

Environmental Justice Evaluation  
for the  
SR 0030 SECTION A10  
US CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT  
WESTERN SECTION

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## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Executive Order 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice (EJ) in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations) was signed on February 11, 1994. This Executive Order was established to protect minority and low-income populations (also referred to as environmental justice, or EJ populations) from experiencing disproportionately high and adverse impacts resulting from federally funded projects. It requires agencies to identify and address high and adverse impacts of projects that would disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations.

While Executive Order 12898 prohibits discriminatory actions against minority and low-income populations, additional consideration must be given for the elderly, children, disabled, and other populations protected under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes when evaluating the potential for discriminatory impacts of a proposed action.

If disproportionately high and adverse impacts are expected, the proposed project cannot be completed unless it can be proven that there is a substantial need for the project; that avoidance and mitigation of the impacts is not practicable, or would have increased high and adverse social, economic, environmental, or human health impacts that are more severe; or there are increased costs of extraordinary magnitude.

The United States Census Bureau (USCB) is the federal agency responsible for collecting national demographic and socioeconomic data, which can be summarized at different geographic scales to reveal information about an area's people and economy. The USCB defines a census tract (CT) as a small, relatively permanent statistical subdivision of a county delineated by a local committee of census data users for the purpose of presenting data. Census tracts nest within counties, and their boundaries normally follow visible features, but may follow legal geography boundaries and other nonvisible features in some instances. Census tracts ideally contain about 4,000 people and 1,600 housing units (USCB 2019a). A block group (BG) is a statistical subdivision of a census tract and is the smallest geographic unit for which the USCB tabulates sample data. Block groups are generally defined to contain between 600 and 3,000 people and 240 and 1,200 housing units (USCB 2019a). Since census tracts are comprised of numerous block groups, block groups are typically identified by both their census tract and block group identifiers.

A review of EJ populations for the US Route 30 Corridor Improvements project was completed utilizing the EPA EJ Screening Tool, the PA Department of Environmental Protection eMAP PA website, and through field reconnaissance. The analysis was conducted to determine the presence of any low-income or minority populations or populations protected under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 within the project area, and if the project may result in disproportionately high and adverse impacts to these populations.

The analysis resulted in the following finding:

No known minority or low-income populations have been identified that would be disproportionately highly and adversely affected by this project as determined above. Therefore, this project has met the provisions of Executive Order 12898.

### 1.1. PA eMap Results

The PA Department of Environmental Protection eMAP website does not identify an EJ Area that overlaps with the US Route 30 Improvements project study area (Figure 1).

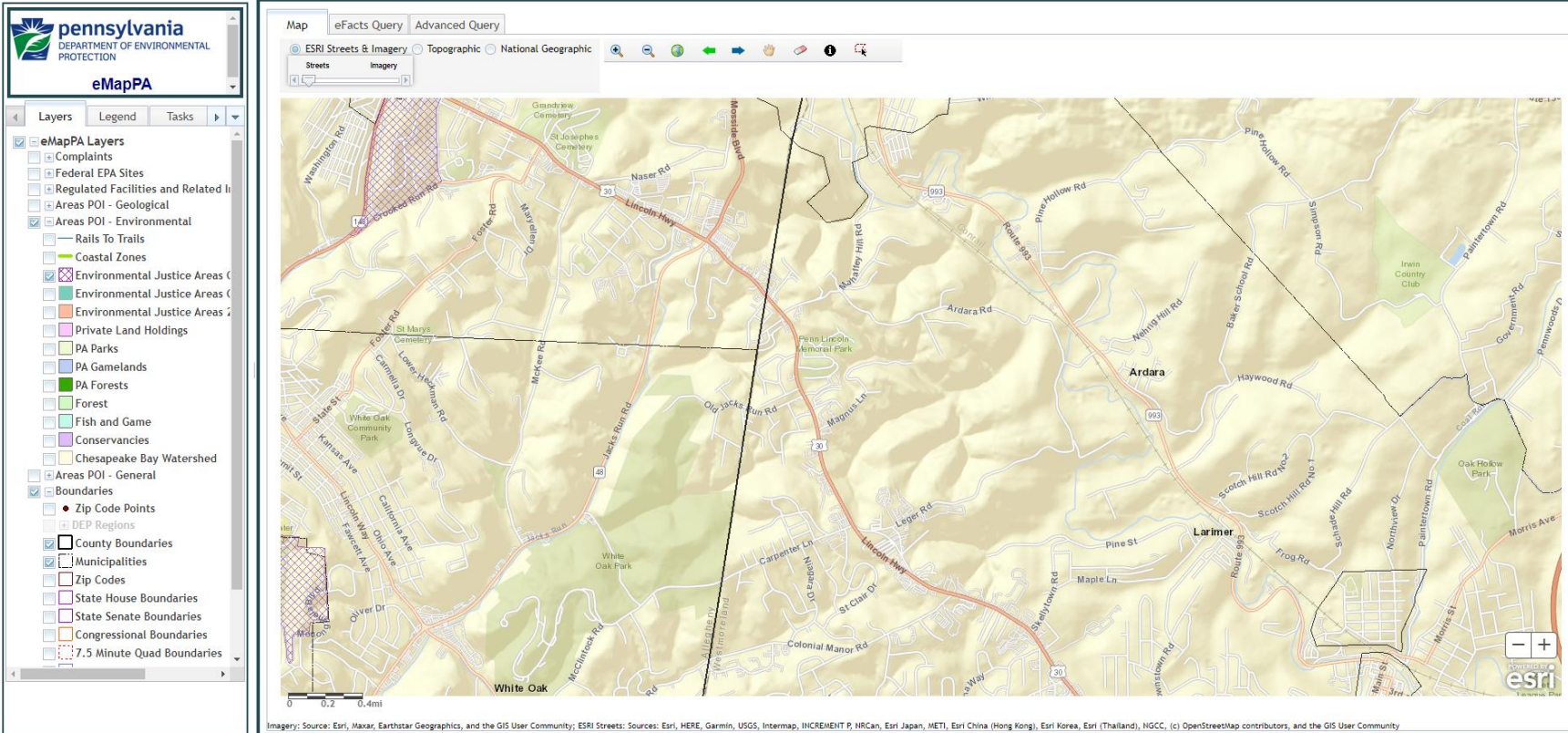


Figure 1: PennDOT eMap Environmental Justice Areas data, panned to the project study area

## 1.2. EPA EJ Screening Tool Results and Observations from Site Visits and Online Review

### 1.2.1. Overview of Demographic Analysis

US Census Bureau's 2016-2020 American Community Survey was reviewed using the EPA EJ Screen Tool for minority, poverty, and Limited English Proficiency data to determine the likelihood of a presence of EJ and / or Title VI populations based on demographic data.

The census tracts (CTs) and block groups (BGs) overlapping with the project area are displayed below (Figure 2).

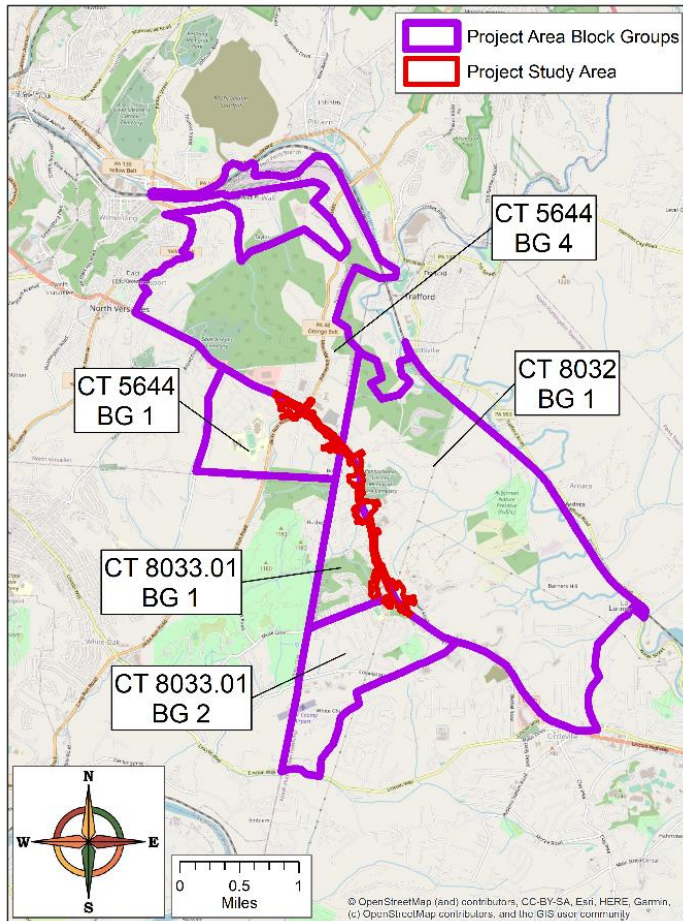


Figure 2: Census Tracts and Block Groups overlapping with the Route 30 Project Study Area

Results of the overall demographic analysis are reported in Table 1 below. Cells with grey highlights identify block groups where EJ populations for the block group exceed those of the reference geography.

Table 1: Demographic data reported for block groups within the Route 30 project study area.

EPA EJSCREEN	Allegheny County Block Groups		Reference Geography	Westmoreland County Block Groups			Reference Geography
	CT 5644 / BG 1	CT 5644 / BG 4		Allegheny County	CT 8033.01 / BG 1	CT 8033.01 / BG 2	
Metric	CT 5644 / BG 1	CT 5644 / BG 4	Allegheny County	CT 8033.01 / BG 1	CT 8033.01 / BG 2	CT 8032 / BG 1	Westmoreland County
% minority	20.15	14.73	22.14	16.76	2.3	3.43	6.5
% households below poverty level	0	13.67	11.81	0	3.16	12.08	10.48
% Limited English Proficiency	0	0	1.32	0	0	0	0.28

Based on this evaluation, EJ populations may be present. Minority populations may exist in the portions of the study area that overlap with Census Tract 8033.01, Block Group 1, and low-income populations may exist in Census Tract 5644, Block Group 4 and Census Tract 8032, Block Group 1. Additional information for these populations is provided below. Due to a higher possibility for EJ populations within these three block groups, the portion of the study area that overlaps with these areas was evaluated further for field indicators of a presence of low-income and / or minority populations, including those outlined in Section 2.2.2 of the PennDOT *project Level EJ Guidance Publication No. 746*.

There is no indication based on demographic data that Limited English Proficiency populations are present within or near the project study area.

### 1.2.2. Low-Income Populations

According to the EPA EJ Screening Tool and the US Census Bureau’s 2016-2020 American Community Survey Data, Census Tract 5644, Block Group 4 and Census Tract 8032, Block Group 1 has a higher percentage of the population below the poverty level compared to Allegheny County and Westmoreland County, respectively (Table 7). According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development online resources (<https://arccg.is/1L1jz0>), public housing does not appear to be present within the project study area.

In addition, the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development identifies the project area region of North Versailles Township (Census Tract 5644) as a federal Qualified Opportunity Zone (QOZs), which are designated to spur economic development and job creation. They are economically distressed communities where new investments, under certain conditions, may be eligible for preferential tax treatment. Localities qualify as QOZs if they have been nominated for that designation by a state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory and that nomination has been certified by the Secretary of the U.S. Treasury via his delegation of authority to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Aerial review, online research, public involvement results, and information gathered during site visits identified that mobile home communities exist along Crown Road, Leger Road, and off of Idaho Lane (Dusty Rhodes Mobile Home Village).



In addition, transit resources, which low-income communities and populations with limited access to transportation likely rely on, are present within the EJ population study area. Bus stops operated by the Westmoreland Transit Authority and the Port Authority (Routes 1F, 3F, 4, and P76) are present along the project corridor.

### 1.2.3. Minority Populations

Census Tract 8033.01, Block Group 1 exhibits a higher percentage of minority population compared to that of Westmoreland County (Table 7). Additional online research and review of aerial photography, public involvement results, and information gathered during site visits did not reveal any further indicators of minority populations or community resources that minority populations rely on in this block group or in the overall project study area.

### 1.2.4. Title VI populations

As previously noted, LEP populations were not identified within any of the block groups overlapping with the study area based on the demographic data review. However, field indicators of resources other Title VI populations rely on are evident within the study area and include:

- Point Pleasant, a retirement community off of PA 48
- Stewartsville Elementary School

## 1.3. Summary of Potential Impacts

Executive Order 12898 of February 11, 1994, Federal Actions to Address EJ in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, requires that the project be assessed to determine whether or not it would have a disproportionately high impact on minority or low-income populations within the area. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation will work to assure that minority populations and low-income individuals have full access to information on the project and understand the potential impacts from construction and operation of improved access.

Potential impacts resulting from the No-Build and Build Alternatives are discussed below to determine if a disproportionately high and adverse impact to EJ populations may occur, either to a specific population or cumulatively:

### 1.3.5. No-Build Impacts

The No-Build Alternative would not result in enhanced safety or mobility along Route 30 and intersecting cross-streets for vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The corridor's Level of Service would continue to be insufficient for current and future capacity needs and signal enhancements to improve the safety of existing pedestrian use along the corridor would remain nonexistent. These would affect EJ- and non-EJ populations alike; therefore, potential impacts to minority and low-income populations resulting from the No-Build Alternative are not expected to be disproportionately high and adverse, and all positive and negative impacts would be distributed equitably throughout the community.

### 1.3.6. Build Impacts

The previously identified field indicators of EJ communities in the project area include Dusty Rhodes mobile home community accessed via Idaho Lane, the mobile home community located south of Leger Road, and transit routes and bus stops within the study area.

Direct impacts to the Dusty Rhodes community would not occur. Impacts to the mobile home property near the southern limits of the project would be limited to minor permanent and temporary right-of-way requirements that would not require relocation of any of the residences in that community. Transit services, which low-income populations in the vicinity of the project may rely on, would likely experience temporary delays during construction due to increased congestion caused by lane closures. However, this temporary impact would affect all populations equivalently through the duration of project construction.

Field indicators of Title VI populations include the Point Pleasant retirement home and Stewartsville Elementary School. The project would not impact the Point Pleasant retirement facilities off of PA 48, and impacts to Stewartsville Elementary School would be limited to minor access changes due to the reconstruction and realignment of Ward Drive.

The project would result in property impacts due to right-of-way requirements along the corridor that would be necessary to facilitate the widening of Route 30. These impacts have been minimized to the extent practicable and all affected property owners would be compensated for the sale of the land. Impacts would primarily be minor strip takes, only affecting roadside vegetation across most adjacent properties. However, some parcels would experience more substantial impacts than others. More specifically, the project would result in:

- Three residential properties with displacements. One of these residences is located on a parcel that includes two separate buildings: one residence and one commercial duplex.
- Seven commercial properties with displacements. One of these commercial properties includes a duplex and thus has the potential to house two separate businesses. This same parcel also includes a separate residential building, as noted above.
- Two full takes affecting empty parcels. There are no structures located on these two parcels.
- Partial or total acquisition of 123 parcels to facilitate widening along Route 30, the implementation of proposed jughandles, driveway adjustments, drainage easements and improvements, and construction of storm water management facilities.

While impacts are expected to result from the displacements noted above, there is no reason to believe that any of the affected properties are minority-owned, owned by low-income families, or individuals protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In addition, there is no evidence that EJ and / or Title VI populations rely on these businesses more so than the general population. There is also no evidence that the three residences that would be displaced are owned or inhabited by a low-income or minority individual or family. All impacts noted above are expected to apply to both EJ and non-EJ populations alike, and impacts do not appear to be disproportionately high and adverse.

Additional negative project impacts would occur, as noted below, but are considered to be minor or are otherwise positive project outcomes, and therefore would not result in a high and adverse impact to EJ populations:

- Permanent access changes would result from the project. The installation of a raised median would restrict left turn movements along the project corridor, thereby affecting access to nearly all properties along the Route 30 corridor. In most cases, motorists would be restricted to right-in and right-out movements and would be required to use the closest jughandle or U-turn median

opening to access their destination. Median openings would be located at jughandles placed approximately every 0.7 miles along the Route 30 corridor (the Carpenter Lane / Leger Road Old Jacks Run Road / Peterson Road and Ardara Road intersection). The PA 48 intersection with Route 30 would be converted to a modified R-CUT intersection to allow the ability to make U-Turns. The access point at the Hartford Heights Volunteer Fire Department Station would remain unrestricted to allow immediate right / left access for EMS vehicles. Full control of access is proposed at all U-turn locations and no private driveway connections would be allowed at these locations.

While some users may view this minor inconvenience as a negative impact, the installation of the raised median along the corridor would improve mobility, reduce congestion, eliminate conflict points, and improve overall safety along this segment of the Route 30 corridor. This minor, permanent access change is expected to affect all populations equivalently.

- Minor, temporary construction easements would be required along Route 30 during project construction. All temporarily disturbed areas would be restored and reseeded with plant species as part of construction, if appropriate.
- Temporary access / accessibility impacts would occur. Temporary lane closures along Route 30 that reduce mainline travel to one-lane in each direction are likely to increase congestion and generate concerns from the public and local business communities. Such restrictions, however, are temporary, and are required for constructability and would be managed by using construction sequencing that builds and implements the proposed jughandles early in the project to enhance operations and safety during construction. This minor, permanent access change is expected to affect all populations equivalently.
- Positive impacts, as listed below, which would mitigate for any project-related negative impacts:
  - Construction of the project would improve safety and mobility of transit, school transportation services, and emergency services along Route 30 and intersecting roadways within the project limits, benefiting all users of the roadway.
  - Pedestrian access would improve as a result of the project. Curb ramps and pedestrian accommodations would be installed at signalized intersections along Route 30 at PA 48, Ardara Rd / Idaho Ln, Old Jacks Run Rd / Peterson Rd, and Carpenter Ln / Leger Rd, with the possibility of sidewalks added in the future. Pedestrian accommodations at each intersection may include a combination of crosswalks, curb ramps, pedestrian signals, pedestrian push-buttons, or similar treatments as appropriate for each location. Pedestrian accommodations are not recommended at the proposed east and west turnaround signals for the Route 30 at PA 48 intersection due to continuous mainline through-movements at each signal. Pedestrian traffic at the turnaround signals shall be directed to the main Route 30 at PA 48 intersection, which is proposed to include pedestrian accommodations.

#### 1.4. Summary

As detailed above, all impacts resulting from the Build Alternative would be expected to affect non-EJ and EJ populations equivalently, and there is no reason to believe that any would result in a cumulative significant impact to EJ populations. Benefits and burdens of the project would be equitably shared among all populations across the project study area. While minority, low-income, and Title VI populations may be present within the project area, impacts to minority and low-income populations do not appear to be disproportionately high and adverse. Benefits and burdens resulting from the project are anticipated to be equitably distributed throughout the community, and no disparate impacts are anticipated under Title VI and related statutes.

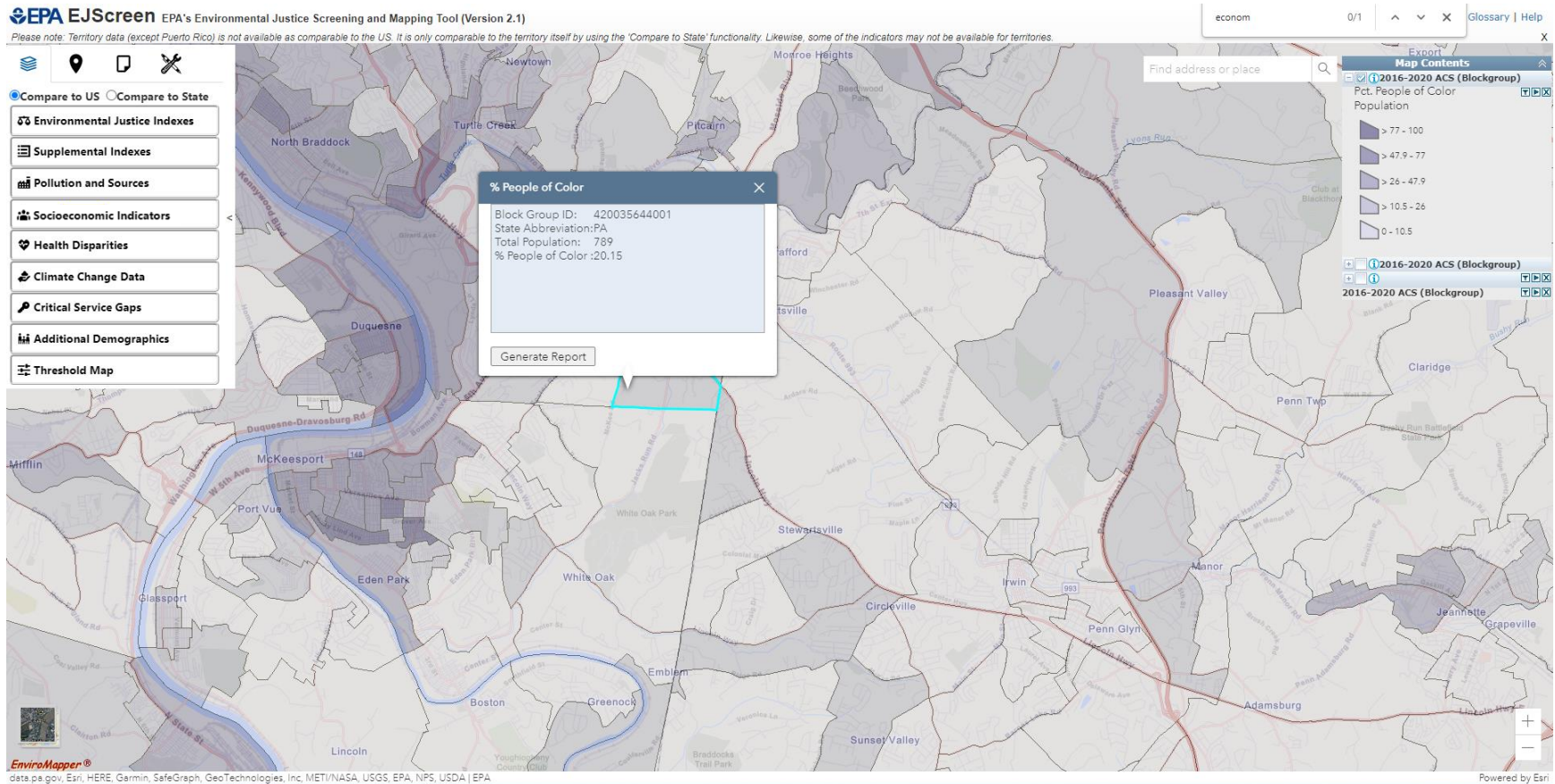


Figure 3: EPA EJScreen Minority dataset for CT 5644 BG 1

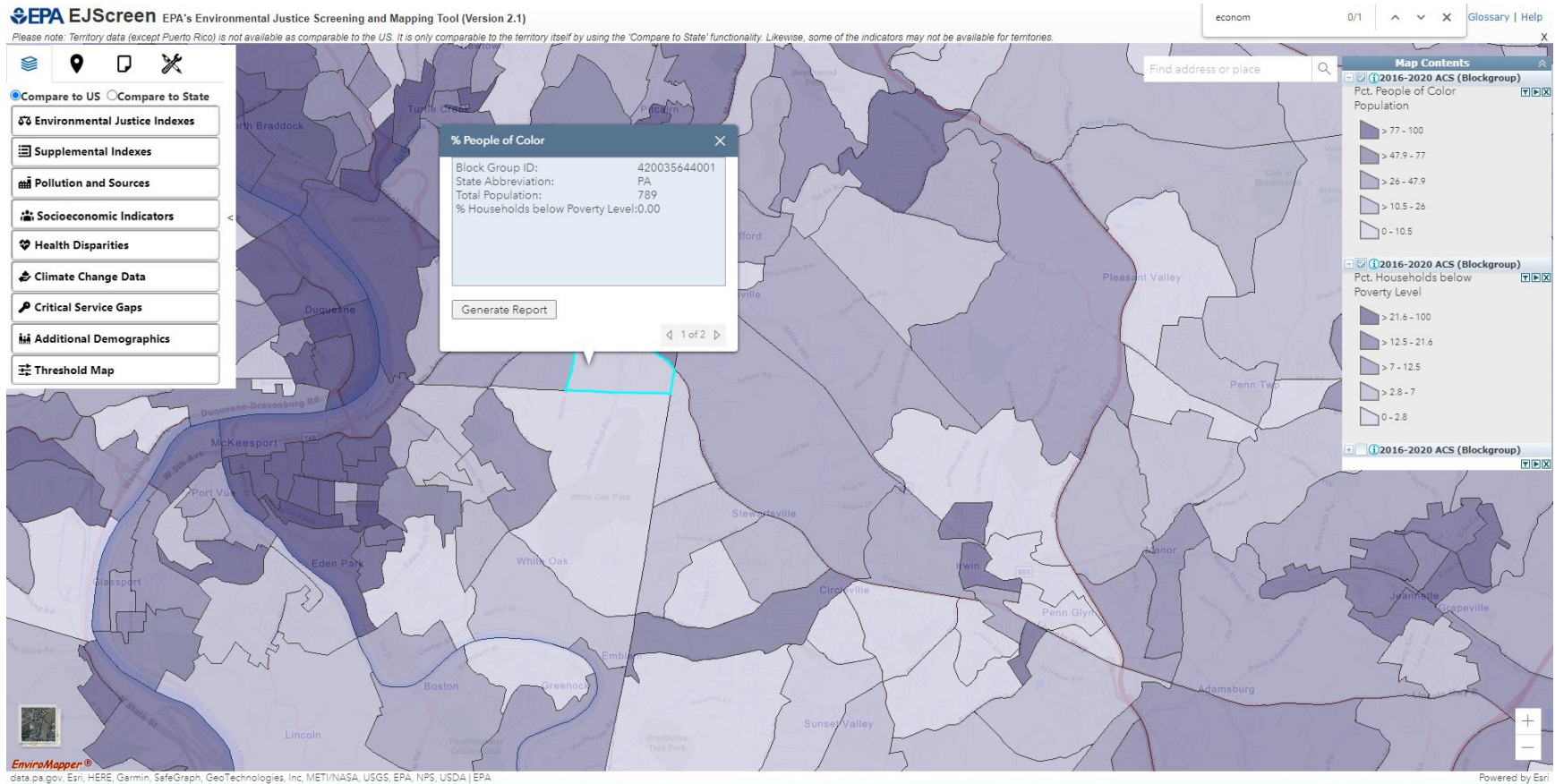


Figure 4: EPA EJScreen Poverty dataset for CT 5644 BG 1

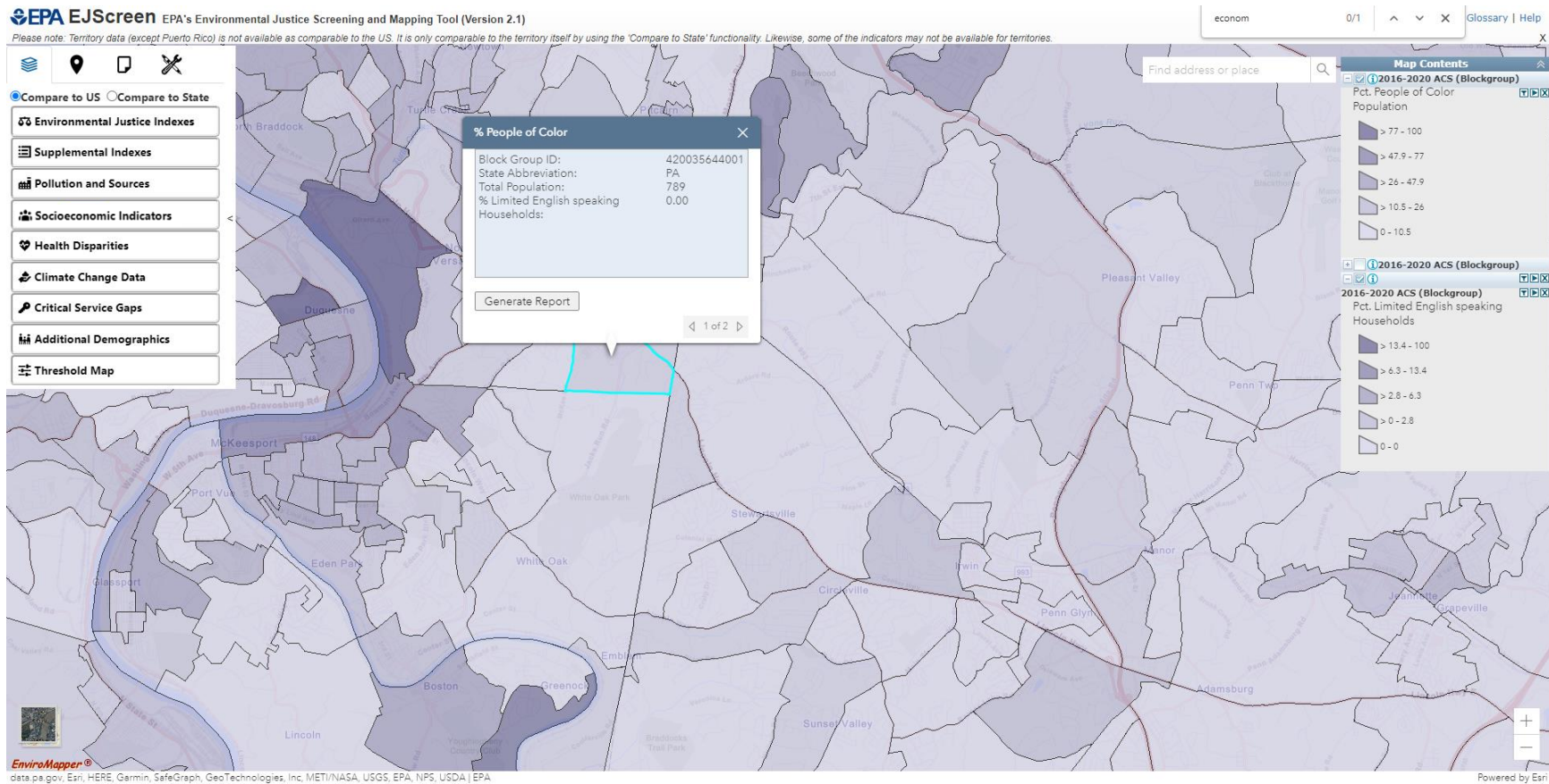


Figure 5: EPA EJScreen Limited English Proficiency dataset for CT 5644 BG 1

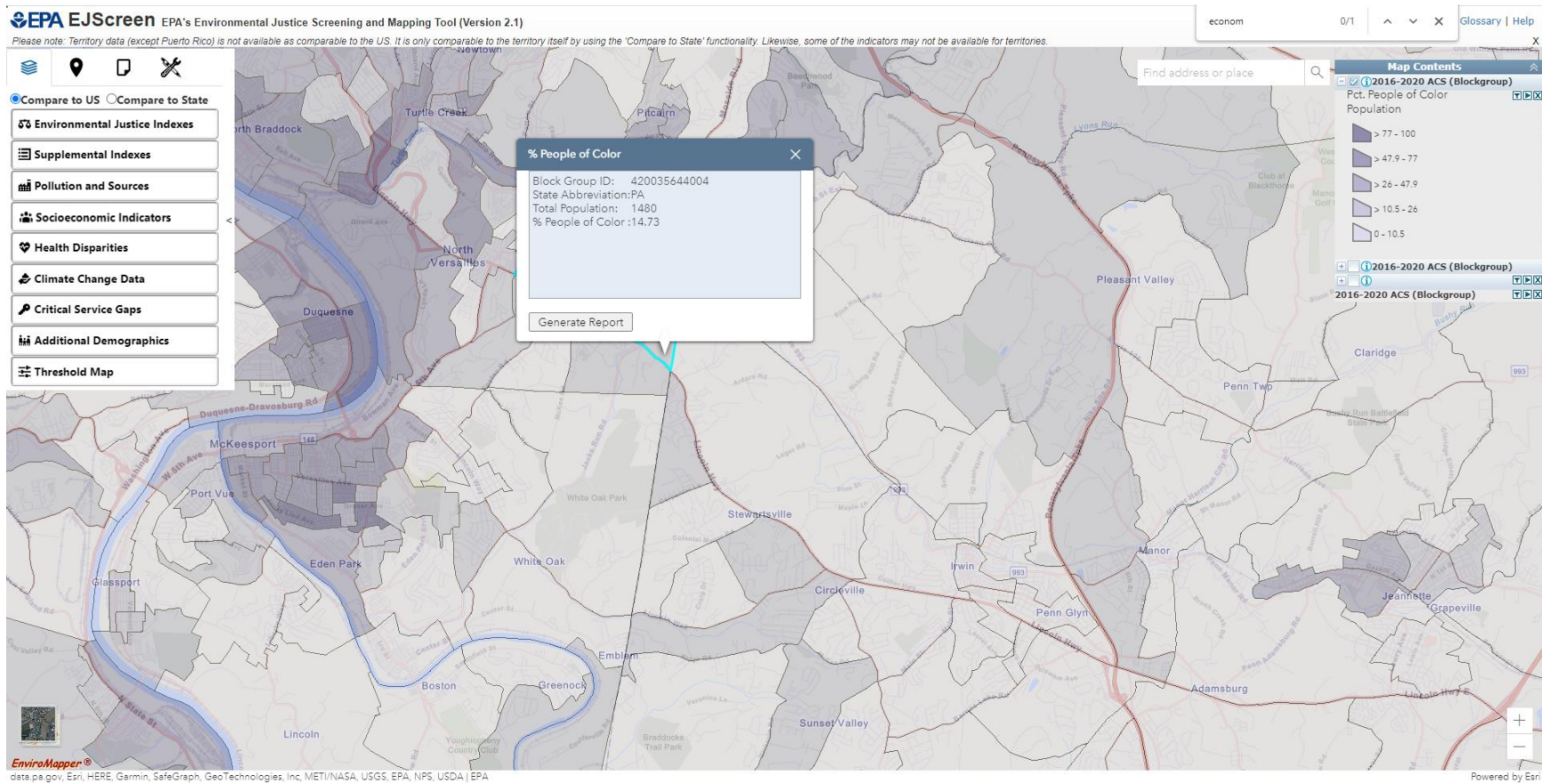


Figure 6: EPA EJScreen Minority dataset for CT 5644 BG 4



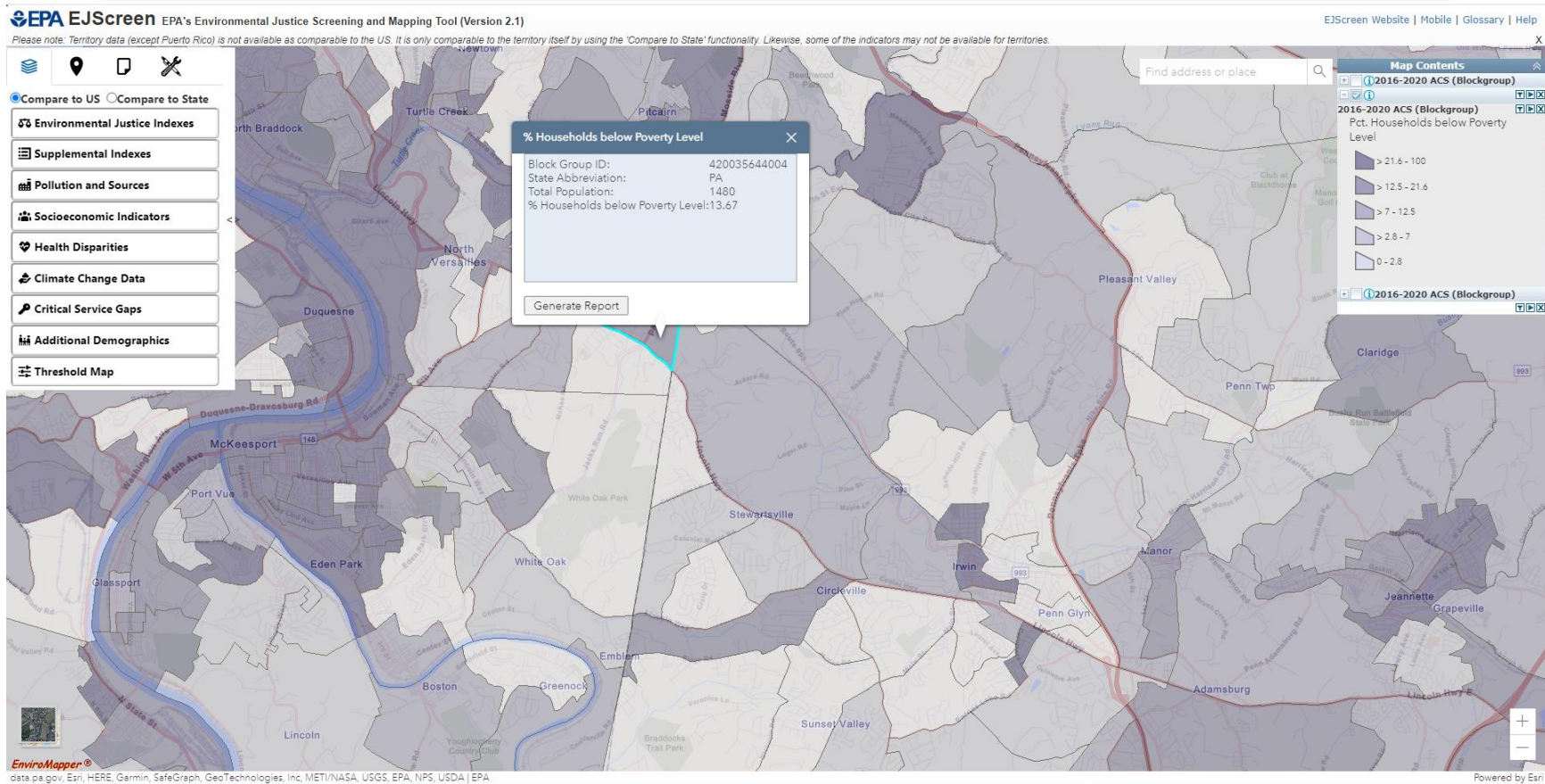


Figure 7: EPA EJScreen Poverty dataset for CT 5644 BG 4

Please note: Territory data (except Puerto Rico) is not available as comparable to the US. It is only comparable to the territory itself by using the 'Compare to State' functionality. Likewise, some of the indicators may not be available for territories.

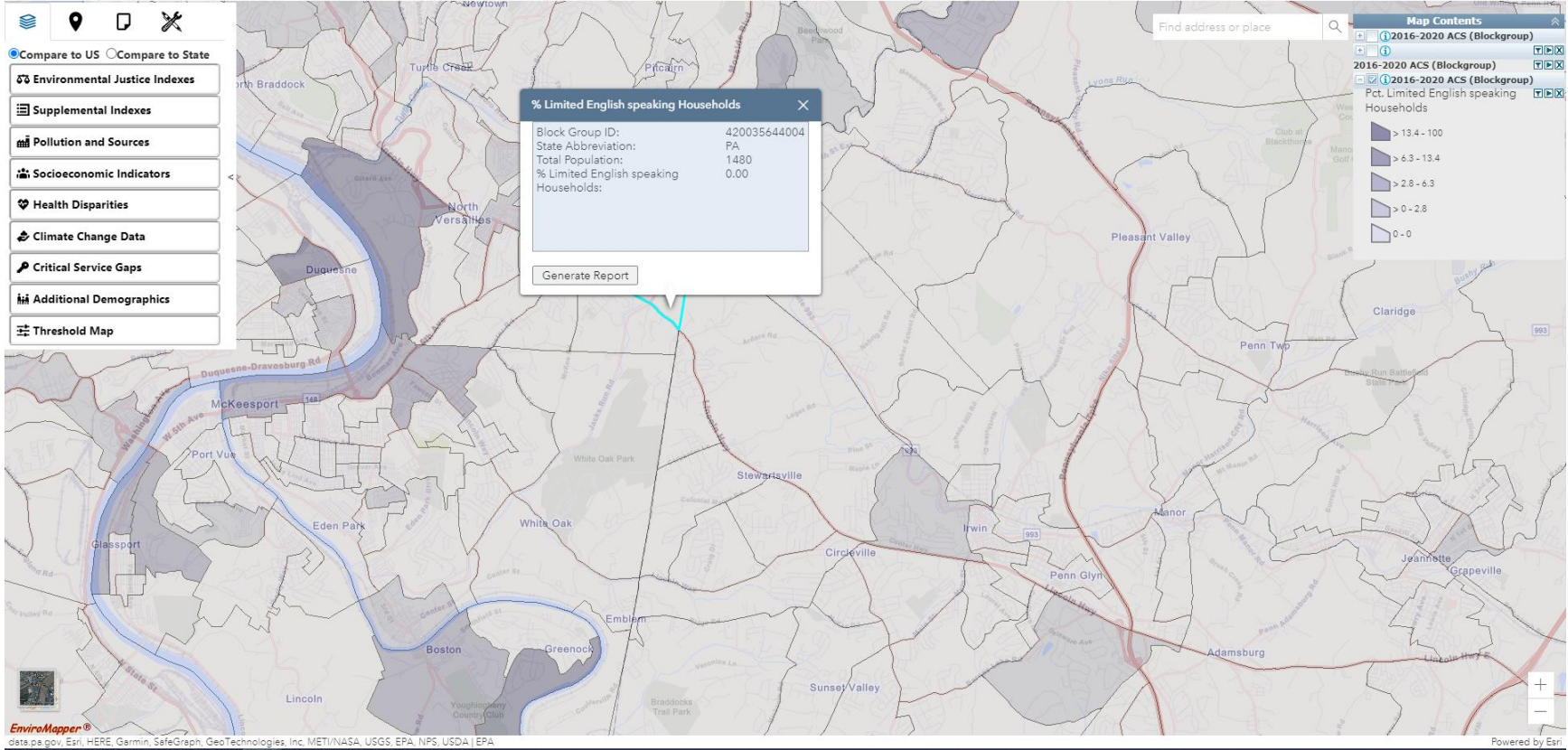


Figure 8: EPA EJScreen Limited English Proficiency dataset for CT 5644 BG 4

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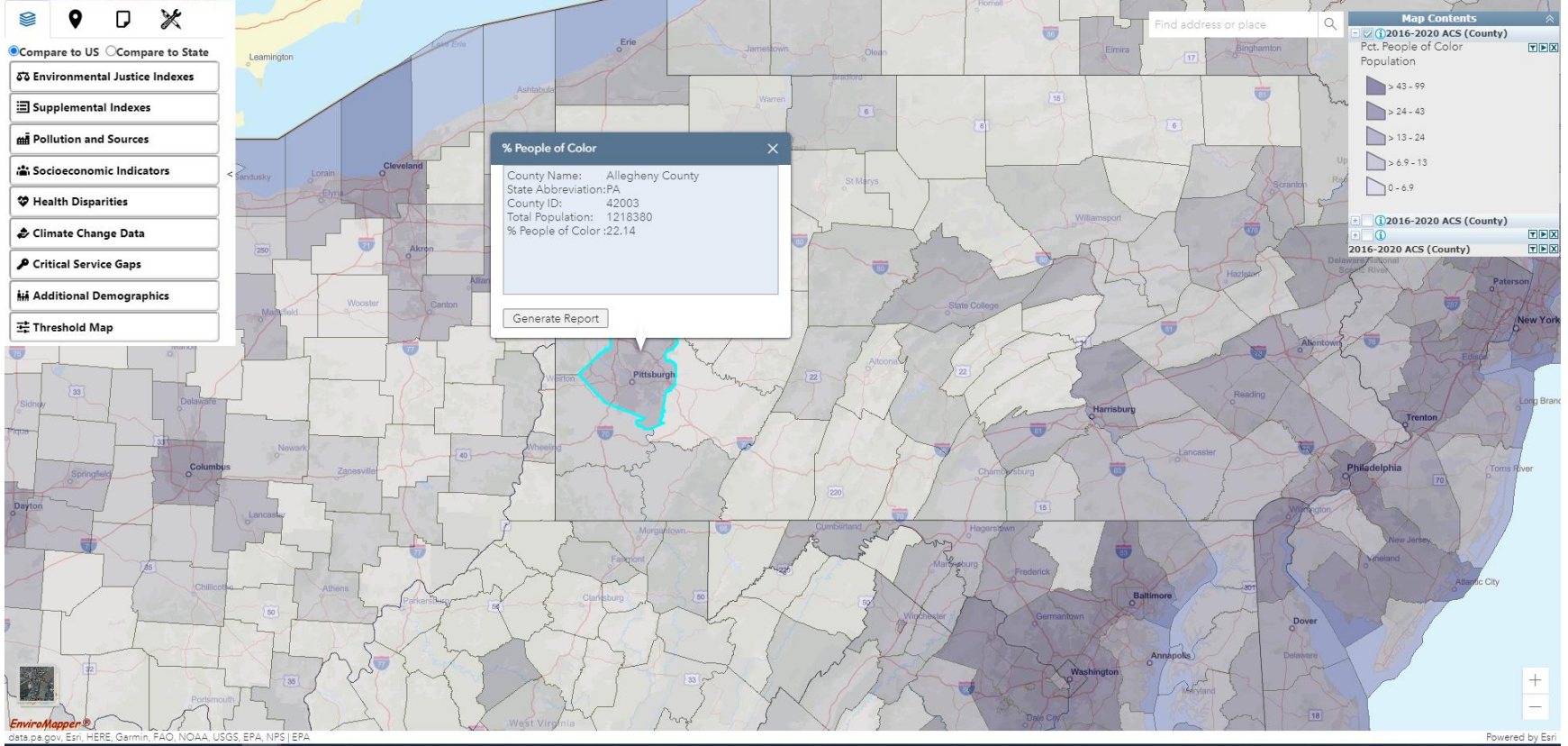


Figure 9: EPA EJScreen Minority dataset for Reference Geography (Allegheny County)

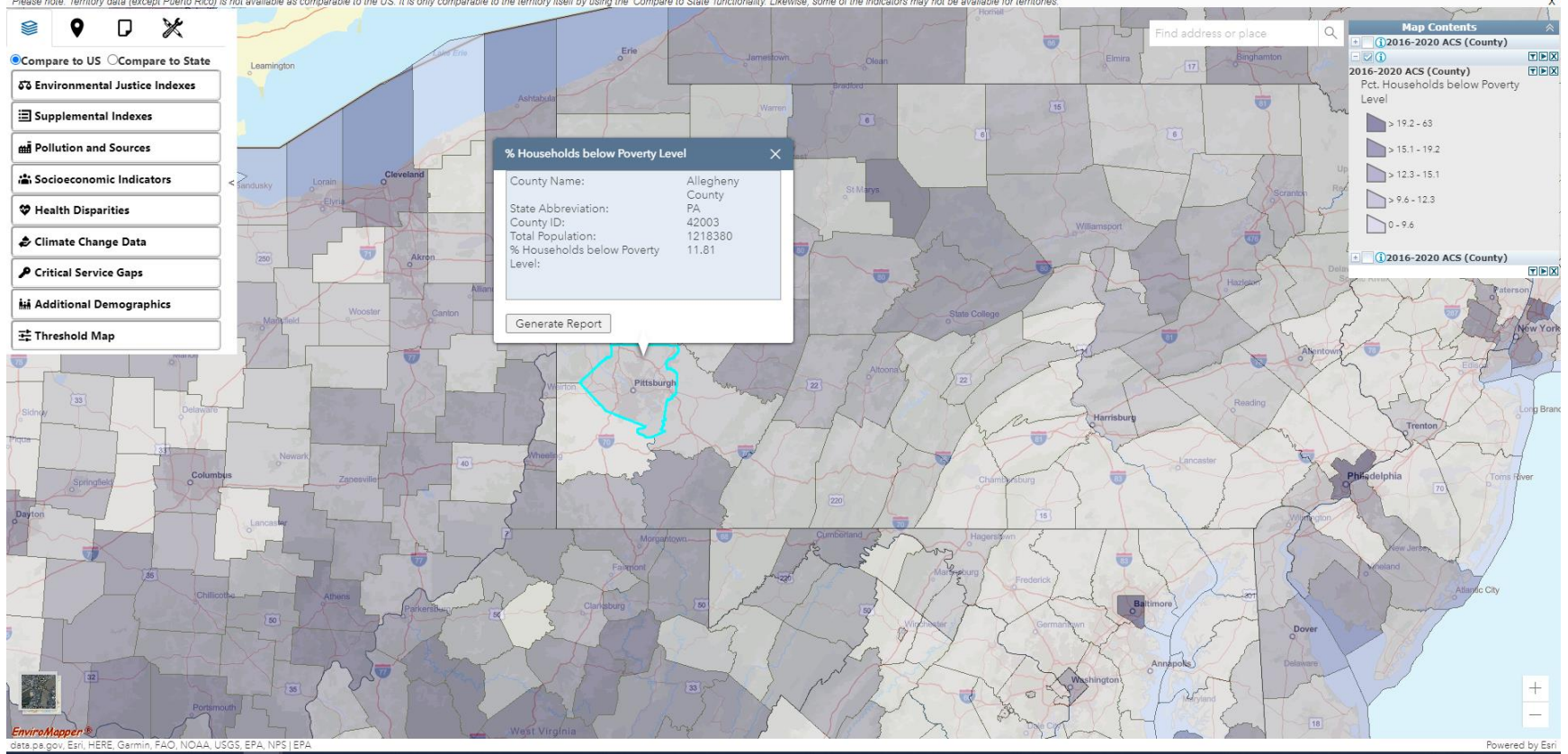


Figure 10: EPA EJScreen Poverty dataset for Reference Geography (Allegheny County)

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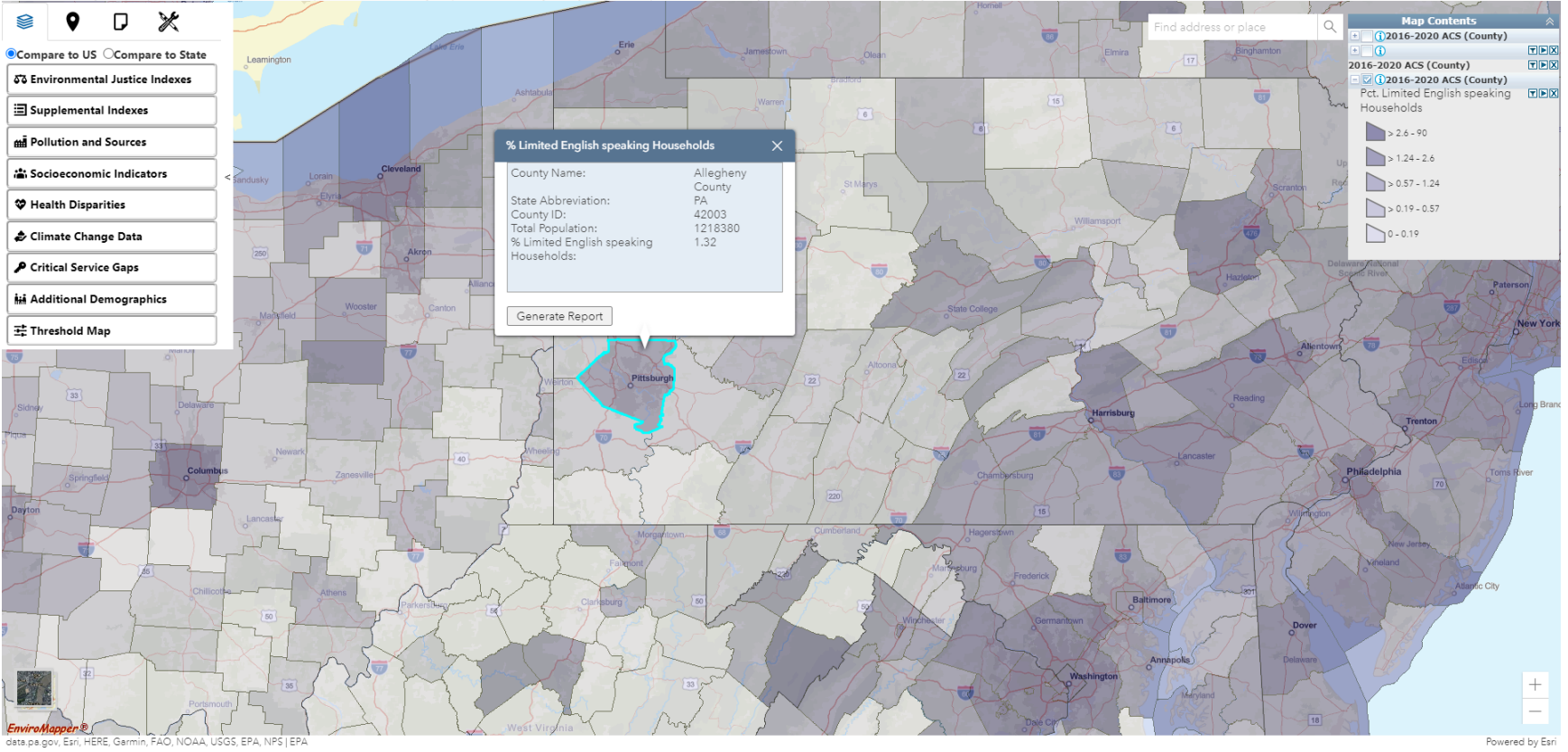


Figure 11: EPA EJScreen Limited English Proficiency dataset for Reference Geography (Allegheny County)

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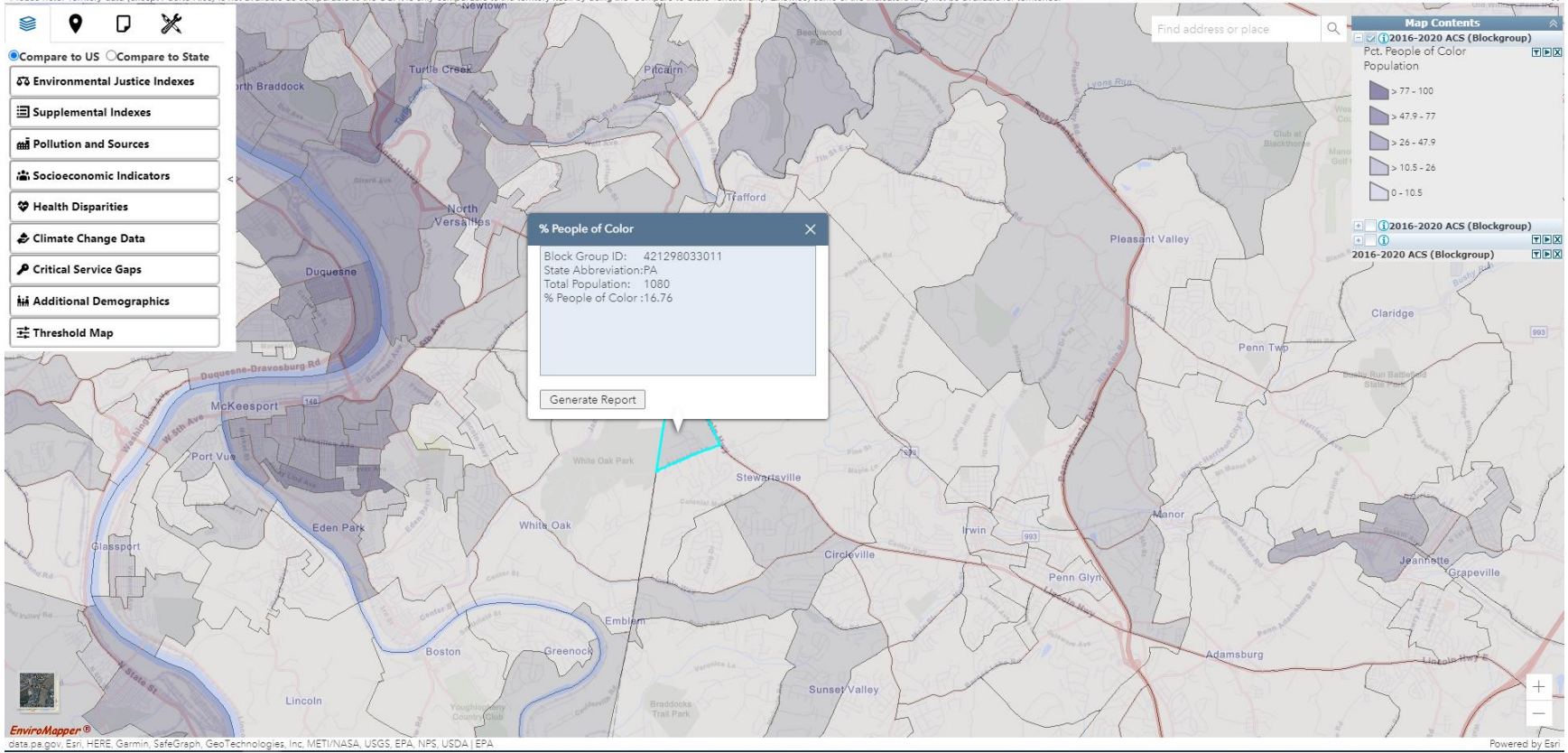


Figure 12: EPA EJScreen Minority dataset for CT 8033.01 BG 1

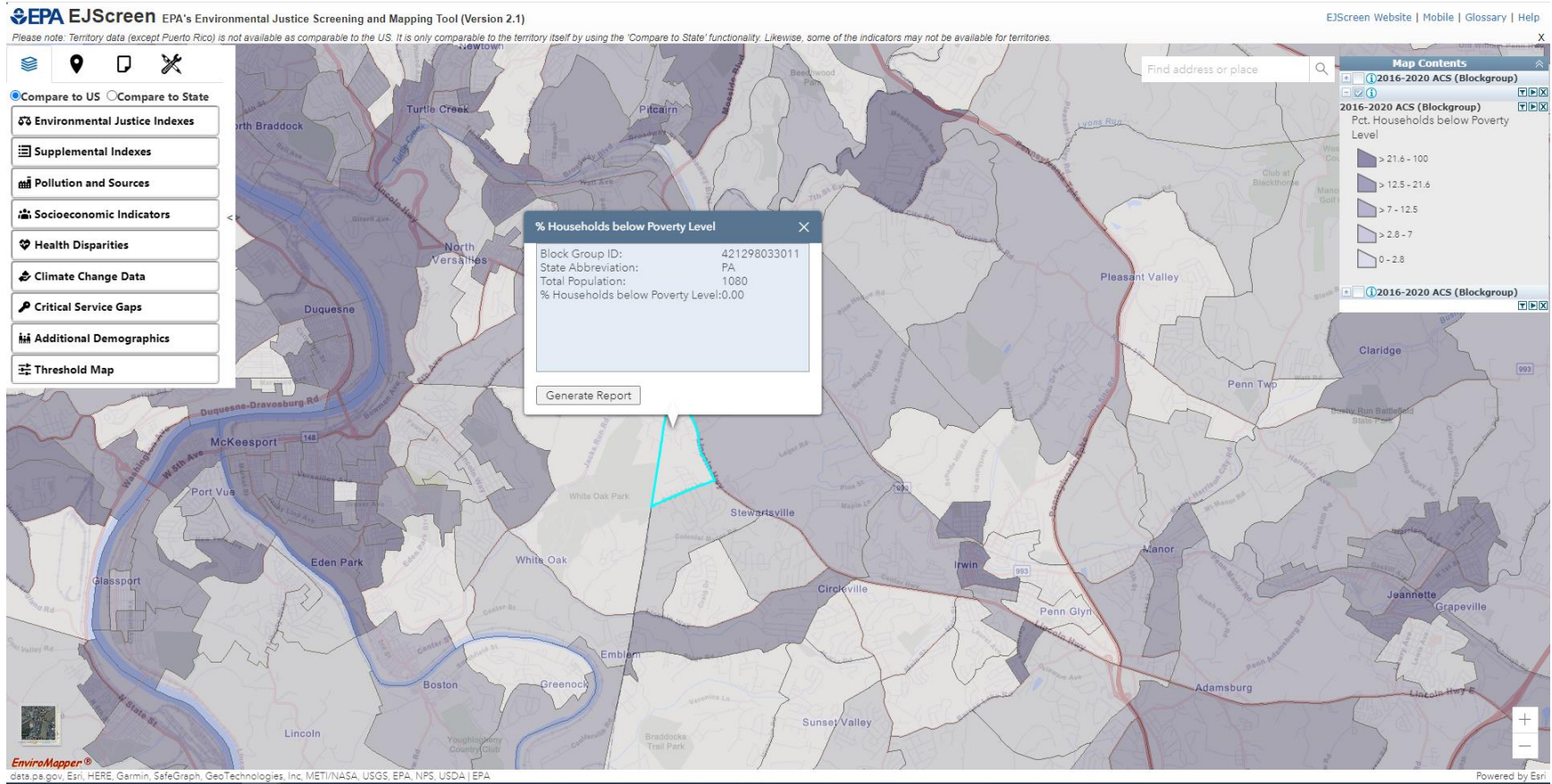


Figure 13: EPA EJScreen Poverty dataset for CT 8033.01 BG 1

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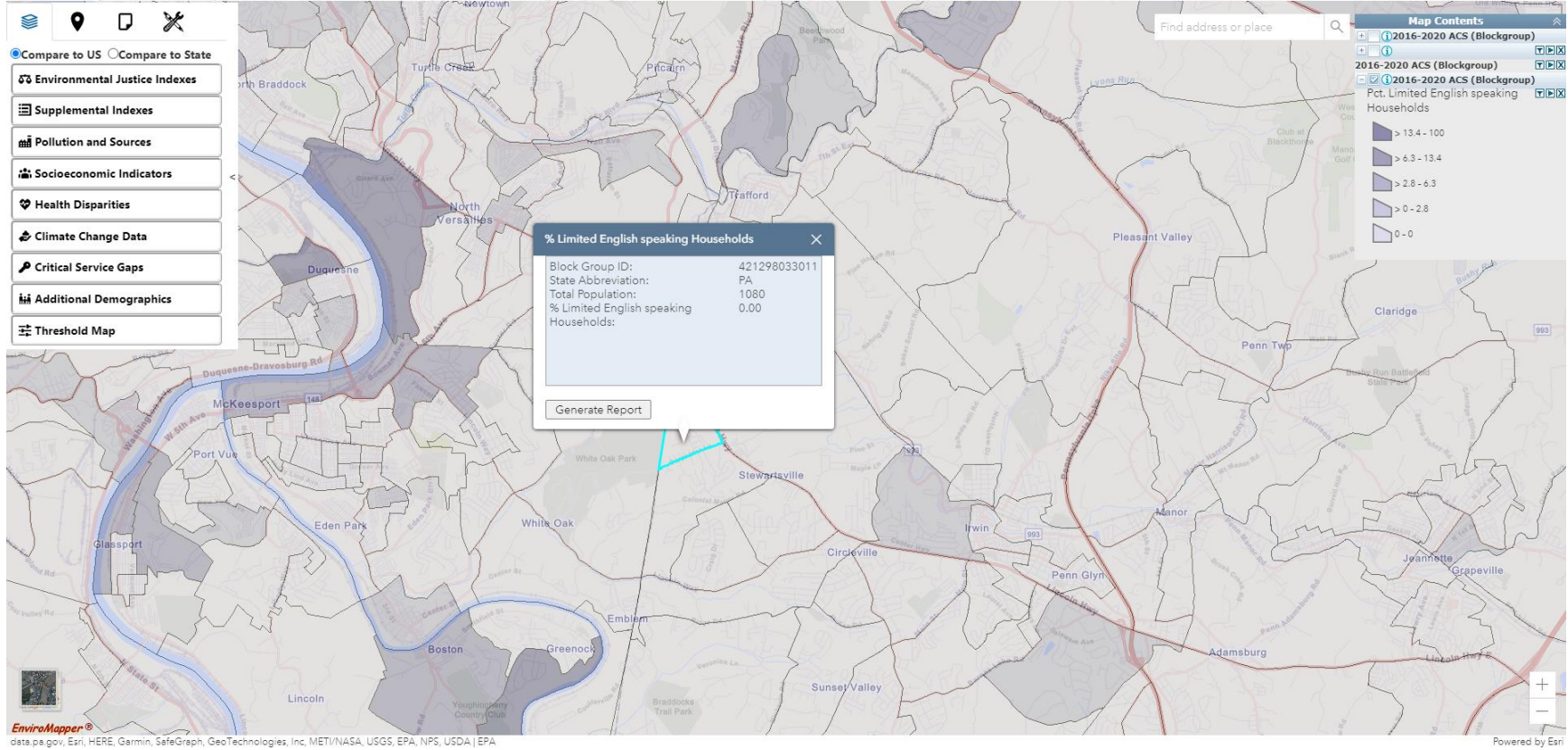


Figure 14: EPA EJScreen Limited English Proficiency dataset for CT 8033.01 BG 1



Please note: Territory data (except Puerto Rico) is not available as comparable to the US. It is only comparable to the territory itself by using the 'Compare to State' functionality. Likewise, some of the indicators may not be available for territories.

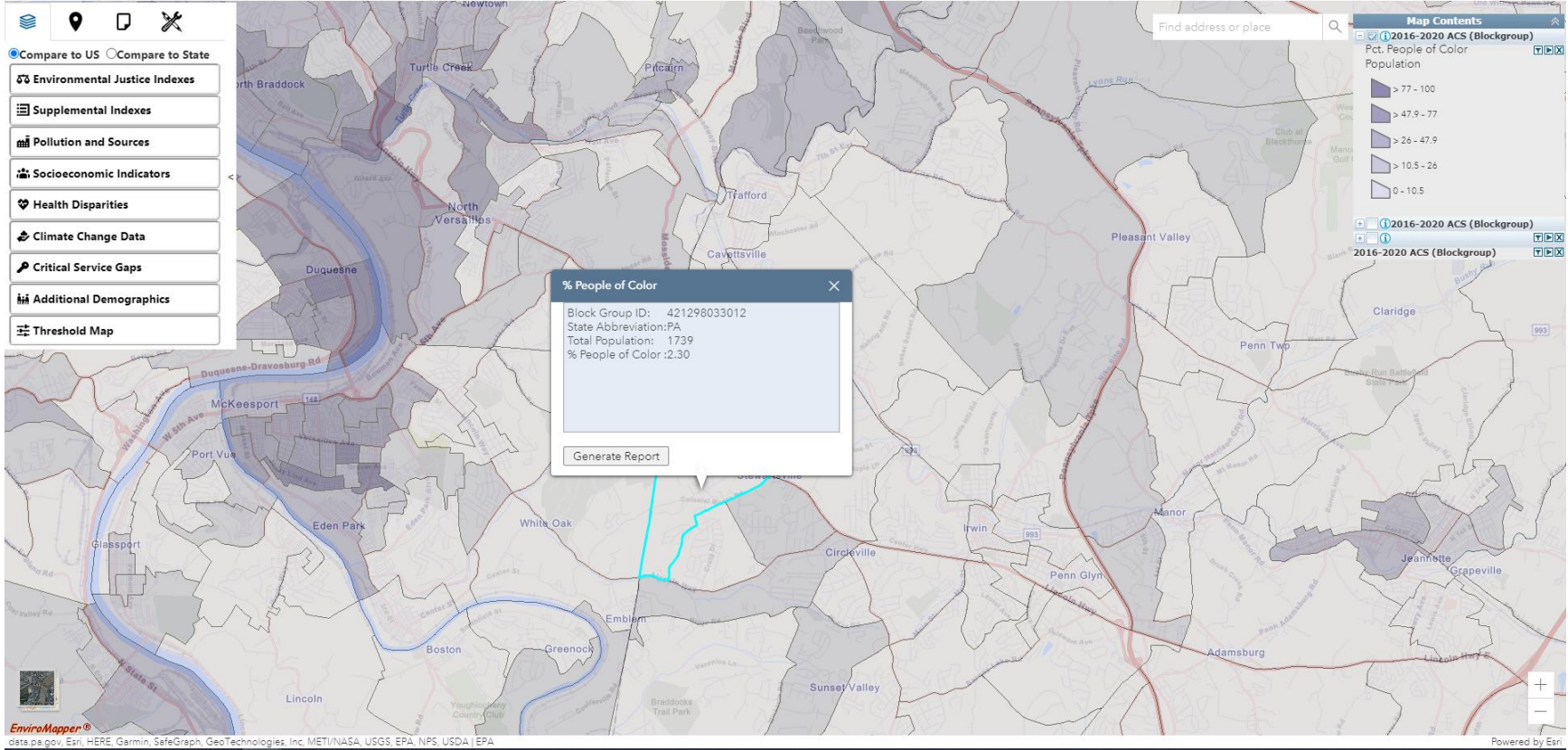


Figure 15: EPA EJScreen Minority dataset for CT 8033.01 BG 2

Please note: Territory data (except Puerto Rico) is not available as comparable to the US. It is only comparable to the territory itself by using the 'Compare to State' functionality. Likewise, some of the indicators may not be available for territories.

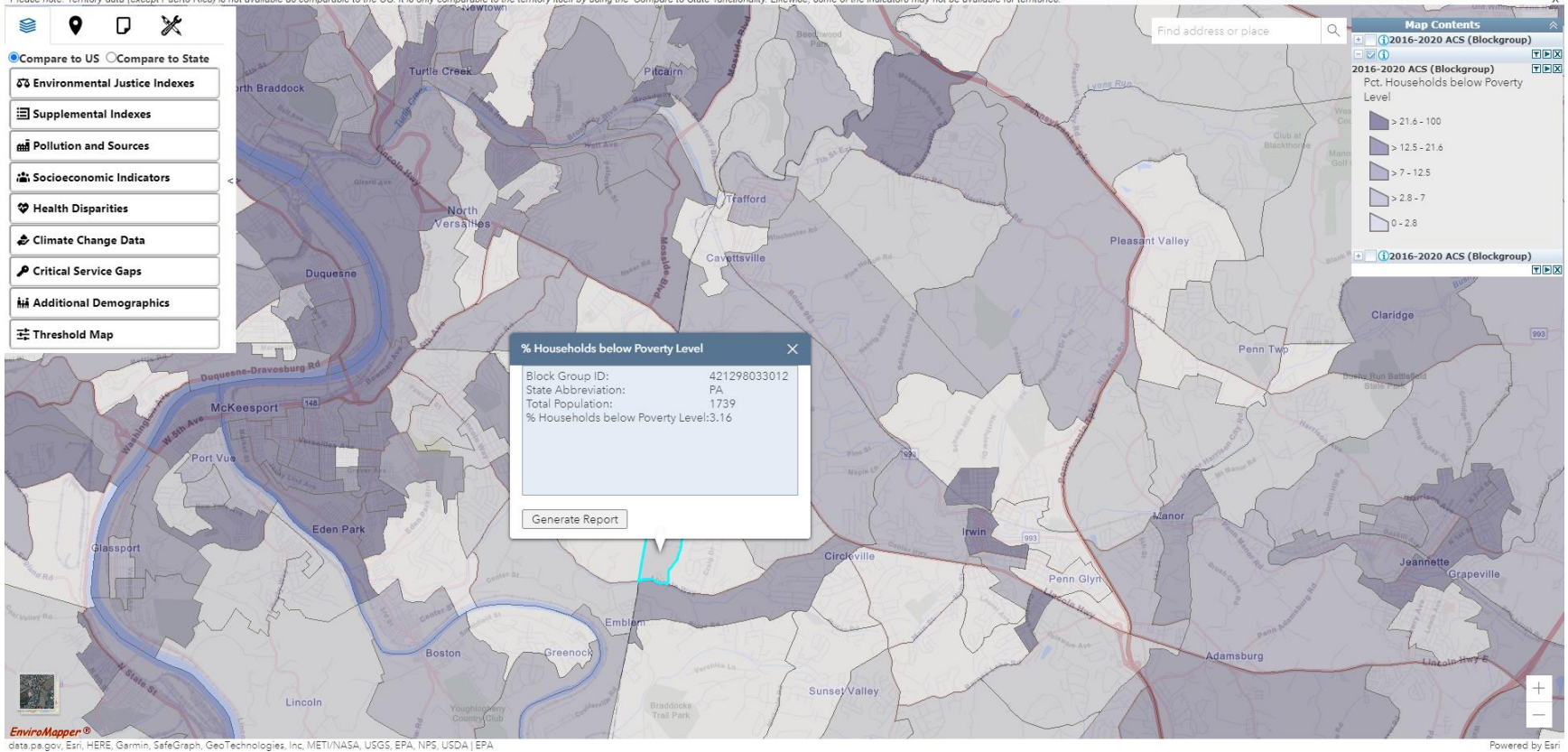


Figure 16: EPA EJScreen Poverty dataset for CT 8033.01 BG 2

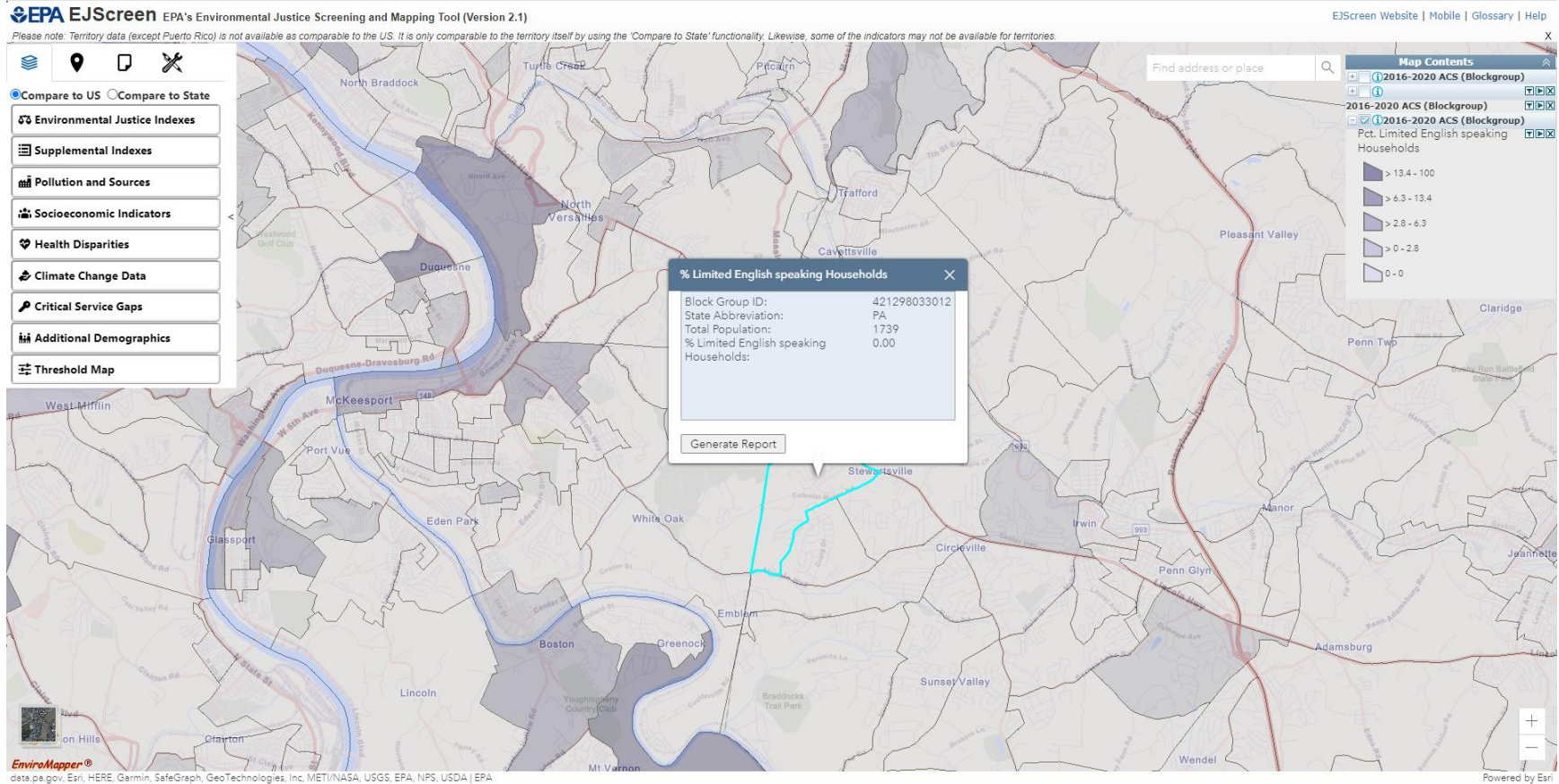


Figure 17: EPA EJScreen Limited English Proficiency dataset for CT 8033.01 BG 2

Please note: Territory data (except Puerto Rico) is not available as comparable to the US. It is only comparable to the territory itself by using the 'Compare to State' functionality. Likewise, some of the indicators may not be available for territories.

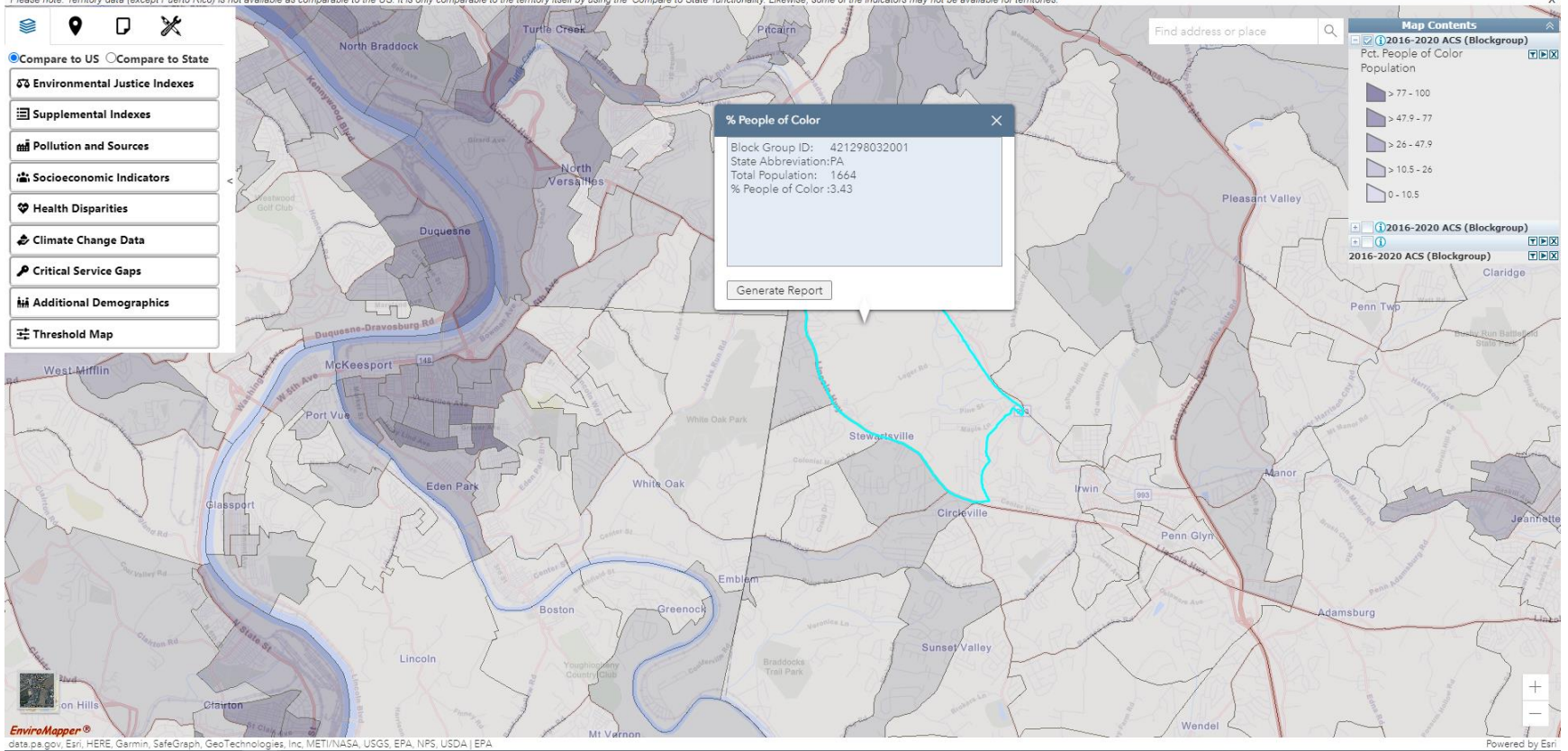


Figure 18: EPA EJScreen Minority dataset for CT 8032 BG 1

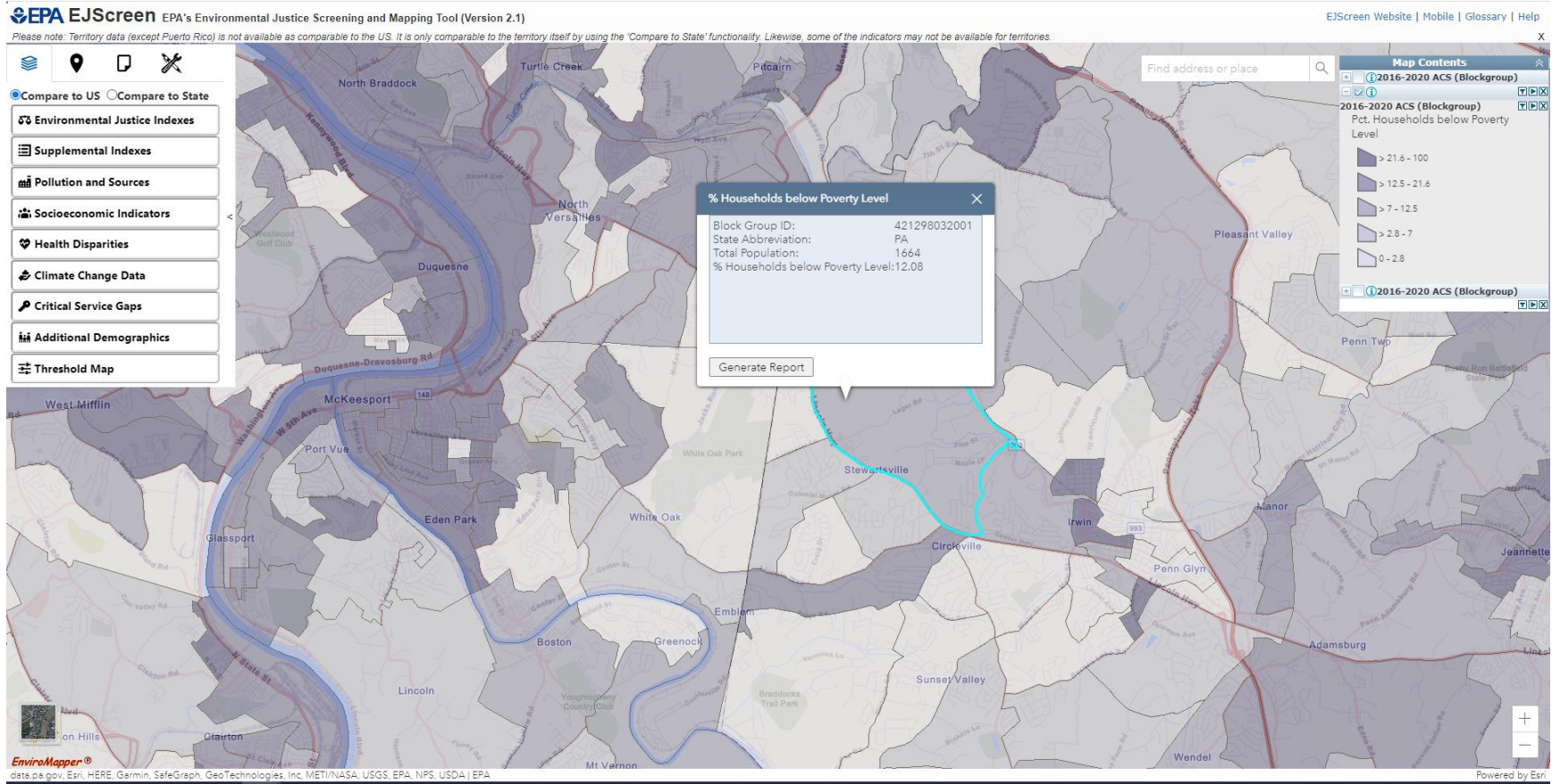


Figure 19: EPA EJScreen Poverty dataset for CT 8032 BG 1

Please note: Territory data (except Puerto Rico) is not available as comparable to the US. It is only comparable to the territory itself by using the 'Compare to State' functionality. Likewise, some of the indicators may not be available for territories.

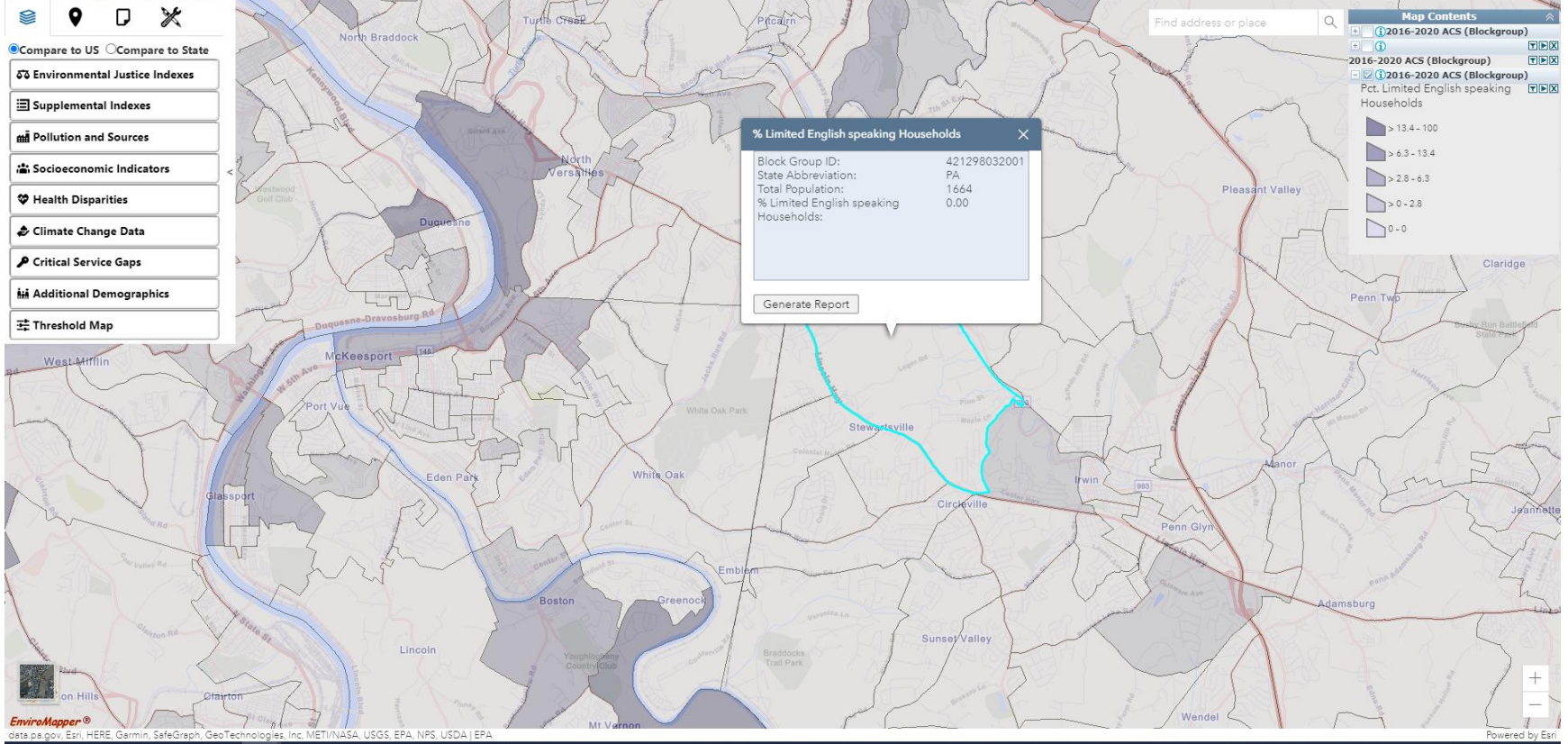


Figure 20: EPA EJScreen Limited English Proficiency dataset for CT 8032 BG 1

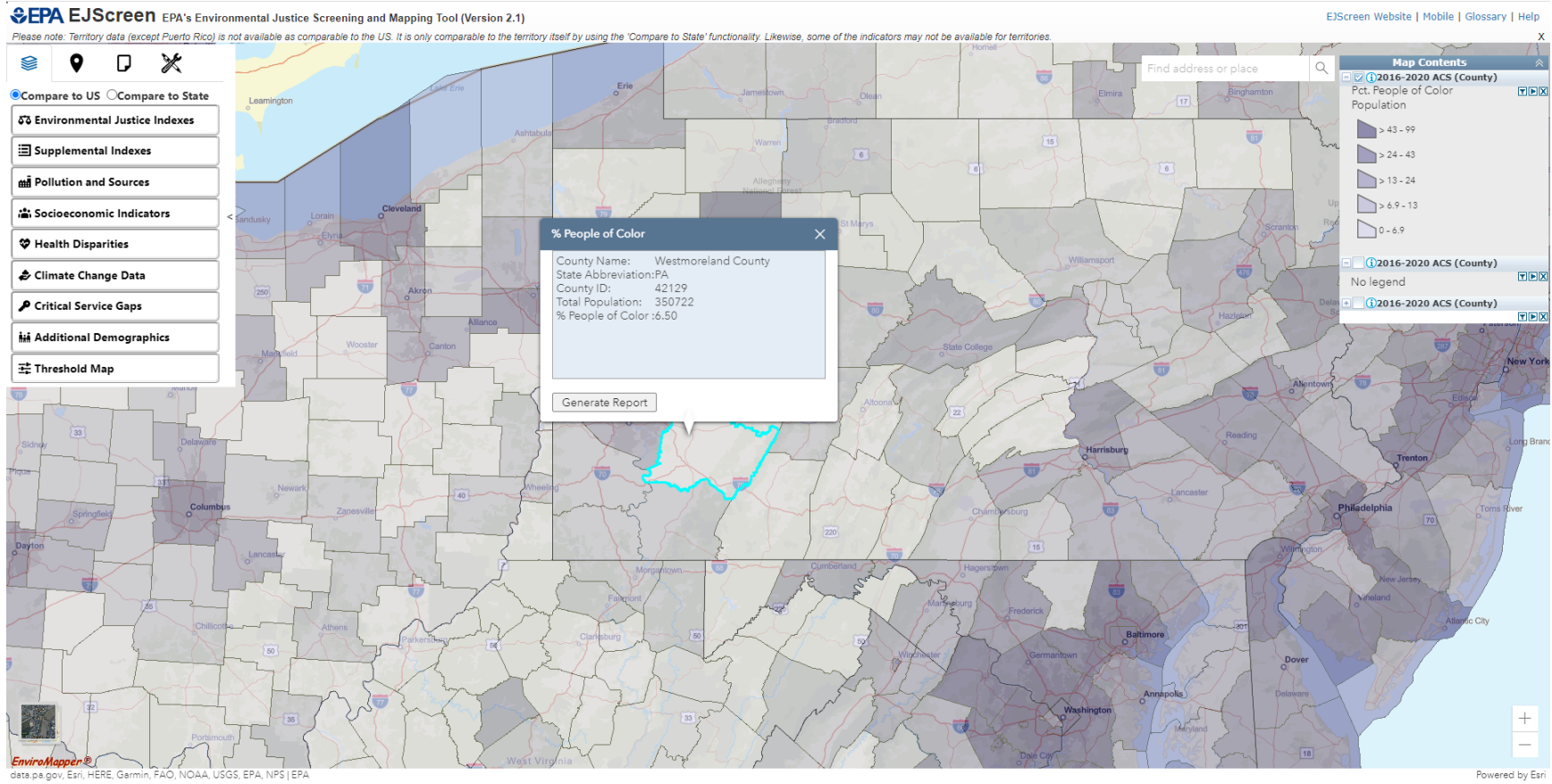


Figure 21: EPA EJScreen Minority dataset for Reference Geography (Westmoreland County)

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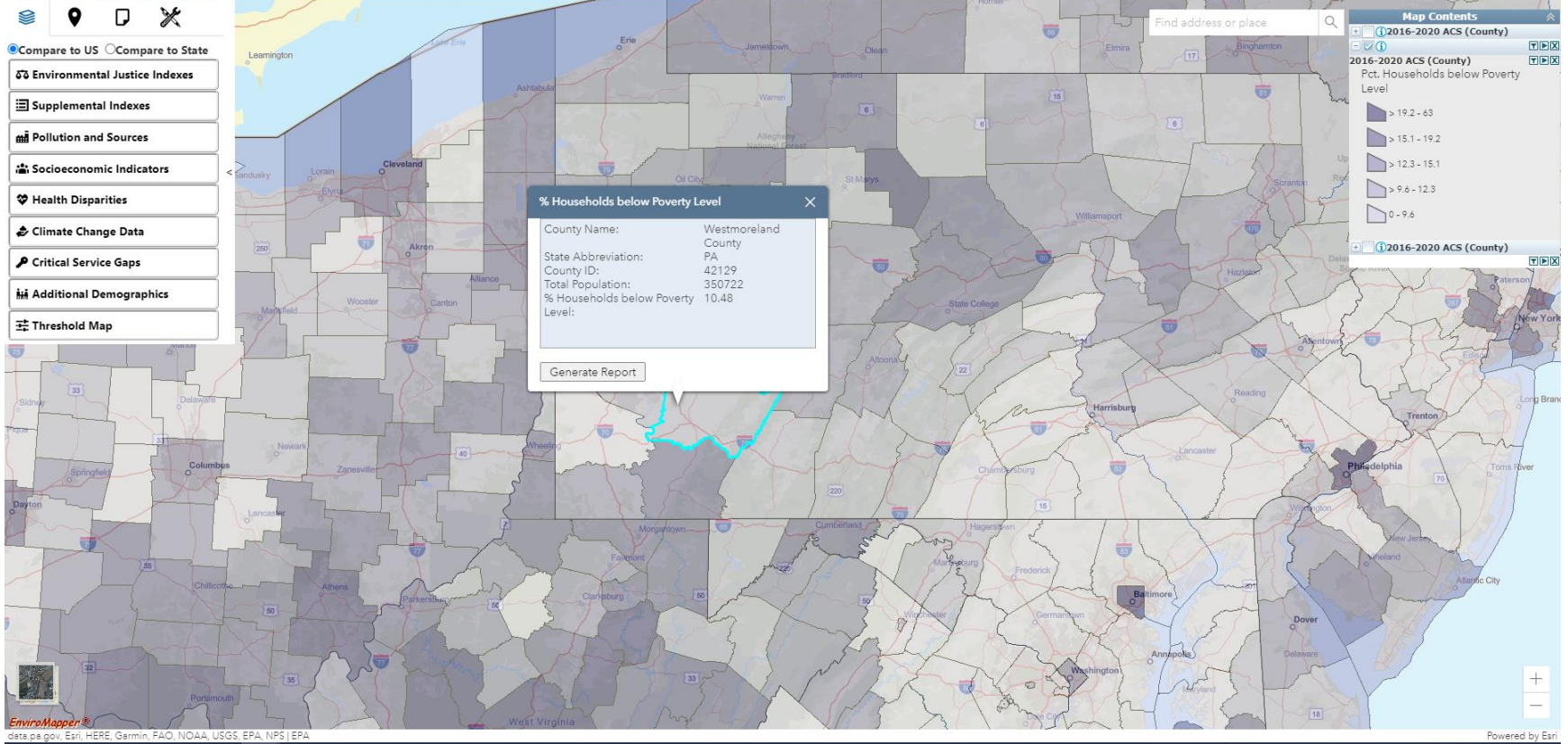


Figure 22: EPA EJScreen Minority dataset for Reference Geography (Westmoreland County)



Please note: Territory data (except Puerto Rico) is not available as comparable to the US. It is only comparable to the territory itself by using the 'Compare to State' functionality. Likewise, some of the indicators may not be available for territories.

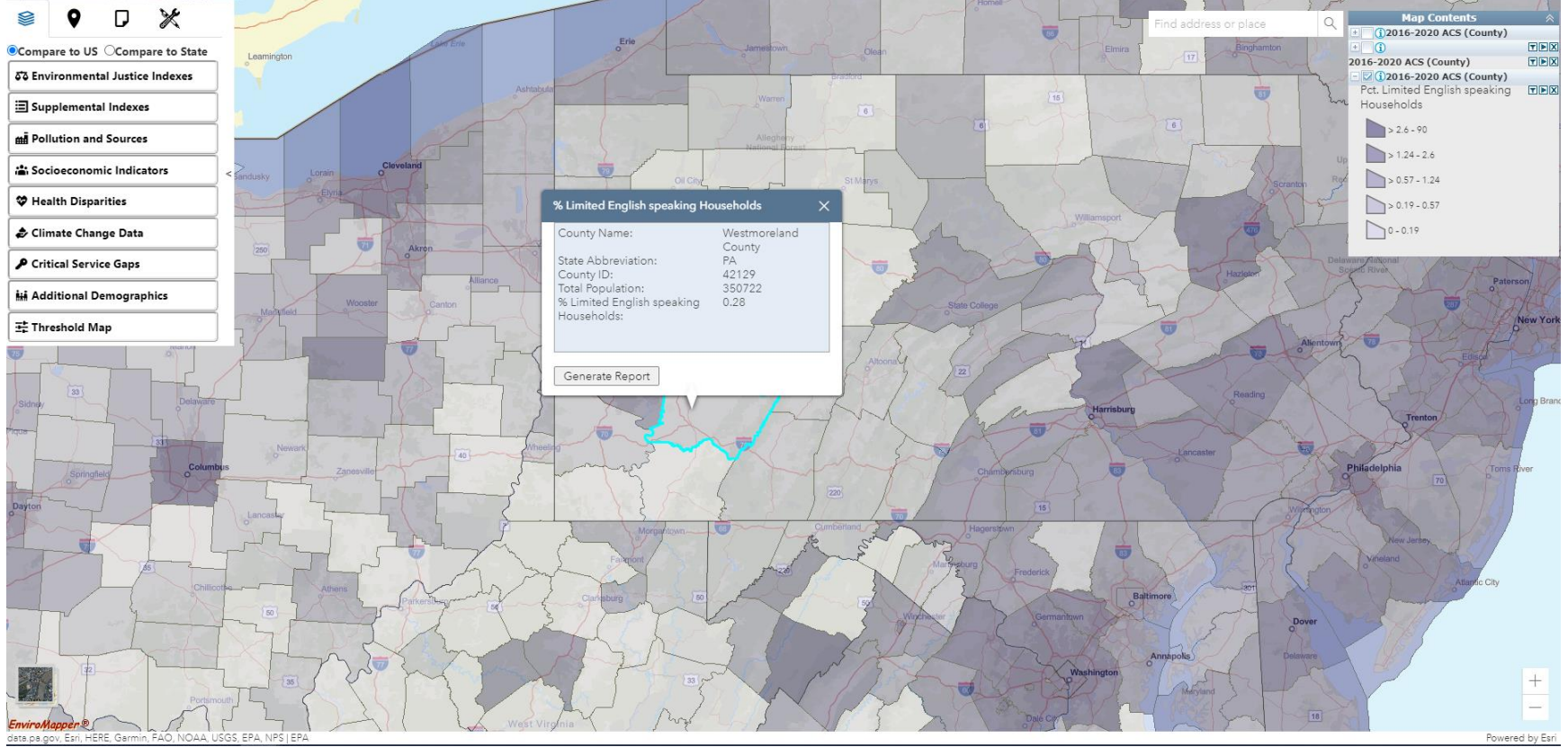


Figure 23: EPA EJScreen Limited English Proficiency dataset for Reference Geography (Westmoreland County)