and at the same time, respond to the cry of the earth.

In May of 2021, Pope Francis invited the whole of the world to take up with renewed vigor the challenge of rescuing and caring for the earth, our common home, by promulgating the Seven Goals of the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform:



The Response to the Cry of the Earth is a call to protect our common home for the wellbeing of all, as we equitably address the prolonged droughts, destructive wildfires, extreme weather, and other natural calamities provoked by changes in the climate.



The Response to the Cry of the Poor is a call to defend human life from conception to death, and all the many parts of the fabric of life on Earth.



Ecological Economics acknowledges that the economy is a part of human society and the effects the ecology of humanity and nature.



The Adoption of Simple, Sustainable Lifestyles grounded in the value of good stewardship of ourselves and the planet.



Ecological Education is about helping children, young people, and adults learn the Christian values and habits to be co-creators and good stewards in caring for our own bodies, defending human life, and living in harmony with creation.



An Incarnational Ecological Spirituality springs from a profound ecological and spiritual conversion rooted in Christ Jesus, who is the firstborn of a new creation. Jesus – the Word of God who shared in our created nature -- helps us to discover sacramental nature of all things: in the beauty of creation and in the cry of the poor, and the groans of creation wounded by the exploitation of sin and human pride. Whenever we gather for the Eucharist, we unite with all heaven and earth to give praise and thanks to God through Christ Jesus.



Community Resilience and Empowerment envisage a synodal journey of community engagement and participatory action at various levels.

We are inspired by the work that has been done already to care for creation, and we look forward to supporting the growth of Creation Care ministries.

Your Diocesan Team

Su Equipo Diocesano

The Office of Catholic Charities and Social Concerns is at your service! Contact us if you have any questions:

¡La Oficina de Caridades Católicas y Asuntos Sociales estamos para servirle! Contáctenos si tiene cualquier pregunta:

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Intern, Catholic Campaign for Human Development hbarahona@scd.org

Herman Barahona

Resources Recursos

Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home (Pope Francis, 2015)

https://www.usccb.org/offices/general-secretariat/laudato-si-care-our-common-home

Laudato Si Action Platform

https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/

Catholic Climate Covenant

https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/

Catholic Relief Services

https://www.crs.org/

California Catholic Conference

https://cacatholic.org/

"Through the greatness and the beauty of creatures one comes to know by analogy their maker" (Wis 13:5); indeed, "his eternal power and divinity have been made known through his works since the creation of the world" (Rom 1:20) LS 12

St. Francis's Canticle of the Sun

O most High, almighty, good Lord God, to you belong praise, glory, honor, and all blessing!

Praised be my Lord God with all creatures; and especially our brother the sun, which brings us the day, and the light; fair is he, and shining with a very great splendor: O Lord, he signifies you to us!

Praised be my Lord for our sister the moon, and for the stars, which God has set clear and lovely in heaven.

Praised be my Lord for our brother the wind, and for air and cloud, calms and all weather, by which you uphold in life all creatures.

Praised be my Lord for our sister water, which is very serviceable to us, and humble, and precious, and clean.

Praised be my Lord for brother fire, through which you give us light in the darkness: and he is bright, and pleasant, and very mighty, and strong.

Praised be my Lord for our mother the Earth, which sustains us and keeps us, and yields divers fruits, and flowers of many colors, and grass.

Praised be my Lord for all those who pardon one another for God's love's sake, and who endure weakness and tribulation; blessed are they who peaceably shall endure, for you, O most High, shall give them a crown!

Praised be my Lord for our sister, the death of the body, from which no one escapes. Woe to him who dies in mortal sin! Blessed are they who are found walking by your most holy will, for the second death shall have no power to

Praise you, and bless you the Lord, and give thanks to God, and serve God with great humility.

(St. Francis, 1182-1226)

do them harm.



www.catholic.org

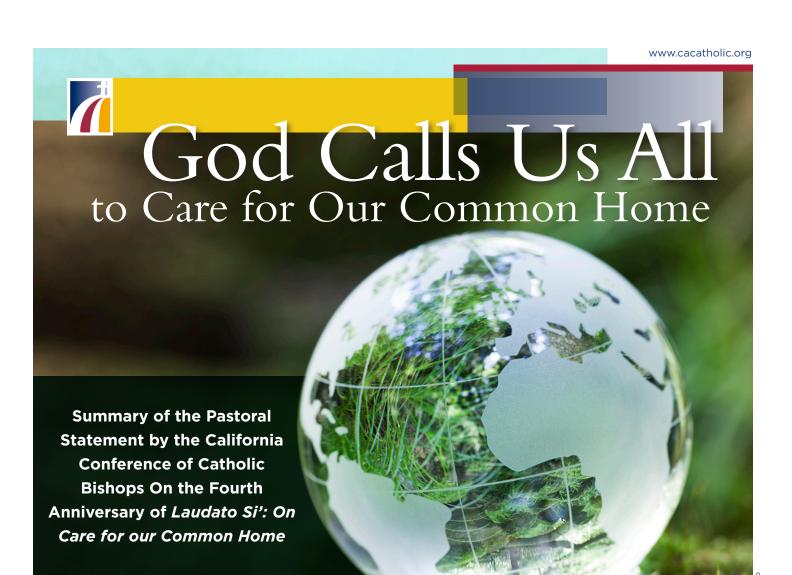
Responding to Pope Francis's Urgent Appeal

A summary of the Pastoral Statement by the California Conference of Catholic Bishops on the Fourth Anniversary of *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*

Exercise: Please read through the summary provided, reflect on the document, and identify topics that inspire you and challenge you to respond to cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

❖ The complete Pastoral Statement by the California Conference of Catholic Bishops can be found at: https://www.cacatholic.org/common-home

"I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all." LS 14



alifornia has been blessed with great beauty. Through all creation, God is revealed. Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato* Si' calls us to rediscover in awe and wonder the beauty of creation. At the same time, we must respond to the cry of the earth in its suffering of our mistreatment of the natural world.

On the fourth anniversary of *Laudato Si'*, we, the bishops of California, are publishing this pastoral statement with a two-fold vision: to animate and energize the implementation of what we are called to do as we face the current crises in California and to offer a dynamic teaching tool that evangelizes our Catholic faith community and beyond to respond. In the context of our Catholic teaching on the theology of creation, we invite the people of California to reflect on ways we can more faithfully and effectively care for creation in thanksgiving to God for this great gift.

The title of the encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, comes from St. Francis' 13th century hymn, "The Canticle of the Creatures," which uses the traditional Catholic vision of a harmonious relationship among God's family, embodying our Creator and all of God's creatures. Pope Francis weaves two themes throughout the encyclical:

- □ *integral ecology* conveying how we are to live in this harmonious relationship with our fellow human beings and with creation, recognizing the interrelationships of our existence with all its environmental, economic, social, and cultural dimensions; and
- □ *the common good* which is "the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment." (LS 156)

The encyclical points out that our faith allows us to see the astonishing beauty of the universe as open to God's transcendence (LS 79). St. Junípero Serra, among the first to catalogue the wild beauty of California, captured well the sentiment of our statement when he wrote: "Blessed be He who created them," referring to the natural beauties of the environment of California.

We can see God's gifts in the various aspects of life here in California: the biodiversity of plants and animals; the state's rich history, which includes its indigenous peoples and their reverence for the earth; the discovery of gold in our hills; the wonders of beauty in our national parks; the productivity of our farmlands; and the advancements in technology that have had positive effects on our lives.

However, California has also encountered tremendous challenges due to the destructive effects of fires, floods, climate change and rapid urbanization.

We bishops are committed to helping fulfill Pope Francis' teachings in *Laudato Si'*—calling the faithful to a commitment to solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care of all humanity. Working together with our pastoral leaders and Catholic institutions, in communion with Christ and with one another in the Eucharist, we are pledged to bring the pope's message to people throughout California. To inspire care for our common home, we invite Californians to contemplate what we each can do through our various 'ecological vocations':

- □ Pastoral leaders and Catholic institutions. Encourage the faithful to take the St. Francis Pledge to pray, act and advocate for solutions to climate disruption. Integrate the messages of Laudato Si' in our worship and share practical tools of teaching that proclaim the encyclical's themes. Examine opportunities to adopt practices that promote renewable energy, divestment from fossil fuels, water conservation, and environmental health and social initiatives with special attention to the needs of the poor and excluded.
- ☐ Youth and young adults. Seek opportunities to pray in natural surroundings; initiate conversations with older adults about environmental protection and a more inclusive society. Consider how one's career can be balanced with the call to care for our common home and to engage others in ways to help heal the earth.
- □ Parents, teachers, and catechists. Help create an environmental consciousness and environmental literacy that promotes the principles of Laudato Si' in every

family's lifestyle—including protecting nature, combatting poverty and restoring dignity to the excluded. Ensure that environmental education in our learning institutions is based on both authentic scientific and ethical principles (LS 209-215). Expand opportunities for outdoor environmental education. Integrate themes from *Laudato Si'* throughout all Catholic educational ministries and programs.

- □ **Public officials.** Address environmental issues with an integral approach that cares for all of creation's ecological, social, cultural and economic dimensions. Enact policies that improve air quality, reduce polluting gases, strengthen water systems, protect precious ecosystems and support the health of our citizens. Ensure that transition from a fossil-based economy does not burden the poor.
- □ Leaders in business. Reflect thoughtfully on your vocation in the light of Laudato Si's message regarding economics, finance and business practices. Evaluate your business' support of a transition toward sustainability, authentic human development, as well as the impact of commerce on the poor. Consider to what extent your business enterprise, its products and its marketing meet genuine human needs and promotes the common good.
- □ Those who work the land and care for it. Reflect on how your work can best balance economic production and environmental protection with attention to greater sustainability. With others, foster agricultural economies that are socially inclusive and address the needs of the hungry. Protect and educate the public about the value of ecosystems and how we can best live in a harmonious relationship with nature in the light of climate disruption, fires and droughts.
- ☐ Artists and innovators. Discover new ways to highlight the beauty of creation and inspire a culture of ecological and human care in the light of the moral applications of the pope's encyclical. Evaluate how your art, design and innovation shape human culture. Invite entrepreneurship in technological development that renews human culture and the common good.

The bishops hope this consideration of the ways *Laudato Si'* relates to our personal lives will inspire the faithful and all people of good will to pursue creative responses to Pope Francis' call for a spiritual renewal and that we will respond with life-giving measures as we move into the challenges we are facing in the 21st century.

Getting Started: Creation Care Team at your Parish

Getting started is sometimes the hardest thing to do, but each of us have something to offer as we respond to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. We are providing the following documents to help you reflect and discern the calling of starting a Creation Care Team, and to think about what your next steps are!

- Creation Care Teams (CCT) Getting Started Guide
- Integrating Creation Care into Parish Ministries
- ❖ A Roadmap for Success: What Your Creation Care Team Will Accomplish in a Year

Remember, you are not alone! The Office of Catholic Charities and Social Concerns is here to be a resource to you, please don't hesitate to call us or email us!

"Everyone's talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God's creation'. All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements, and talents" (LS 14)



BEFORE YOUR FIRST MEETING:

Invite people. Our <u>Recruitment Toolkit</u> gives you ideas and step-by-step directions to bring people to the table.

Set an agenda. Decide on clear goals for your first meeting before it begins. Make sure that one of your goals is discussing individual member's strengths and interests, so that you have information to make the most of your team. To energize your members, you might plan your first activity around a quick win, such as taking a Creation-observing walk around the parish or school. Our Roadmap Toolkit is a good resource to get you started as you plan activities.

AT YOUR FIRST MEETING:

Meet and greet. Let members introduce themselves and explain what their expectations of and goals for the CCT are.

This is a great time to evaluate what your team members are interested in and where their strengths lie. Is your team particularly interested in advocacy and fired up for letters to the editor, or do they want to get their hands dirty? Discuss what projects your team might want to get involved with in the future.

Establish a meeting time and place. As a group, decide what time and place work best for regular meetings. Strive to accommodate as many people as possible, but realize that not everyone will be able to attend every single meeting.

Designate a note taker. While this isn't essential, it's helpful to have someone who can take notes throughout the meeting. It will ensure good ideas aren't forgotten, that recaps can be provided to members who missed a meeting, and that the group stays accountable to its mission.

Analyze your community. Along with fellow team members, think about how people in your community will respond to the CCT. Will your pastor or pastoral council be supportive? Which ministries and staff should you reach out to? Our <u>Leadership Engagement Guide</u> gives you clear tips on how to reach leaders in your parish, and our <u>Courageous Conversations Guide</u> gives you advice on how to compassionately engage people who resist solutions to climate change.





Creation Care Teams (CCT) enable the Catholic community to lead the charge to solve climate change. Whether it's a group from your parish, workplace, or school, your CCT will work to make a difference, create more sustainable facilities, and advocate for faith-informed climate policies. CCT help transform your community and become, in Pope Francis's words, "protectors of God's gifts."

Pulling together all the pieces for your CCT can seem overwhelming. We have provided this toolkit to lay out the first steps you're likely to encounter on your journey.

We're always available to answer any additional questions. Please drop us a line at programs@catholicclimatecovenant.org if you'd like to be in touch. Your CCT is a big part of the faithful solution to climate change, and we thank you for your work.

Meet with your pastor. Now that you've talked through what your group hopes to accomplish, it's time to speak to your pastor. Set up an initial meeting to gauge his interest in working with your group, establish a point person your group can connect with to present ideas or questions, and learn if there's a budget for any of your group's activities.

Plan quick-win activities. One of the best ways to build confidence among team members, establish a team dynamic, and recruit new members is by starting with small activities for early "wins." These small-scale projects help your team gain experience before proceeding to larger-scale actions.

LONG-TERM:

Recruit new members. Make your team truly open and welcoming. Recruit additional members with the help of our Recruitment Toolkit.

Play to people's strengths. As your team grows, becomes more comfortable working together, and tackles larger projects, it's time to divvy up the work. Putting people in charge of various activities, like money management, communications, or coordinating with the parish, will help the team succeed. This also ensures everyone feels like they're a valued, contributing member of the team.

Connect with the wider community. Creation care is an integral part of our faith. Make sure your parish or school is aware of your accomplishments, and continually help others see the spiritual value in caring for Creation.

CCT RESOURCE LIBRARY:

- 1. Getting Started Guide
- 2. Recruitment Toolkit
- 3. Roadmap Toolkit
- 4. Leadership Engagement Guide
- 5. <u>Courageous Conversations</u> <u>Guide</u>
- 6. Sample Bulletin Insert
- 7. Sample Flyer
- 8. Climate Change and Youth
- 9. Greening Catholic Ministry
- 10. Guide to Climate Change and Catholic Social Teaching
- 11. Solar Power and Renewables Buyers Guide
- 12. Earth Day Guide



WHAT YOUR CREATION CARE TEAM WILL ACCOMPLISH IN A YEAR



Thank you for participating in the Catholic Climate Covenant's Creation Care Team (CCT) program!

This checklist will help your CCT stay on track during the next year. It is not a list of requirements, but rather ideas for a path forward. Following this path will ensure that your CCT contributes in a real, meaningful way to better care of Creation.

We don't expect you to do this alone. Toolkits to help you talk with Church leaders and host events are in our Resource Library, which is available exclusively for our Creation Care Teams. In addition, there are many study guides, small group resources, and other program materials on our website. We also send you ideas and tips through our bi-weekly emails.

We want to help! Please write us at programs@catholicclimatecovenant.org if you have any questions about accomplishing a specific project, or if you would simply like to chat with someone about your work. The important thing is to get started; we'll help you to your destination.

Your CCT is doing good work. On behalf of Creation and our vulnerable sisters and brothers, we thank you.



- → Team meets once a month to pray together, talk, and coordinate events and projects.
- → Ask to meet with your pastor, parish school principal, or institutional leader to hear his/her views on climate change. If those leaders are not available, meet with the Parish Council, parish staff, or other staff in your institution.
- → Publish something about what the CCT is doing in your community's bulletin, newsletter, or website. This is important in order to get the community involved.



- → Talk to your pastor about integrating climate change and Creation care into a homily. A good start would be to focus on Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'* encyclical.
- → Talk to your music director about integrating Creation care music in worship.
- → Ask your pastor to hold an annual "Earth Day" Sunday (April 22), St. Francis of Assisi Festival (October 4), or World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation (September 1) with appropriate liturgy and hymns.



EDUCATION: PLAN TO ACCOMPLISH ONE

- → Hold a Creation care educational event for your community. Catholic Climate Covenant provides program guides for Feast of St. Francis and Earth Day. These programs can be conducted on any date, not just the official festival dates.
- → Show an environmental film and hold a discussion afterwards.
- → Use your bulletin insert, newsletters, or flyers in the hallway to disseminate Creation care educational information. Catholic Climate Covenant provides a list of the top 10 things you can do to protect Creation.
- → Sponsor a study of Laudato Si' or another Creation care text.

- → Take a tour of places in your community that are already suffering from climate change, and report back to your congregation/community what you learned.
- → Speak with groups in your community that are already active on Creation care and climate change mitigation. Learn from their successes and challenges.
- → Reach out to Youth Ministry and explore integrating Creation care into their curriculum and plans.
- → Educate while being active in community. Consider a congregational or community project (planting trees to sequester carbon dioxide, cleaning a bike path to encourage sustainable transportation) that benefits your community. This is especially good for youth groups!



SUSTAINABILITY: PLAN TO ACCOMPLISH ONE

- → Complete an energy audit of your building. You can check with your state's Interfaith Power and Light (IPL) or your local utility about energy audits.
- → Talk to your Parish Council or appropriate committees/leaders about purchasing "clean" or "green power." Most utilities allow customers to purchase 100% renewable power for a nominal fee. Be sure to read all contracts carefully.
- → Talk to your facilities manager or building services staff about sustainable practices. Changing lightbulbs to LEDs or CFLs, turning off office appliances at night, and posting a "please conserve water" sign by faucets will all help shrink your carbon footprint.
- → Encourage carpooling, walking, or bicycling. This can be done by helping your community members use a carpool sign-up sheet or installing bicycle racks.
- → Switch to re-usable dishware for your events. A fact sheet on reusable dishware and a guided process for making the switch are in our 2015 Feast of St. Francis program guide (see page 6).
- → Start/encourage recycling and composting, both of which shrink your carbon footprint.
- → Set up a program to measure the carbon footprint of each family in the community and have them pledge to reduce. This can be done by directing families to an online carbon calculator (such as this one from the EPA) and having families share their results at a community event.



ADVOCACY: PLAN TO ACCOMPLISH ONE

- → Use the action alerts you receive in your bi-weekly CCT emails to contribute to moral climate policies.
- → Disseminate the advocacy information to your community.
- → Hold a letter-writing campaign to elected officials at local, state, or national levels to tell them that Creation care should be reflected in public policy decisions
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The Laudato Si' Plan, Diocese of Sacramento

We can see God's gifts through the environmental richness and diversity throughout our Diocese which spans the northern and eastern regions of California that includes 42,597 square miles. However, we face tremendous challenges due to fires, floods, drought, and climate change.

The Diocese of Sacramento commits to responding to Pope Francis's urgent call through several activities that encourage each of us to **Reflect**, **Act** and **Evaluate**.

In 2022, we are focusing on 3 Laudato Si' goals:

- The Response to the Cry of the Earth,
- The Response to the Cry of the Poor, and
- Ecological Education

Reflect

Laudato Si' tells us that "an integral ecology includes taking time to recover a serene harmony with creation, reflecting on our lifestyle and our ideals, and contemplating the Creator who lives among us and surrounds us, whose presence 'must not be contrived but found, uncovered'." (LS,225).

We start with a profound period of reflection that supports deepening the "ecological conversion" to which St. John Paul II and Pope Francis call us to. Reflection includes a consideration of how our Diocese and Parishes' unique values and identity relate to the *Laudato Si'* goals through a synodal process.

- 1) Parish Councils would be invited to reflect on *Laudato Si*: Study and reflection on the Laudato Si' goals to encourage understanding of our relationships and ways of living and how our efforts to protect the most vulnerable are linked to the changes in climate.
- 2) The Diocese will offer workshops on:
 - a. Laudato Si', in which the connections between this issue and justice, pro-life and intergenerational issues are illustrated.
 - b. Care for our Common Home in Catholic Social Teaching, and
 - c. The Scientific Basis for Action to Protect our Common Home

Act

The Diocese will encourage individuals, families, and Parishes to take concrete actions towards the *Laudato Si'* goals.

Diocesan Activities include:

1) CCUSA Emergency Preparedness Series: a 3-part series guiding individuals and Parishes on preparing for emergencies. Videos and participant guidebooks will be available online.

- 2) Providing activities, resources, and prayers for Rogation Days (May), Laudato Si' week (May), Earth Day (April), and Season of Creation (September 1- October 4).
- 3) Care for Creation Ministries: For those who are interested in Care for Creation teams of ministry at their Parish, we will provide support on how to get started, identifying local environmental challenges, and bringing resources to the Parish.

Evaluate

As we develop greater "care for our brothers and sisters and for the natural environment", we begin to see "the moral imperative of assessing the impact of our every action and personal decision on the world around us." (LS 208).

Evaluation includes an annual self-assessment of progress and create a *Laudato Si'* plan for the coming year and celebrating any progress made.

During the Season of Creation, we invite Care for Creation teams and ministries as well as all parishioners to convene and celebrate, give thanks, and prepare for another Season of Creation.

Introduction to Environmental Justice

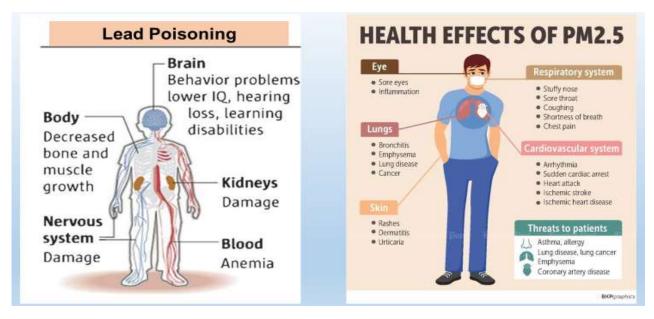
"Some forms of pollution are part of people's daily experience. Exposure to atmospheric pollutants produces a broad spectrum of health hazards, especially for the poor, and causes millions of premature deaths. People take sick, for example, from breathing high levels of smoke from fuels used in cooking or heating. There is pollution that affects everyone, caused by transport, industrial fumes, substances which contribute to the acidification of soil and water, fertilizers, insecticides, fungicides, herbicides and agrotoxins in general." LS 20

The United States Environmental Protection Agency defines "environmental justice" as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys:

- The same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and
- Equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn and work."¹

In Laudato Si', Pope Francis describes the serious health hazards faced by many around the world and in our own Diocese. Responding to Pope Francis's urgent appeal also requires that we understand these health hazards as threats to life, reflect and act on how we can take steps to ensure that all receive protection from these health hazards so that they can live, learn and work in a healthy environment.

The graphics below provides an overview of the effects of lead poisoning and particular matter (PM) and the impact of pollution on pregnancy:



¹ https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice

Pollution and Pregnancy Contaminación y el Embarazo Higher Risk of: Corren un mayor riesgo de: Pre-term Birth Parto prematuro Low Birth weight Bajo peso al nacer Obesidad Obesity High Blood Pressure Alta presión Still Births Nacimientos muertos Miscarriage Aborto espontáneo Autism risks Riesgo de Autismo

How can you find out your local environment is doing?

- U.S. EPA Enviro-Screen: https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen
- California Enviro-Screen (Office of Health Hazard Assessment)
 - o https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40