



National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

September 18, 2020
Speaker Nancy Pelosi
US House of Representatives

Dear Madam Speaker:

On behalf of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), a national coalition of 46 prominent Latino organizations, and in accordance with policy priorities in the 2020 NHLA Hispanic Public Policy Agenda, we wish to thank you for ensuring that environmental justice issues are included in H.R. 4447, the Clean Economy Jobs and Innovation Act.

As organizations committed to the advancement of civil rights protections and the pursuit and attainment of equity and justice in federal policy, we support the efforts that Chair Grijalva and Representative McEachin have put forth through the drafting and introduction of the Environmental Justice For All Act (H.R. 5986). We agree with the bill's findings that 'potential environmental and climate threats to environmental justice communities merit a higher level of engagement, review, and consent to ensure that communities are not forced to bear disproportionate environmental and health impacts.' For that reason, we strongly support the inclusion of key components in the House energy package.

The provisions included in the House energy package from the Environmental Justice For All Act will make significant progress in strengthening environmental justice protections by: codifying President Clinton's executive order 12898 on environmental justice into law, increasing federal agency accountability and coordination around confronting environmental injustice, and authorizing significant grant funding targeted toward community-based environmental justice organizations to increase capacity, provide protections for environmental justice communities against harmful federal actions, and advance community-led solutions to environmental justice. Significantly, the bill would prohibit discrimination based on exclusion from participation, denial of benefits, or disparate impact, and establish an individual right to action regardless of the citizenship of the parties.

For generations, Latino communities have suffered from excess pollutants generated by lax environmental standards for polluting facilities in our neighborhoods, vulnerable to the consequences of climate inaction and environmental racism. A Yale University study found that Hispanics have the highest exposure rates for 10 out of the 14 pollutants monitored by the Environmental Protection Agency. Further, more than half of people who live within two miles of a toxic waste facility in the United States are people of color.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alianza Americas
American G.I. Forum
ASPIRA Association
AVANCE Inc.
Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute
Farmworker Justice
Green Latinos
Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities
Hispanic Federation
Hispanic National Bar Association
Hispanics in Philanthropy
Inter-University Program for Latino Research
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
League of United Latin American Citizens
MANA, A National Latina Organization
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
Mi Familia Vota
NALEO Education Fund
National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives
National Association of Latino Arts and Culture
National Association of Latino Independent Producers
National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc.
National Day Laborer Organizing Network
National Hispana Leadership Institute
National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Hispanic Environmental Council
National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Institute for Latino Policy
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Latinx Psychological Association
Presente.org
SER Jobs for Progress National
Southwest Voter Registration Education Project
U.S.- Mexico Foundation UnidosUS
United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
United States Hispanic Leadership Institute
United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce
Voto Latino

Limited access to clean water in low-income and communities of color has long been documented, and now we have science-based research indicating that pollution and environmental degradation are increasing the disproportionate mortality rate of Covid-19 among communities of color.

The fact that Latino and Black Americans are dying disproportionately from COVID-19 exposes the deadly consequences of our nation's history of environmental injustice. These issues are not unrelated. We cannot and must not accept this - we need environmental justice for all and we need it now

We thank you for ensuring the inclusion of these environmental justice provisions and encourage you to continue your pursuit of garnering meaningful and comprehensive environmental justice reform. Every person in this country has the right to breathe clean air, drink clean water, and live on uncontaminated land, regardless of their zip code, the weight of their wallet, or the color of their skin. The urgency for action to address environmental justice could not be greater for the millions of Latino families and workers on whose behalf our organizations advocate.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss further, feel free to reach out to Mark Magaña at MarkMagana@GreenLatinos.org or Laura M. Esquivel at lesquivel@hispanicfederation.org.

Sincerely,

Mark Magaña
Co-Chair NHLA Energy and Environment Committee
Founding President and CEO, GreenLatinos

Laura M. Esquivel
Co-Chair NHLA Energy and Environment Committee
Vice President, Federal Policy and Advocacy, Hispanic Federation

cc: Rep. Raul Grijalva
Chairman, House Natural Resources Committee

Rep. Donald A. McEachin
House Committee on Energy and Commerce