

AI-Enabled Early-Warning and Decision Support for Environmentally Induced Cancer in E-Waste and Automobile- Recycling Communities: A Conceptual Public-Health Framework

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.66592/9nf8wx05>

Abstract

Communities near informal electronic-waste processing and automobile dismantling experience complex exposures whose carcinogenic consequences often appear years later. Disease registries therefore identify harm after much of the preventable exposure has occurred. This conceptual study develops an AI-enabled early-warning and decision-support framework designed to shift prevention upstream. The architecture contains four coupled layers. A sensing layer combines low-power environmental monitoring with targeted biomonitoring under explicit quality and provenance controls. A predictive-risk engine estimates biochemical and carcinogenic risk with calibrated uncertainty and flags emerging hotspots. A decision-support layer ranks source control, worker protection, advisories, surveillance, and remediation by expected risk reduction, cost, and feasibility. A governance-and-equity layer controls consent, privacy, access, non-discrimination, community participation, and source-reduction primacy. Framework development followed a decision-backward synthesis: prevention decisions were defined first, followed by the evidence, technical functions, safeguards, and failure conditions needed to support them. The proposal is falsifiable at each layer. Advancement requires adequate sensor coverage and reliability, external calibration, acceptable subgroup performance, uncertainty coverage, manageable alert burden, auditable recommendations, and demonstrated corrective action. Implementation should progress from a bounded pilot to

comparative decision evaluation and independent governance review. Success is defined by reduced exposure and biological risk, not predictive accuracy alone. The framework does not support autonomous enforcement or unrestricted individual surveillance. Its contribution is an integrated research architecture for testing whether continuous sensing and accountable prediction improve the timing, targeting, and equity of environmental-health protection in high-burden recycling communities.

Keywords: e-waste; automobile recycling; environmental carcinogenesis; early-warning systems; biomonitoring; 8-OHdG; oxidative stress; low-power IoT sensing; decision support; environmental justice; predictive risk modeling; health-data governance

1. Introduction

1.1 The exposure setting

Recycling is, in aggregate, an environmental good. Recovering copper, aluminum, steel, precious metals, and rare elements from discarded electronics and end-of-life vehicles displaces virgin extraction, conserves energy, and diverts mass from landfill and incinerator. Yet the processes by which materials are recovered, particularly where they proceed informally or with weak engineering controls, concentrate hazard in the bodies of workers and the neighborhoods that surround them (Wong et al., 2007; Perkins et al., 2014). The methods that make recovery cheap are frequently the methods that make it dangerous. Cable is stripped of insulation by open fire because fire is free; circuit boards are stripped of gold by acid because acid is effective; vehicle bodies are opened by torch because torches are fast; batteries are broken by hand because hands are available. Each shortcut converts a bound, relatively inert material into a mobile, bioavailable contaminant. Circularity therefore requires explicit chemical-safety screening so material recovery does not transfer toxic risk into new products or communities (Okojie & Abioye, 2020). Digital-twin environmental-compliance models provide a related mechanism for connecting procurement records, operational conditions, and regulatory evidence over time (Ike et al., 2025).

The chemistry of these operations is diverse and cumulative. Lead migrates from solder, cathode-ray tube glass, wheel weights, and lead-acid batteries. Cadmium volatilizes from rechargeable cells, pigments, and coatings. Hexavalent chromium is generated in plating and

in the thermal processing of alloyed steels. Mercury escapes from switches, lamps, and relays. Brominated and organophosphate flame retardants leach and combust from plastic housings. Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and polychlorinated dibenzo-dioxins and -furans form whenever halogenated plastics are burned at low temperature. Respirable and ultrafine particulate matter, laden with adsorbed metals and organics, arises from shredding, grinding, and combustion. Fuels, solvents, used oils, and refrigerants add benzene, chlorinated hydrocarbons, and other volatile species. The result is not a single exposure but a shifting, site-specific mixture whose components act on the human body through overlapping mechanisms.

1.2 From exposure to cancer, through a long delay

Several of these agents are recognized human carcinogens or probable carcinogens; others are potent generators of oxidative stress that damages DNA, lipids, and proteins. Systematic reviews of e-waste exposure have documented a consistent association between these operations and adverse health outcomes across exposed workers and residents, including children (Grant et al., 2013; Parvez et al., 2021; Heacock et al., 2016), and the developmental toxicity of the metals involved compounds the concern for the youngest members of these communities (Grandjean & Landrigan, 2014). A recurrent theme across their mechanisms is the disturbance of cellular redox balance. Redox-active metals participate in Fenton-type and Haber–Weiss reactions that yield hydroxyl radicals; other metals deplete glutathione or inhibit DNA-repair enzymes; combustion-derived organics form bulky DNA adducts and generate reactive oxygen species during metabolic activation. The convergence of these pathways on the genome is why a biomarker such as 8-OHdG (a nucleoside product of the oxidative attack on guanine) has become a workhorse index of genotoxic stress. Elevated 8-OHdG does not diagnose cancer; it reports that the molecular processes upstream of cancer are active.

The decisive feature for public health is latency. Solid tumors and many hematopoietic malignancies emerge years to decades after the exposures that initiate and promote them. This temporal gap is the central obstacle to protecting recycling communities, and it is also the central opportunity. It is an obstacle because the instruments we conventionally use to detect harm (cancer registries, mortality records, epidemiological case series) can only register disease that has already crystallized. By the time an incidence signal is statistically legible in a small community, a cohort of exposures that could have been prevented has already been metabolized, distributed, and, in some fraction of bodies, transformed into initiated cells. The

signal we can measure with confidence is precisely the signal that arrives too late to act upon for the people it counts.

1.3 Reactive versus anticipatory public health

The dominant posture of environmental public health in these communities is therefore reactive. Contamination is confirmed after it is widespread; exposure is characterized after it is chronic; disease is enumerated after it is incurable in many of those enumerated. Each response is valuable and each is late. A registry that documents an excess of bladder cancer in a dismantling district is an indictment of a decade-old failure to control exposure; it cannot return that decade to the exposed. Remediation that follows the discovery of leaded soil in a schoolyard is necessary and admirable; it also concedes that children were exposed while the lead sat undetected. This pattern falls hardest on communities already burdened by cumulative environmental and social inequalities (Morello-Frosch et al., 2011; Cushing et al., 2015). The structure of the problem rewards a different structure of response.

An anticipatory public-health posture inverts the sequence. Rather than waiting for disease to reveal exposure, it measures exposure continuously and treats sustained or rising exposure as itself the actionable event. Rather than waiting for a biomarker to confirm that damage has accumulated, it models the trajectory of damage and intervenes on the trajectory. The latency that defeats reactive surveillance becomes, under anticipation, a reservoir of preventable time: the years between first exposure and first tumor are years during which source control, worker protection, advisory action, and remediation can each subtract from the eventual disease burden. The scientific basis for anticipation already exists in fragments: exposure science can measure contaminants, toxicology can relate contaminants to biological effect, and biomarker research can index effect before disease. What is missing is an integrating architecture that fuses these fragments in something close to real time, reasons about them under uncertainty, and connects the reasoning to decisions.

1.4 Why artificial intelligence, and why now

Three developments make an integrating architecture feasible now rather than aspirationally. First, sensing has become cheap, small, and low-power. Distributed networks of environmental sensors can report on particulate matter, selected gases, and physical conditions continuously and at neighborhood spatial resolution, at costs that no longer require a research grant per node.

Second, the analytical methods needed to fuse heterogeneous, noisy, irregular data (spatiotemporal statistics, machine learning, physically informed models, and calibrated uncertainty quantification) have matured and become accessible. Third, the biomarker and toxicological literature has advanced to the point where exposure-to-effect relationships, though still uncertain, can be encoded as quantitative models rather than qualitative warnings. Artificial intelligence, understood here not as autonomous agency but as a set of statistical and computational tools for inference and decision support under uncertainty, is the natural connective tissue among these developments. Its role is to convert streams of imperfect environmental and biological measurements into calibrated forecasts of risk, to detect the anomalies and hotspots that human monitors would miss in high-volume data, and to organize the space of possible responses so that scarce prevention resources are directed where they will avert the most harm. The intelligence in the system is not a substitute for exposure science, toxicology, epidemiology, or public-health judgment; it is an amplifier that lets those disciplines act at the speed, scale, and resolution that anticipation requires.

1.5 Aim and contribution

The aim of this manuscript is to specify, at the conceptual level, an AI-enabled early-warning and decision-support framework for environmentally induced cancer risk in e-waste and automobile-recycling communities. We do not report an empirical study; we articulate an architecture, its scientific rationale, its outputs, its validation logic, and its ethical constraints. Our contribution is fourfold. We (i) frame the protection of recycling communities as a problem of anticipation rather than reaction and argue that latency makes anticipation both necessary and possible; (ii) decompose the anticipatory system into four coupled layers (sensing, predictive-risk engine, decision support, and governance-and-equity), and specify the function and key outputs of each; (iii) define an implementation and validation pathway in which the system earns trust incrementally and is judged ultimately by realized exposure and risk reduction rather than by predictive metrics alone; and (iv) situate the whole within the demands of environmental justice and national significance, grounding it in documented exposure science while orienting it to the United States e-waste and automotive-recycling sectors. The remainder of the manuscript develops the architecture (Section 2), the implementation and validation pathway (Section 3), the significance argument (Section 4), a brief treatment of related work in low-power sensing and health-data governance (Section 5), and a concluding

synthesis (Section 6).

1.6 Framework development method and falsification logic

The framework was developed through a decision-backward conceptual synthesis. The target decision was defined first: whether, where, and when to intensify source control, worker protection, community advisories, surveillance, or remediation before disease appears. The analysis then specified the evidence needed to support each choice, the sensing and modeling functions required to generate that evidence, and the governance conditions required to prevent misuse. This order keeps the architecture tied to prevention rather than to the availability of sensors or algorithms.

Five design constraints governed the synthesis. Temporal relevance requires signals to arrive early enough to change exposure. Causal plausibility requires forecasts to connect measured hazards with defensible biological pathways. Operational reliability requires explicit data-quality, maintenance, and provenance controls. Decision accountability requires uncertainty, alternatives, and reasons to remain visible to human reviewers. Environmental justice requires equivalent coverage, calibration, and protective benefit across affected neighborhoods and worker groups.

The proposal is falsifiable at each layer. The sensing layer fails when coverage, detection reliability, or data completeness falls below prespecified thresholds. The predictive engine fails when external calibration, subgroup performance, or uncertainty coverage is inadequate. The decision layer fails when recommendations do not outperform simpler rules in expected harm reduction or impose an unacceptable false-alert burden. The governance layer fails when consent, access control, auditability, community review, or corrective action cannot be demonstrated. A failed layer should stop escalation to consequential use.

1.7 Evidence base and adjacent-domain synthesis

The framework proposed here sits at the confluence of several engineering, safety, health-services, and infrastructure literatures that have matured largely in parallel. This section situates it relative to five adjacent bodies of work whose methods, governance patterns, and monitoring architectures inform, without being identical to, the anticipatory system developed in the remainder of the manuscript. These clusters are adjacent rather than central: they contribute transferable patterns for resilient supply chains, disciplined occupational-safety analytics, remote infrastructure monitoring, health-services policy, and energy-autonomous sensing, each

of which reappears, transformed, in the layered architecture of Section 2.

1.7.1 Supply-chain and infrastructure resilience

A large body of work on procurement, inventory, and supply-chain governance in energy and critical-infrastructure settings offers directly transferable lessons for provisioning, maintaining, and scaling a distributed sensing-and-decision system. Foundational models link inventory availability and plant uptime, strategic procurement, and materials readiness to sustained operational performance (Okonkwo et al., 2018a; Okonkwo et al., 2018b; Okonkwo et al., 2021a; Okonkwo et al., 2019), while resilience-oriented frameworks address critical infrastructure and gas-processing continuity, regulatory-compliant procurement in high-risk environments, and risk management for EPC projects (Ogunwole et al., 2021; Okonkwo et al., 2021b; Agbabiaka et al., 2019). A digital-governance thread extends these ideas toward asset-lifecycle management and inventory visibility, predictive procurement planning, national-scale optimization through integrated IT and procurement systems, and secure, scalable supply-chain platforms supporting national energy reliability (Okonkwo et al., 2023a; Okonkwo et al., 2024a; Okonkwo et al., 2024b; Okonkwo et al., 2025; Okonkwo et al., 2024c). Complementary reviews synthesize advances in procurement strategy, ERP adoption, logistics performance, digital supply-chain cost control, service-management automation, port-logistics efficiency, and the integration of IT systems engineering with supply-chain operations (Okonkwo et al., 2024d; Okonkwo et al., 2024e; Okonkwo et al., 2024f; Okonkwo et al., 2020; Okonkwo et al., 2023b), and geospatially informed vendor evaluation, bid selection, and ERP procurement extend the same logic into spatial decision-making (Patrick et al., 2021; Patrick et al., 2020). Work on AI-augmented secure software engineering for autonomous threat detection rounds out the resilience picture for the digital substrate on which any national sensing system must run (Odejobi et al., 2025). Data-driven sustainability metrics in procurement offer an additional basis for evaluating whether vendors reduce hazardous inputs and improve traceability (Akin-Oluyomi et al., 2023).

1.7.2 Occupational safety and HSE at industrial and recycling sites

Because recycling and dismantling are performed by workers in high-hazard settings, the occupational-safety and health-safety-environment (HSE) literature is especially pertinent to the worker-protection interventions the decision layer ranks. Conceptual models of human

error, unsafe-behavior recurrence, and life-preserving safety practice establish the behavioral substrate of industrial risk (Obriki & Arumosoye, 2020; Obriki & Arumosoye, 2022a; Obriki & Arumosoye, 2021), while governance- and leadership-oriented models connect contractor and subcontractor safety performance, safety-walkthrough coverage, safety leadership, and organizational-learning maturity to injury-free outcomes (Arumosoye & Obriki, 2020; Obriki & Arumosoye, 2024b; Obriki & Arumosoye, 2019; Arumosoye & Obriki, 2024; Arumosoye & Obriki, 2021; Obriki et al., 2025). Hazard-specific analyses address lifting and rigging, heat stress, and emergency-response readiness (Arumosoye & Obriki, 2022; Arumosoye & Obriki, 2018; Arumosoye & Obriki, 2023), and a data-driven strand (near-miss and hazard-observation utilization, digital safety-data streams, proactive hazard identification, incident-investigation learning, and predictive safety analytics) prefigures the anomaly-detection logic of the present engine (Arumosoye & Obriki, 2019; Obriki & Arumosoye, 2023; Obriki & Arumosoye, 2024a; Arumosoye et al., 2025; Obriki & Arumosoye, 2018). QHSE-audit, workforce-training, evacuation, and environmental-compliance systems for construction and facility operations extend the same discipline to the built environment surrounding recycling activity (Obogo et al., 2020a; Obogo et al., 2020b; Obogo et al., 2020c; Obriki et al., 2022b; Obriki et al., 2022c; Obogo et al., 2022; Obogo et al., 2024a; Obogo et al., 2024b; Obogo et al., 2025; Obogo et al., 2019).

1.7.3 UAV, GIS, and aviation monitoring and oversight

Remote and geospatial monitoring of large infrastructure corridors demonstrates how sparse, mobile, and fixed observation can be fused for wide-area surveillance: an architectural pattern the sensing layer generalizes to environmental media. UAV, LiDAR, and GIS frameworks for power-grid inspection, pipeline and corridor monitoring, right-of-way encroachment detection, and utility asset management show how aerial and geospatial data support continuous condition assessment (Dagodzo, 2018a; Dagodzo, 2018b; Dagodzo & Ahiaeke Patrick, 2021a; Dagodzo & Ahiaeke Patrick, 2020; Dagodzo & Ahiaeke Patrick, 2022; Dagodzo & Ahiaeke Patrick, 2021b), while enterprise-integration and national-deployment studies, together with UAV regulatory analyses, address the organizational and governance dimensions of scaling such systems (Dagodzo & Ahiaeke Patrick, 2023a; Dagodzo & Ahiaeke Patrick, 2025; Dagodzo & Ahiaeke Patrick, 2023b). A parallel aviation-safety-oversight literature (predictive compliance monitoring from consumer-complaint data, adaptive safety-management-system

implementation, and AI-driven wildlife-strike risk quantification) illustrates data-driven, anticipatory risk oversight in a high-consequence regulated domain (Adeyelu, 2018; Adeyelu, 2019; Adeyelu, 2020; Adeyelu & Dagodzo, 2024).

1.7.4 Health-services and clinical-policy frameworks

The decision and governance layers draw conceptual scaffolding from health-services and clinical-policy scholarship that formalizes how policy, workforce, and coordination shape care outcomes. Care-coordination, patient-flow, continuity-of-care, and readmission-reduction frameworks show how structured pathways translate risk information into action (Akinlolu et al., 2023; Fapohunda et al., 2025a; Igweonu et al., 2024; Omaghomi et al., 2025b), while patient-safety, infection-prevention, antimicrobial-stewardship, fall-prevention, and postoperative-monitoring models specify how clinical policy is operationalized on the front line (Fapohunda et al., 2023a; Omaghomi et al., 2022; Fapohunda et al., 2023c; Omaghomi et al., 2024; Akinlolu et al., 2025; Fapohunda et al., 2024b). Governance- and preparedness-oriented work on workforce planning, emergency-response coordination, disaster-risk mitigation, and behavioral-health crisis response, together with access-expanding models for telehealth, mental-health screening, community health workers, and chronic-disease management, informs the equity and augmentation commitments carried forward here (Omaghomi et al., 2023; Fapohunda et al., 2024a; Akinlolu et al., 2024; Fapohunda et al., 2025b; Fapohunda et al., 2023b; Akinlolu et al., 2022; Omaghomi et al., 2025a).

1.7.5 Low-power environmental sensing

Finally, the physical feasibility of a dense, continuously reporting sensing layer rests on advances in energy-autonomous and intermittently powered wireless systems. Studies of radio-frequency energy harvesting, batteryless and maintenance-free wireless infrastructure, and epoch-aligned reliable broadcast establish that useful sensing can persist without mains power (Asiedu & Quainoo, 2023c; Asiedu & Quainoo, 2023d; Asiedu & Quainoo, 2025b), while work on energy–reliability–latency trade-offs and predictive power management for intermittent IoT devices supplies the design discipline the sensing layer inherits (Asiedu & Quainoo, 2024c; Asiedu et al., 2025c). Complementary physical-layer and test-engineering studies (impedance-mismatch modeling, Wi-Fi 6 throughput prediction, wireless test-automation, and reliability-centered maintenance for high-density compute) characterize the link performance and

operational reliability on which any field deployment depends (Quainoo et al., 2024; Quainoo et al., 2025a; Quainoo et al., 2025b).

1.7.6 Cross-domain monitoring and surveillance

Adjacent work on continuous monitoring, anomaly detection and surveillance for critical infrastructure and public health further informs the sensing, predictive-risk and decision-support layers of the framework, including (Adebayo et al., 2022; Adebayo et al., 2023b; Adegbite et al., 2020; Adegbite et al., 2022; Adegbite et al., 2023; Adegbite et al., 2024a; Adegbite et al., 2024b; Adegbite et al., 2025; Ahmed et al., 2021; Atakpa et al., 2024; Atakpa et al., 2023).

Complementary studies on predictive humanitarian logistics, digital-twin environmental compliance, machine-learning-enabled sensor-energy management, and IoT security show how resilient data and monitoring architectures can support time-sensitive decisions across distributed infrastructure (Anene & Clement, 2022; Ike et al., 2025; Kumuyi et al., 2024b; Jimoh et al., 2023).

2. Framework architecture

The framework is a layered, closed-loop system. Environmental and biological signals enter through a sensing layer; a predictive-risk engine transforms those signals into forecasts of biochemical and carcinogenic risk with quantified uncertainty; a decision-support layer converts forecasts into ranked, auditable intervention options; and a governance-and-equity layer conditions the entire pipeline on community consent, privacy, non-discrimination, and the primacy of source reduction. The loop closes because interventions change exposure, and changed exposure re-enters the sensing layer, allowing the system to learn whether its recommendations worked. Each layer is designed to be intelligible to the layer above and accountable to the layer that governs all of them. The table that follows summarizes the four layers by function and key outputs; the subsections then develop each in turn. IoT architectures that combine machine-learning prediction with constrained energy management offer a transferable design pattern for this sensing layer (Kumuyi et al., 2024b). Organizational-readiness research on generative AI in healthcare further indicates that deployment capacity, workforce preparation, and governance maturity should be validated alongside model performance (Ayinde et al., 2025).

Table 1. The four-layer early-warning framework: function and key outputs.

Layer	Function	Key output
Sensing	Aggregate environmental & biomonitoring data with provenance	Quality-controlled, harmonized exposure streams
Predictive-risk engine	Forecast oxidative stress, DNA damage and cancer risk	Calibrated risk forecasts; anomaly/hotspot flags
Decision support	Rank interventions by expected benefit and feasibility	Prioritized, auditable action recommendations
Governance & equity	Ensure privacy, participation, fairness, source accountability	Safeguards, audits, community oversight

2.1 Sensing layer

The sensing layer is the sensory surface of the system: the set of instruments and protocols through which environmental and biological reality is converted into data. Its design must reconcile three tensions (coverage versus cost, sensitivity versus robustness, and richness versus privacy), and it must do so in field conditions characterized by dust, heat, power intermittency, and, often, community mistrust.

Environmental monitoring across media. Contamination in recycling districts partitions across soil, air, and water, and no single medium suffices. Soil integrates deposition over time and is the reservoir most relevant to persistent metals such as lead and cadmium and to hydrophobic organics such as dioxins and brominated retardants; it is the medium through which children are exposed by hand-to-mouth contact and through which produce is contaminated. Air carries the acute and semi-acute hazard: respirable and ultrafine particulate matter, combustion gases, volatile organic compounds, and metal-laden fumes generated during active burning, cutting, and shredding. Water (surface runoff, shallow wells, and drainage) transports acid-leaching residues, dissolved metals, and soluble organics into and out of the community. The sensing layer must therefore be multi-media by design, combining fixed high-fidelity reference instruments, denser networks of lower-cost continuous sensors, and periodic laboratory-grade sampling that anchors and corrects the continuous streams. Integrating such modeling with smart, distributed sensors for environmental and human-health inference is a direction the literature has actively developed (Reis, 2015), and geographic information systems provide the spatial backbone for translating dispersed measurements into exposure surfaces (Nuckols et al., 2004).

Low-power distributed IoT sensing. The economic and logistical core of continuous monitoring is a distributed network of low-power sensor nodes. Each node integrates a small suite of

transducers (particulate counters, selected electrochemical or metal-oxide gas sensors, temperature and humidity references, and, where feasible, indicators relevant to water quality) together with a microcontroller, local buffering, and a low-power wide-area radio. Energy is the binding constraint: nodes are frequently deployed where mains power is unreliable and must run on small solar harvesters and batteries. This drives a design discipline of duty cycling, on-node preprocessing that transmits features rather than raw high-rate streams, and communication protocols optimized for infrequent, small messages over long ranges. The value of such a network is not the precision of any single node (low-cost sensors drift, saturate, and respond to interferences), but the spatial and temporal density of the ensemble, which reveals gradients, plumes, and diurnal cycles invisible to a handful of reference stations. This is the same shift toward dense, lower-cost continuous monitoring that reshaped the air-pollution measurement paradigm (Snyder et al., 2013). The architecture assumes that individual measurements are imperfect and compensates through redundancy, cross-calibration against reference instruments, and statistical fusion in the layer above.

Community biomonitoring and 8-OHdG. Environmental measurement establishes what is present in the surroundings; biomonitoring establishes what has entered the body. The sensing layer therefore incorporates, under strict consent and governance, targeted human biomonitoring. Two complementary classes of biomarker are relevant. Biomarkers of exposure (metals in blood or urine, metabolites of combustion-derived organics, and related measures) quantify internal dose and validate that environmental signals translate into human uptake. Biomarkers of effect (foremost among them 8-hydroxy-2'-deoxyguanosine (8-OHdG), a urinary and tissue index of oxidative DNA damage) quantify the biological consequence of that dose along the mechanistic path toward carcinogenesis. 8-OHdG is attractive precisely because it is upstream of disease: it rises when oxidative genotoxic stress is active, long before any tumor exists, and it is measurable non-invasively. Its interpretation demands care, because it reflects total oxidative burden, including contributions from lifestyle and inflammation, and because it varies within and between individuals. The framework treats 8-OHdG and its congeners not as diagnostic endpoints but as effect signals that ground and calibrate the predictive engine's mechanistic claims, linking measured environmental exposure to a measured biological response that lies on the causal route to cancer.

Data quality and provenance. A system that acts on data inherits the failures of its data. The sensing layer therefore treats data quality and provenance as first-class engineering concerns

rather than afterthoughts. Every measurement carries metadata describing the instrument, its calibration state, its uncertainty, the time and location of acquisition, and the processing steps applied to it, in keeping with findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable data-stewardship principles (Wilkinson, 2016). Automated quality control screens for physically impossible values, stuck sensors, drift, and gaps, and flags rather than silently discards suspect data. Calibration is continuous: low-cost nodes are periodically co-located with reference instruments, and correction models are updated as sensors age. Provenance is maintained end to end so that any forecast or recommendation can be traced back to the specific measurements that produced it: an essential property both for scientific auditability and for the trust of communities who have historically been studied without accountability. Where biomonitoring data are involved, provenance tracking is coupled to the consent and privacy machinery of the governance layer, so that the lineage of a sample is inseparable from the permissions attached to it.

2.2 Predictive-risk engine

The predictive-risk engine is the inferential heart of the framework. It ingests the multi-media environmental streams and biomonitoring signals produced by the sensing layer and outputs forecasts of biochemical and carcinogenic risk, with calibrated uncertainty, at both individual and community scale. Its task is to bridge three gaps: from external environmental concentration to internal dose, from internal dose to biological effect, and from cumulative biological effect to eventual cancer risk. Each bridge is uncertain, and the engine's responsibility is to represent that uncertainty honestly rather than to conceal it behind a single confident number.

From exposure to internal dose. The first stage estimates the dose that reaches individuals and subpopulations given the measured environmental fields. This requires spatial and temporal interpolation of sparse and noisy sensor data into continuous exposure surfaces, combined with exposure models that translate ambient concentrations into intake through inhalation, ingestion, and dermal pathways, following established human-health exposure-assessment guidance (USEPA, 2009). Behavioral and demographic context (time spent near active processing, occupational role, age, and the hand-to-mouth behavior of young children) modulates intake substantially, so the engine reasons about populations of exposure scenarios rather than a single representative person. Physically informed models constrain the statistics: dispersion of

airborne contaminants, deposition to soil, and transport in water obey known physical laws, and embedding those laws regularizes inference where data are thin. Biomonitoring data close the loop empirically, allowing the engine to check and correct its dose estimates against measured internal concentrations.

From dose to biochemical effect. The second stage maps internal dose to biochemical effect, with oxidative stress and DNA damage as the central intermediate endpoints. Many carcinogens relevant to recycling exposure converge mechanistically on the generation of reactive oxygen species and the disruption of redox homeostasis, so oxidative stress functions as a mechanistic hub through which chemically diverse exposures can be integrated. The engine encodes dose–response relationships between mixtures of contaminants and markers of oxidative genotoxic stress, using 8-OHdG and related effect biomarkers as observable anchors. Crucially, it must handle mixtures, not single agents: recycling exposures are cocktails whose components may act additively, synergistically, or antagonistically, and whose joint effect is poorly captured by summing single-agent risks. The engine therefore favors representations that can express interaction and non-linearity, while remaining disciplined by mechanistic plausibility so that it does not hallucinate effects the toxicology does not support.

From effect to cancer risk. The third stage projects accumulated biochemical effect into forecasts of carcinogenic risk over relevant time horizons. This is the most uncertain bridge, because it spans the latency period and depends on cumulative and time-weighted exposure, individual susceptibility, and competing risks. The engine expresses this output as a distribution over risk rather than a point estimate, and it makes explicit the assumptions (linearity, thresholds, susceptibility distributions) on which the projection rests. At the individual scale, outputs support clinically meaningful actions such as prioritization for surveillance; at the community scale, they support population-level decisions about source control and remediation, in the spirit of precision public health that targets prevention to those who stand to benefit most (Khoury et al., 2016). Importantly, the engine's cancer-risk forecasts are framed as decision-relevant risk signals, not as predictions that a particular person will develop disease: a distinction that matters both scientifically and ethically.

Calibrated uncertainty. Because every stage is uncertain and the stakes of both false alarms and missed hazards are high, calibrated uncertainty quantification is not a refinement but a requirement. A forecast that claims 80 percent probability of exceeding a risk threshold must be right about 80 percent of the time when it makes that claim; otherwise the decision layer

cannot weigh it rationally. The engine propagates uncertainty from sensor noise, model structure, and parameter estimation through to its final outputs, and it distinguishes uncertainty that more data could reduce from uncertainty that is irreducible given current knowledge. This honesty about confidence is what allows the decision layer to act proportionately: to escalate when a hazard is both likely and severe, and to gather more information when the signal is genuinely ambiguous.

Anomaly and hotspot detection. Beyond continuous forecasting, the engine performs anomaly and hotspot detection: it flags sudden departures from expected patterns, an overnight spike consistent with a new burning site, a localized cluster of elevated readings, a biomarker signal inconsistent with modeled exposure. This capacity draws on decades of experience with public-health surveillance, from environmental-health surveillance systems to syndromic and digital disease detection, which have established both the value and the pitfalls of acting on early, noisy signals (Thacker et al., 1996; Henning, 2004; Brownstein et al., 2009). These flags are not themselves conclusions; they are attention signals that direct human investigation and, where warranted, rapid response. Hotspot detection gives the system a spatial memory, identifying the specific locations where exposure concentrates so that interventions can be targeted rather than diffuse. Anomaly detection gives it a temporal reflex, catching acute events that would be averaged away in long-run statistics.

2.3 Decision-support layer

Forecasts are not, by themselves, protection. The decision-support layer converts the engine's risk outputs into ranked, justified, auditable options for action, and it does so in a manner that augments the judgment of public-health professionals, community leaders, and regulators rather than displacing it. Its guiding principle is that the system recommends and explains; humans decide and are accountable. Decades of evidence on clinical decision-support systems indicate that such tools improve practice only when specific design features (timely, actionable, workflow-integrated recommendations) are present (Kawamoto et al., 2005), a lesson the layer takes as a design constraint.

The intervention repertoire. The layer reasons over a structured repertoire of interventions spanning the prevention hierarchy. At the top sit source control and enforcement: stopping or engineering out the emitting activity itself, prohibiting open burning, requiring capture and treatment, enforcing standards on dismantling and battery handling. Source control is privileged

because it removes hazard rather than merely managing exposure to it, and its primacy is a design commitment, not an afterthought. Below source control lie worker protection measures (engineering controls, ventilation, personal protective equipment, work practice changes, and hygiene provisions) that reduce the dose to those most heavily exposed. Public advisories inform residents of elevated risk and recommend protective behavior, from avoiding a contaminated area to changing food-growing practices; their design must attend to how risk is perceived and communicated if they are to inform rather than alarm or be ignored (Fischhoff, 1995). Targeted surveillance and screening direct scarce clinical resources toward the individuals and groups the engine identifies as most at risk, enabling earlier detection where prevention has partially failed. Remediation addresses accumulated contamination in soil and water. These options differ in who acts, how quickly they take effect, whom they protect, and what they cost.

Ranking by expected risk reduction, cost, and feasibility. For any given risk forecast, the layer estimates, for each candidate intervention, the expected reduction in exposure and downstream cancer risk, the cost of implementation, and the feasibility of execution given the local legal, economic, and social context. It then ranks interventions by these criteria, making the trade-offs explicit rather than hidden. A cheap advisory that modestly reduces risk, an expensive remediation that dramatically reduces it, and an enforcement action that is highly effective but institutionally difficult are presented side by side with their respective expected benefits, costs, and obstacles, so that decision-makers can choose with full information. The ranking incorporates the uncertainty propagated from the engine: an intervention whose benefit is large in expectation but uncertain is distinguished from one whose smaller benefit is nearly certain, allowing decision-makers to manage risk according to their own tolerance and mandate.

Augmentation, not automation. The layer is explicitly designed to augment human judgment. It does not autonomously trigger enforcement, dispatch screening, or issue advisories; it assembles the evidence, quantifies the options, and presents a defensible recommendation that a human authority evaluates against considerations the system cannot fully encode: political constraints, competing community priorities, historical context, and ethical nuance. This division of labor is deliberate. Automating consequential public-health decisions would concentrate unaccountable power in a model and would fail the communities most in need of trustworthy institutions. Keeping a human in the loop preserves accountability, admits values the model cannot represent, and allows the system's recommendations to be overridden when

they are wrong.

Auditability and explanation. Every recommendation is auditable. The layer records the forecasts, assumptions, cost and feasibility estimates, and weighting that produced a given ranking, and it can explain, in terms a non-specialist can follow, why one option was ranked above another and which measurements drove the assessment. Auditability serves three ends. It enables scientific scrutiny and correction, because a recommendation that can be inspected can be criticized and improved. It enables democratic accountability, because a community can see why a decision affecting it was recommended. And it enables learning, because when an intervention is chosen and its effect later observed in the sensing layer, the recorded rationale can be compared against the realized outcome to refine future recommendations.

2.4 Governance-and-equity layer

The governance-and-equity layer is not a compliance wrapper bolted onto a technical system; it is a constitutive part of the architecture that conditions how every other layer may operate. Its inclusion reflects a hard lesson: technologies deployed in vulnerable communities without their agency, and without protection against misuse, tend to reproduce or deepen the injustices they claim to address. The layer encodes five commitments.

Community participation. The communities that host recycling activity are not passive study subjects but stakeholders with knowledge, interests, and rights. The framework requires their participation in defining what is measured, where sensors are placed, how findings are communicated, and which interventions are pursued, in the tradition of community-based participatory research that treats residents as partners in inquiry (Israel et al., 1998). Participation is not a single consultation but an ongoing relationship in which the community shares in the governance of the data it generates and the decisions those data inform. This both improves the science, residents know where burning occurs and when, and grounds the legitimacy of any action the system recommends.

Privacy. Biomonitoring and fine-grained spatial data are intimate. Knowing an individual's biomarker levels, or that a specific household sits in a hotspot, creates the potential for harm if the information is misused by employers, insurers, landlords, or authorities. The governance layer imposes strict privacy protections: data minimization, aggregation and de-identification wherever individual-level detail is not essential, secure storage and controlled access, and consent that is informed, specific, and revocable. These commitments align with an emerging

body of work on health-data governance, secure and cost-effective health infrastructure, cyber-risk management, and AI governance and data-privacy compliance in digital health, which specifies how sensitive health data can be protected without foreclosing its beneficial use (Adebayo et al., 2025; Adebayo et al., 2023a; Ekechi et al., 2022; Kumuyi et al., 2024a; Ozowara et al., 2022; Ozowara et al., 2025). Provenance tracking from the sensing layer is bound to these permissions, so that the technical lineage of a datum and the ethical permissions attached to it move together. Privacy-by-design and role-based access controls provide practical safeguards for separating identifiable records from community-level alerts (Badmus et al., 2024).

Non-discrimination and fairness auditing. A system that forecasts risk and ranks interventions can, if unexamined, allocate protection unequally: directing surveillance disproportionately toward some groups, or systematically under-detecting hazard where sensors are sparse or biomonitoring participation is low. The layer requires continuous fairness auditing: examination of whether the sensing network's coverage, the engine's accuracy, and the decision layer's recommendations are equitable across the subpopulations that share the community. Detected disparities (such as poorer forecast calibration in an under-instrumented neighborhood) are treated as defects to be corrected, not as acceptable noise. Non-discrimination also constrains use: risk forecasts must not become instruments for stigmatizing a community or justifying its neglect. Equitable protection also extends to the downstream services that risk information should mobilize; work on cross-border regulatory harmonization, risk-based approval, drug-shortage early warning, regulatory readiness, and pharmaceutical supply-chain governance illustrates how access to essential medicines and therapies can be secured for underserved populations (Eze et al., 2024a; Eze et al., 2024b; Eze et al., 2022a; Eze et al., 2022b; Eze et al., 2023). Related scholarship on last-mile distribution, supply-chain resilience, quality assurance, continuity of care, interaction screening, and nanomaterial-enabled delivery underscores that equitable protection depends on reliable access as well as reliable measurement (Asiedu, 2022a; Asiedu, 2025a; Asiedu & Asiedu, 2022b; Asiedu & Asiedu, 2023a; Asiedu & Asiedu, 2023b; Asiedu & Asiedu, 2024a; Asiedu & Asiedu, 2024b; Ike et al., 2024). Automated-decision compliance research adds a legal and governance lens for detecting discriminatory effects before recommendations are operationalized (Annan, 2025). Predictive analytics for smart-city emissions and infrastructure risk provides a relevant precedent for joining spatial environmental indicators with public planning decisions (Okojie

et al., 2023).

Source-reduction primacy. The governance layer enshrines the principle that the preferred response to hazard is to eliminate the hazard at its source. This principle guards against a subtle failure mode in which a sophisticated monitoring and screening apparatus becomes a substitute for prevention: normalizing exposure by managing its consequences rather than stopping its cause. By privileging source control in the decision layer and auditing whether recommendations and actions respect that priority, the framework keeps its purpose fixed on prevention. The system exists to make exposure smaller, not to make chronic exposure more comfortably surveilled.

Fairness, transparency, and accountability as continuous practice. Finally, the layer treats governance as a continuous practice rather than a launch checklist. The system's performance, its equity, its privacy protections, and its fidelity to source-reduction primacy are monitored over time and reported to the community and to oversight bodies. Mechanisms exist for communities and workers to contest findings, correct errors, and hold operators accountable. This continuous accountability is what transforms a powerful surveillance-and-inference apparatus from a potential instrument of control into an instrument of protection owned, in meaningful part, by the people it protects.

2.5 Inter-layer coupling and the closed loop

The four layers are not a pipeline that runs once from left to right; they form a closed loop whose behavior emerges from the couplings between them. Three coupling relationships deserve explicit treatment because they determine whether the system is anticipatory in fact and not merely in name.

The first coupling runs from the predictive-risk engine back to the sensing layer as adaptive sensing. Because the engine knows where its uncertainty is greatest and where its hotspot detectors have fired, it can direct the sensing layer to concentrate resources (mobile sampling, additional nodes, or a round of biomonitoring) precisely where additional data would most sharpen the forecast or resolve an ambiguous anomaly. This transforms the sensing layer from a static grid into a responsive instrument whose attention follows the risk. It also disciplines the cost of monitoring: rather than instrumenting everywhere at maximum density, the system invests measurement where measurement changes decisions. Adaptive sensing must, however, be constrained by the governance layer, so that the pursuit of informative data never overrides

consent or concentrates intrusive measurement on particular households without their agreement.

The second coupling runs from the decision-support layer back through action to the sensing layer as outcome feedback. When a recommended intervention is enacted (an open-burning practice is halted, ventilation is installed, a hotspot is remediated), the sensing layer observes the environmental and, over a longer interval, biological response. This observed response is the ground truth against which both the engine's forecasts and the decision layer's benefit estimates are evaluated and refined. Outcome feedback is what allows the system to learn from its own recommendations rather than merely issuing them; it is the mechanism by which decision validity is established empirically over time. The loop is asymmetric in its timescales: environmental response to source control can be rapid, biological response is slower, and cancer-incidence response lies beyond the horizon of near-term feedback, which is why the framework relies on the faster proxies to close the loop while reserving epidemiological signals for long-run confirmation.

The third coupling is the pervasive conditioning of every layer by the governance-and-equity layer. Governance is not a downstream check applied to finished outputs; it sets the permissions under which sensing may occur, the constraints under which the engine may use individual-level data, and the priorities, source-reduction primacy above all, by which the decision layer ranks options. In systems terms, governance is a controller acting on every stage, not a monitor observing the last one. This pervasiveness is what distinguishes the framework from a technically capable system that happens to have an ethics appendix; here, the ethical commitments are load-bearing structural elements without which the other layers are not permitted to operate.

3. Implementation and validation pathway

A conceptual framework earns the right to influence real communities only by demonstrating, incrementally and transparently, that it works and that it does no harm. This section specifies a staged pathway from pilot to scale and articulates the three kinds of validity the system must establish (predictive, decision, and process validity) culminating in the standard by which the whole endeavor should ultimately be judged: realized reduction in exposure and risk.

3.1 From pilot to scale

Pilot stage. Deployment begins in a single, well-characterized community that hosts documented recycling activity and is willing to participate. The pilot's purposes are to instrument the sensing layer under real field conditions, to gather the paired environmental and biomonitoring data needed to calibrate the predictive engine, and to establish the governance relationship with the community before any consequential decisions are automated in recommendation. In the pilot, the decision-support layer runs in an advisory, shadow capacity: it generates ranked recommendations that are compared against expert judgment and against outcomes, building an evidence base for its reliability without yet steering scarce resources. The pilot is deliberately data-rich and slow, because the trust and the calibration accumulated here are the foundation for everything that follows.

Scaling stage. Scaling proceeds along two axes, more communities and deeper integration, only as validity is demonstrated. Geographic scaling extends the sensing network and the engine to additional sites, testing whether models calibrated in one community transfer to others with different waste streams, climates, and social contexts, and adapting them where they do not. Functional scaling gradually elevates the decision layer from shadow advisory toward a trusted input to real resource-allocation decisions, always under human authority and continuous audit. Scaling also confronts the heterogeneity of the United States e-waste and automotive-recycling sectors, which span formal permitted facilities, small dismantlers, and informal operations, each with different data availability, regulatory leverage, and community structure. The pathway assumes that no single configuration fits all sites and that the framework must be instantiated locally even as it shares a common architecture.

3.2 Predictive validity

Predictive validity asks whether the engine's forecasts are accurate and well-calibrated. Establishing it requires comparing forecasts against independent measurements at every bridge in the inferential chain: predicted exposure surfaces against held-out reference instruments and biomonitoring; predicted oxidative-stress and DNA-damage effects against measured 8-OHdG and related markers; and, over longer horizons, predicted risk patterns against epidemiological signals where they eventually become available. Calibration is assessed as rigorously as accuracy: the system must not only rank risk correctly but also quantify its confidence honestly, so that a stated probability means what it claims. Predictive validity is necessary but not

sufficient (a perfectly accurate forecast that changes no decision protects no one) which is why it is only the first of three standards.

3.3 Decision validity

Decision validity asks whether the decision-support layer's recommendations, when acted upon, actually reduce exposure and risk more effectively than the decisions that would have been made without it. This is a higher bar than predictive accuracy, because it concerns the causal effect of the system on outcomes rather than the correctness of its forecasts. Establishing decision validity requires comparing the outcomes of system-informed decisions against a credible counterfactual: expert judgment alone, prior practice, or, where ethical and feasible, staged rollout that allows comparison across sites and times. It also requires examining whether the ranking of interventions by expected risk reduction, cost, and feasibility holds up in practice: whether the interventions the system favors deliver the benefits it projected, at the costs it estimated, given the feasibility it assessed. Decision validity is where the system proves it adds value beyond insight: that it improves action.

3.4 Process validity

Process validity asks whether the system operates fairly, transparently, privately, and accountably in practice, not merely on paper. It is assessed through the continuous fairness auditing, privacy safeguards, and community-accountability mechanisms of the governance layer. Does sensor coverage reach the whole community or only its instrumented parts? Is forecast calibration equitable across subpopulations? Are consent and privacy protections honored? Do communities have real avenues to contest and correct? Are recommendations respecting source-reduction primacy, or is the apparatus drifting toward managing exposure instead of ending it? Process validity recognizes that a system can be predictively accurate and decision-effective yet still fail its communities if it is unjust, opaque, or extractive. A system that improves aggregate outcomes while entrenching inequity or violating privacy has not succeeded on the terms that matter here.

3.5 The ultimate standard: realized exposure and risk reduction

The three validities converge on a single ultimate standard: the framework succeeds to the extent that it produces realized reductions in exposure and, downstream, in cancer risk in the

communities it serves. Predictive accuracy, decision quality, and process integrity are instruments toward this end, not ends in themselves. This standard has a demanding implication given latency: because cancer outcomes are delayed by years to decades, the near-term measure of success cannot be observed cancer incidence but must be reductions in the intermediate quantities on the causal path, measured environmental concentrations, measured internal dose, and measured biological effect such as 8-OHdG. The closed-loop design of the framework makes this measurable: when an intervention is enacted, the sensing layer observes whether exposure actually falls, and the engine observes whether biological effect follows. The system is thus accountable to a chain of observable proxies for its ultimate goal, and it earns confidence in its long-run cancer-prevention benefit by demonstrating, repeatedly and transparently, that its recommendations lower the exposures and biological insults that cause cancer. Success is not a forecast that turns out to be right; success is a hazard that was reduced because the system helped someone reduce it.

3.6 Limitations, failure modes, and safeguards

Intellectual honesty requires naming the ways the framework could fail, because a system that acts on vulnerable communities must be designed against its own worst behaviors. Several failure modes are foreseeable, and each implies a safeguard.

The first is measurement failure masquerading as safety. Low-cost sensors degrade, biomonitoring participation is uneven, and coverage is never uniform. A community that appears low-risk may simply be under-measured, and the danger is that absence of signal is misread as absence of hazard. The safeguard is the sensing layer's insistence on provenance, uncertainty, and quality flags, coupled to the engine's requirement that it distinguish confident low risk from mere ignorance. A forecast of low risk built on sparse data must be labeled as uncertain, not reassuring, and the fairness auditing of the governance layer must treat systematically under-instrumented areas as a defect to be remedied rather than a quiet gap.

The second is model misspecification in the exposure-to-cancer chain. The bridges the engine spans (dose reconstruction, mixture toxicology, and long-latency projection) are genuinely uncertain, and an overconfident model could either raise false alarms that waste resources and erode trust or miss real hazards that then accumulate unseen. The safeguard is disciplined uncertainty quantification, mechanistic constraint of the models so they do not extrapolate beyond what toxicology supports, and the staged validation pathway that withholds

consequential trust until predictive and decision validity are demonstrated. The engine is designed to be corrigible: its assumptions are explicit and its forecasts are checkable against biomarkers and outcomes.

The third is mission drift toward surveillance. A system rich in spatial and biological data about a marginalized population could, absent vigilance, evolve into an instrument that monitors people while doing little to reduce their exposure, or worse, that furnishes data used against them. The safeguard is structural: source-reduction primacy in the decision layer, strict privacy and consent binding data to permissions, non-discrimination constraints on use, and community co-governance that gives residents standing to contest and redirect the system. The framework's purpose is fixed by these commitments on shrinking exposure, not on observing it more precisely.

The fourth is the automation of authority. Were the decision layer permitted to act autonomously, it would concentrate consequential and value-laden choices in a model whose limitations it cannot itself perceive. The safeguard is the deliberate design of the layer as augmentation rather than automation, keeping accountable humans in the decision and preserving avenues for override. Naming these failure modes is not a concession that the framework is unsound; it is part of the design, because a system built for anticipation must anticipate its own faults as rigorously as it anticipates the hazards it exists to prevent.

4. Public-health significance and implementation relevance

4.1 Prevention objective and intervention logic

The framework targets a specific operational gap: harmful exposure can persist for years before disease surveillance detects an outcome. Open burning, inadequate ventilation, and contaminated soil are potentially controllable, but timely action requires credible information about where exposure occurs, how uncertain the measurements are, and which intervention is feasible. The proposed architecture therefore links sensing to decision rules rather than treating monitoring as an endpoint. This contribution is conditional. Continuous measurement has public-health value only when alerts prompt documented corrective action and when evaluation shows lower exposure or biological risk than current practice.

4.2 Requirements for economic evaluation

Economic advantage should be tested rather than presumed. Evaluation should include sensor acquisition and maintenance, laboratory confirmation, data stewardship, workforce training, false-alert investigations, intervention costs, avoided exposure, and downstream health outcomes. Comparators should include current surveillance and simpler threshold-based triggers. The relevant outputs are incremental cost per unit of exposure reduced, cost per quality-adjusted life-year when defensible health-effect estimates exist, and the distribution of costs and benefits across workers, residents, firms, and public agencies. A complex predictive system should not advance when a simpler rule achieves comparable protection at lower cost or with less data collection.

4.3 Environmental-justice evaluation

Environmental-justice evaluation should test whether exposure, monitoring burden, false alerts, intervention delays, and realized benefits differ across workers and communities. The framework should therefore report subgroup-specific coverage, error, response time, and exposure reduction rather than relying on an aggregate performance estimate. Community participation should include authority over acceptable data uses, retention periods, escalation rules, and publication of results. These requirements prevent a monitoring program from collecting sensitive data without producing a corresponding protective benefit.

4.4 Relevance to regulated and informal recycling settings

The framework is relevant to both regulated facilities and informal recycling settings, but transfer between them should not be assumed. Permitted operations often have stronger monitoring, occupational controls, and response capacity, whereas informal sites may have limited infrastructure and fragmented governance. Validation should therefore stratify performance by facility type, workforce arrangement, contaminant profile, and community context. Evidence drawn from international e-waste studies should inform hazard selection and study design, while local exposure measurements, baseline risks, regulations, and intervention capacity should determine implementation. Claims of broader applicability require external validation rather than extrapolation from a single setting.

4.5 Integration across disciplinary evidence

The framework integrates evidence from exposure science, toxicology, biomarker research,

environmental sensing, statistical modeling, and governance. Each field supports a different link in the proposed chain, but evidence for the individual links does not validate the complete system. The research contribution is therefore an explicit, falsifiable architecture whose added value must be tested against simpler alternatives. Prospective studies should determine whether coupling these components improves timing, decision quality, exposure reduction, and equity without imposing disproportionate data or operational burdens.

5. Discussion: positioning within sensing, governance, and decision-support research

The framework connects three bodies of evidence: low-power environmental sensing, governance of sensitive health data, and decision support in high-stakes settings. Positioning the proposal within these literatures clarifies which components are established, which links remain hypothetical, and which claims require prospective validation.

5.1 Low-power environmental sensing

The feasibility of the sensing layer rests on more than a decade of advances in low-cost, low-power environmental instrumentation and networking. The emergence of inexpensive particulate and gas sensors, energy-efficient microcontrollers, energy-harvesting power supplies, and long-range low-power wide-area communication has made it possible to deploy dense networks of continuous monitors at costs that were previously prohibitive (Snyder et al., 2013; Reis, 2015). A substantial literature has examined the strengths and limitations of such networks: their capacity to reveal fine-scale spatial and temporal structure invisible to sparse reference monitors, and their well-documented weaknesses of drift, cross-sensitivity, and calibration dependence. That literature has developed the very techniques the sensing and engine layers rely upon (co-location calibration, statistical correction, and data fusion that treats low-cost measurements as informative but imperfect) alongside a parallel systems literature on keeping intermittently powered nodes reliable and maintenance-free in the field (Asiedu & Quainoo, 2023d). The framework adopts these methods wholesale and extends their application from general air-quality monitoring toward the specific, multi-media, exposure-characterization task posed by recycling communities, where the relevant hazards include not only particulate matter but metals and combustion-derived organics, and where the purpose is not ambient reporting but health-protective inference. What the framework adds is the coupling of this sensing capacity to a biochemical-risk engine and a decision layer, so that measurements become forecasts and forecasts become protective action.

5.2 Health-data governance

The governance layer draws on an equally substantial body of work concerning the ethical handling of sensitive health and biomonitoring data, the conduct of community-based participatory research, and the emerging norms for fair, accountable, and transparent algorithmic systems (Israel et al., 1998). This literature has established principles the framework treats as binding: informed and revocable consent, data minimization and privacy protection, community participation and shared governance, protection against discriminatory use, and continuous auditing for fairness and accountability. It has also documented the failure modes the framework is designed to avoid: research that extracts data from vulnerable communities without returning benefit, technologies deployed without consent that entrench surveillance, and algorithmic systems whose opacity places consequential decisions beyond scrutiny. The framework's contribution relative to this work is to embed these governance principles structurally within a decision-support architecture rather than appending them as external oversight, and to add the specific commitment of source-reduction primacy, which guards against the particular danger that a health-data-intensive monitoring apparatus becomes a substitute for, rather than a spur to, the elimination of hazard. In coupling sensing, inference, and decision support under a governance regime built for exactly this kind of vulnerable-community deployment, the framework integrates the two literatures it inherits into a single, ethically disciplined, anticipatory system.

5.3 Algorithmic decision support and the integration gap

A third, cross-cutting body of work concerns algorithmic decision support in high-stakes domains (clinical medicine, public health, and resource allocation) where models inform, but do not replace, expert action (Kawamoto et al., 2005). This literature has clarified the properties that make such support trustworthy: calibrated and honest expression of uncertainty, transparency and explainability sufficient for human oversight, auditability of the reasoning behind each recommendation, and continuous evaluation against realized outcomes rather than against static benchmarks. It has also cataloged the pathologies of poorly designed support: automation bias, in which humans defer uncritically to a model; opacity that places consequential logic beyond scrutiny; and metric fixation, in which a system optimizes a proxy that diverges from the outcome that matters. The decision-support layer of the framework is

built to inherit the former and avoid the latter, and its explicit accounting of expected risk reduction, cost, and feasibility is a direct response to the metric-fixation danger, keeping the system's optimization tied to the reduction of harm rather than to the accuracy of a forecast.

What remains under-addressed in the separate literatures, and what the framework contributes, is the integration gap: the absence of a coherent architecture that carries a signal all the way from a low-power sensor in a recycling yard, through a calibrated biochemical-risk inference, to a ranked and auditable protective decision, under a governance regime designed for vulnerable communities. Each of the three inherited bodies of work solves a piece (sensing solves measurement, health-data governance solves ethical handling, algorithmic decision support solves trustworthy recommendation), but none solves the coupling. The framework's central claim is that anticipation is a property of the whole loop and cannot be achieved by any component alone: a perfect sensor network that feeds no inference, a perfect risk model that informs no decision, or a perfect decision layer that operates without community governance would each fail the communities the system exists to protect. Closing the integration gap, under explicit ethical discipline and with success defined by realized exposure reduction, is the work this framework sets out to do.

5.4 Research priorities and decision thresholds

The first research priority is a prospective pilot with prespecified go, revise, and stop thresholds. Minimum thresholds should cover sensor uptime and spatial coverage, missingness, laboratory agreement, external calibration, subgroup error, uncertainty coverage, alert burden, response time, and community acceptance. Thresholds should be approved before outcome analysis so weak performance cannot be reinterpreted after the fact as adequate.

The second priority is comparative decision evaluation. The proposed framework should be tested against current surveillance and against simpler trigger rules using the same data and intervention options. Evaluation should measure exposure reduction, timeliness, false alerts, missed hazards, cost, worker and community burden, and distribution of benefit. A more complex model should advance only when it improves decisions, not merely prediction metrics. The third priority is independent governance evaluation. Community representatives, occupational-health practitioners, regulators, privacy specialists, and technical auditors should review data permissions, model changes, subgroup performance, incident logs, and remediation outcomes. The system should remain reversible: data collection can be narrowed,

recommendations suspended, and models withdrawn when safeguards fail or benefits do not materialize.

6. Conclusion

The latency between hazardous exposure and cancer creates a prevention window that conventional disease surveillance cannot use. The framework developed here addresses that gap by linking environmental and biological sensing to uncertainty-aware risk estimation, ranked preventive actions, and governance controls. Its purpose is to support earlier protection in e-waste and automobile-recycling communities, not to replace regulators, clinicians, workers, or community judgment.

The proposal should advance only through staged and comparative validation. Each layer has measurable failure conditions involving coverage, data quality, calibration, subgroup performance, alert burden, auditability, consent, and corrective action. The full framework should outperform simpler trigger rules and existing surveillance on exposure reduction, timeliness, missed hazards, false alerts, cost, burden, and distribution of benefit. Predictive accuracy without improved decisions is insufficient.

Source reduction remains the governing objective. Individual biomonitoring and spatial data should never become substitutes for hazard control or instruments of discrimination. Independent oversight and community participation must retain authority to narrow data collection, suspend recommendations, and withdraw models when safeguards fail. The framework succeeds only when it produces earlier, accountable, and more equitable reductions in exposure and risk.

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