

Arizona Latin-American Medical Association (ALMA) • Common Ground for Conservation • Consejo de Federaciones Mexicanas en Norteamérica (COFEM) • Democracia Ahora • Hispanic Health Council (HHC) • Hispanics in Politics • Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) • Latin American Youth Center (LAYC) • Latino Coalition for a Healthy California (LCHC) • League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) • Mujeres de la Tierra • National Hispanic Environmental Council (NHEC) • National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA) • National Latino Coalition on Climate Change (NLCCC) • National Puerto Rican Coalition (NPRC) • Project Economic Refugee • Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (TEJAS) • Voces Verdes • William C. Velazquez Institute (WCVI)

September 29, 2010

Dear President Obama, the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives:

On behalf of the undersigned groups representing over 5 million Latino citizens across the U.S., we urge you to oppose any legislation that would block or delay the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from enforcing the Clean Air Act. Air pollution has serious effects on human health and is a public health matter of the utmost importance to the Hispanic community who sadly faces a heightened risk from air pollution.

Air pollution threatens vast numbers of Latinos nationwide. An estimated 66 percent of U.S. Latinos—25.6 million people—live in areas that do not meet the federal government's air quality standards.ⁱ These areas include the U.S.-Mexico border region, Southern California, the Central Valley of California, and the cities of Chicago, New York, Phoenix, and Houston. Increased temperatures as a result of global warming, will impact many heavily Latino areas, by exacerbating problems with ground level ozone formation, a primary contributor to asthma and other respiratory disease.

Reports detail some of the many health risks already faced by the community:ⁱⁱ

- In Chicago and the surrounding area, more than 800,000 Hispanics live within ten miles of two power plants that are estimated to contribute to 2,800 asthma attacks and 41 premature deaths every year.
- Six of the 25 most polluted counties in the nation are in California's Central Valley which together are home to 1.1 million Latinos. Fresno County has the third highest asthma rate in the nation, after Chicago and New York, and a much higher asthma hospitalization rate for Latino children than non-Hispanic white children.
- Latinos living in the New York City metropolitan area suffer the highest adult asthma rate of all ethnic groups there, and children are hospitalized for asthma at twice the national rate.
- In the neighborhood of South Phoenix, where 60 percent of the population is Hispanic, the asthma rate is higher than anywhere else in surrounding Maricopa County.
- San Diego's Barrio Logan neighborhood, where 85 percent of residents are Latino has asthma rates four times the national average.

In 2009, EPA found that global warming pollutants endanger the public health and welfare, and are therefore covered under the Clean Air Act. Acknowledging that global warming pollution is dangerous to our health and environment requires the EPA to follow up with standards under the Clean Air Act to control carbon pollution from cars, power plants, and other industrial sources.

Proper implementation of the Clean Air Act will also ensure that the largest power plants and factories use modern technology to reduce their global warming pollution, increase energy efficiency and help to move to cleaner energy sources.

Current efforts to undermine implementation of the Clean Air Act would derail our country's progress towards clean energy, harm millions of children, elderly persons and vulnerable populations resulting in greater health care costs and lost productivity as well as health harm and deaths.

Low-income and minority communities often have less access to health care and less ability to incur the costs of heat related health threats. Any legislation that blocks the Clean Air Act will severely jeopardize the public health and impact productivity in our communities.

For Latinos today, protecting the Clean Air Act means jobs, better health and better opportunities for a brighter, healthier future. We urge you to protect our communities by opposing any legislation that would block or delay the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from enforcing the Clean Air Act.

Sincerely,

Voces Verdes

National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA)
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
National Latino Coalition on Climate Change (NLCCC)
Arizona Latin-American Medical Association (ALMA)
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California (LCHC)
Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (TEJAS)
Hispanic Health Council (HHC)
National Puerto Rican Coalition (NPRC)
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)
Consejo de Federaciones Mexicanas en Norteamérica (COFEM)
Democracia Ahora
Mujeres de la Tierra
Latin American Youth Center (LAYC)
William C. Velazquez Institute (WCVI)
National Hispanic Environmental Council (NHEC)
Project Economic Refugee
Common Ground for Conservation
Hispanics in Politics

¹Natural Resources Defense Council, *Hidden Danger: Environmental Health Threats in the Latino Community*, October 2004. . Available online at: http://www.nrdc.org/health/effects/latino/english/latino_en.pdf.

²Natural Resources Defense Council, *Hidden Danger: Environmental Health Threats in the Latino Community*, October 2004. . Available online at: http://www.nrdc.org/health/effects/latino/english/latino_en.pdf. See also, League of United Latin American Citizens, *Air of Injustice, How Air Pollution Affects the Health of Hispanics and Latinos*, July 2004. Available online at: <http://www.lulac.org/assets/pdfs/pollutionreport2.pdf>