



# FACT SHEET: Interim Framework for Advancing Consideration of Cumulative Impacts

**EPA's *Interim Framework for Advancing Consideration of Cumulative Impacts*** provides a foundation and shared reference point for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) commitment to incorporate cumulative impacts to meet its mission to protect human health and the environment.

At the heart of the interim, or draft, framework for advancing consideration of cumulative impacts is EPA's understanding that the benefits of environmental protection have not been distributed equally. The adverse cumulative impacts of environmental pollution and the lack of environmental benefits on the environment, public health, and quality of life are borne disproportionately in some places by some communities.

EPA's focus on cumulative impacts is rooted in considerable scientific evidence and people's lived experience that shows that pollution, socioeconomic

disadvantage, lack of green space and other environmental benefits, and health susceptibility and vulnerability tend to be clustered in persistent, systematic patterns, and that the resulting health disparities continue over generations.

## What Are Cumulative Impacts?

Cumulative impacts are the totality of exposures to combinations of environmental stressors and their effects on health and quality of life outcomes.

- **Chemical stressors** are compounds that are released into the environment by waste, emissions, pesticide use, or use of consumer products and can change or damage living organisms or ecosystems.
- **Nonchemical stressors** are factors in the built, natural, and social environments, including climactic stress that directly or indirectly adversely affect health or increase vulnerability.



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## What Does the Framework Do?

**Helps develop Agency-wide approaches to incorporate the consideration of cumulative impacts.**

The framework will serve as a reference point to determine when and how to consider cumulative impacts in a range of federal activities as appropriate and consistent with federal law. For EPA, this may include standard setting, permitting, rulemaking, cleanup, emergency response, funding, planning, program oversight for states, territories, and Tribes, or other decision making.

**Summarizes the evidence driving the need to consider cumulative impacts.**

The framework provides an overview of factors to consider in cumulative impacts analysis, showcases examples focused on the health and wellbeing of communities and Tribes, and highlights work at EPA.

The framework is not meant to provide detailed instruction or set the expectation that cumulative impacts consideration will be used in every decision at EPA.

**Incorporates Tribal and Indigenous perspectives throughout the framework.**

The framework notes how Tribal exposures and susceptibility may differ from the general population and provides examples of EPA permitting decisions that included Tribal consultation. EPA will continue to build its cumulative impacts effort with input received during Tribal consultations and from perspectives provided by Indigenous peoples.

EPA is taking public comments for 90 days at a date to be determined and will be [holding Tribal Consultation](#) with federally recognized Tribes.