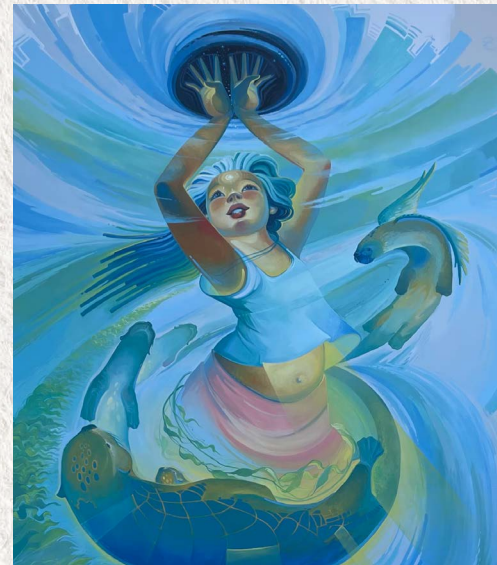




LCJF
LATINO
CLIMATE JUSTICE
FRAMEWORK
2025 - 2028
¡Usa Tu Voz y Elige Clima!



INTRODUCTION

Since its 2022 launch, the Latino Climate Justice Framework (LCJF) has become a powerful tool for addressing the disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis and environmental degradation on Latino/a/e communities nationwide. This comprehensive framework, developed through collaboration among diverse Latino/a/e organizations and individuals across the country, has grown from its initial 80 endorsers to more than 1,200 organizations and leaders endorsing, demonstrating its widespread resonance, relevance, and utilization.

These updates reflect our commitment to addressing the evolving landscape of climate issues affecting Latino/a/e communities.

Since the first edition of the LCJF, numerous organizations in this coalition have utilized the LCJF as a tool for advocacy in their own communities and have already made significant contributions by influencing policy discussions, participating in comment periods, supporting conservation efforts, joining commissions, and advocating for new policies and regulations at all levels of government. The LCJF has increased Latino/a/e representation on key climate decision-making committees by equipping advocates with data-driven insights on Latino/a/e perspectives, enabling them to make compelling, well-informed justifications for policies that reflect their communities' needs and concerns.

The LCJF will continue to be a catalyst for change, empowering *nuestra comunidad* (our community) to be the driving force behind climate solutions and a thriving future rather than resigned victims. This framework represents our collective voice and our commitment to securing environmental liberation for all. In a world where climate actions often favor the privileged few, the LCJF shines as a beacon of change, emphasizing that true climate solutions are equitable and benefit everyone.

“My journey as a GreenLatinos member and contributor to the Latino Climate Justice Framework began in early 2022 in Eastern California at Friends of the Inyo.org, and has continued in my new role at Sierra Forever.org. I use the LCJF to highlight challenges to the Latino community around issues that include language (in)equity, access to public lands, and the climate crisis. I always point out that the LCJF exists in English AND Spanish so that Spanish-speaking Latinos may refer to this important document when conducting self-advocacy.”

— Louis Medina

Outreach Director, with Sierra Forever
(formerly Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association)



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HOW TO UTILIZE THIS FRAMEWORK

The original LCJF is structured to provide a comprehensive overview of climate justice issues affecting Latino/a/e communities and outline associated policy solutions. The 2024 update builds on this success by adding case studies to better illustrate the progress and challenges from leaders and organizations doing the hard work on the frontlines. We added additional important new policy topics including the impacts of plastic pollution, critical energy transition minerals, climate disinformation, false solutions, and expanded outdoor labor safeguards and we also included a policy tracker to hold ourselves and our elected representatives accountable. Here's how to navigate the document:



Each chapter begins with an introduction that provides context for the issues discussed. This is followed by:

1. INFOGRAPHICS

Key statistics and data points relevant to the chapter's focus.

2. OBJECTIVES

Specific policy goals and actions recommended to address the issues.

3. CALL-OUT BOXES

These highlight important concepts, case studies, or policy trackers:

- **Important concepts:** Added details that take a deeper dive on some of the topics.
- **LCJF in Action:** Real-world examples of the framework being implemented.
- **Policy Trackers:** Updates on specific policies or legislation related to the chapter's focus.



The LCJF serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, advocates, and community leaders fighting environmental degradation and driving climate action. However, it's crucial to understand what this framework is and what it isn't. At its core, it's designed to continually evolve through periodic updates of the framework, with new data, community feedback, and changing circumstances. This living document provides a roadmap for addressing climate justice issues, but it's not a one-size-fits-all solution. We recognize the diversity within Latino/a/e communities and understand that local context is paramount. The LCJF is not meant to substitute local community engagement and decision making. Instead, we strongly advocate for community vetting of all policies and solutions presented here. This ensures that proposed actions meet local needs in a just and equitable way through a transparent process.

Endorsement of the Latino Climate Justice Framework 2025-2028 signifies broad support for its overarching goals and principles and does not imply unanimous agreement with every specific policy recommendation or statement contained within.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The climate crisis continues to intensify, disproportionately affecting Latino/a/e communities across the United States. These impacts intersect with and exacerbate long-standing inequities and injustices, creating urgent challenges that require immediate attention and action.

Latino/a/e communities face numerous climate-related issues, from extreme heat affecting outdoor workers and poor air quality in neighborhoods near industrial facilities, to increased vulnerability to natural disasters like hurricanes, floods, and wildfires. Despite some policy advancements, current efforts fall short of the pace and scale needed to combat the worst effects of the climate crisis and protect communities at the forefront of these crises. The political landscape remains complex, with support for climate action often divided along party lines, as evidenced by the party-line passage of major legislation like the groundbreaking Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). This polarization, combined with misinformation campaigns from the fossil fuel industry, has slowed progress on urgent climate solutions.

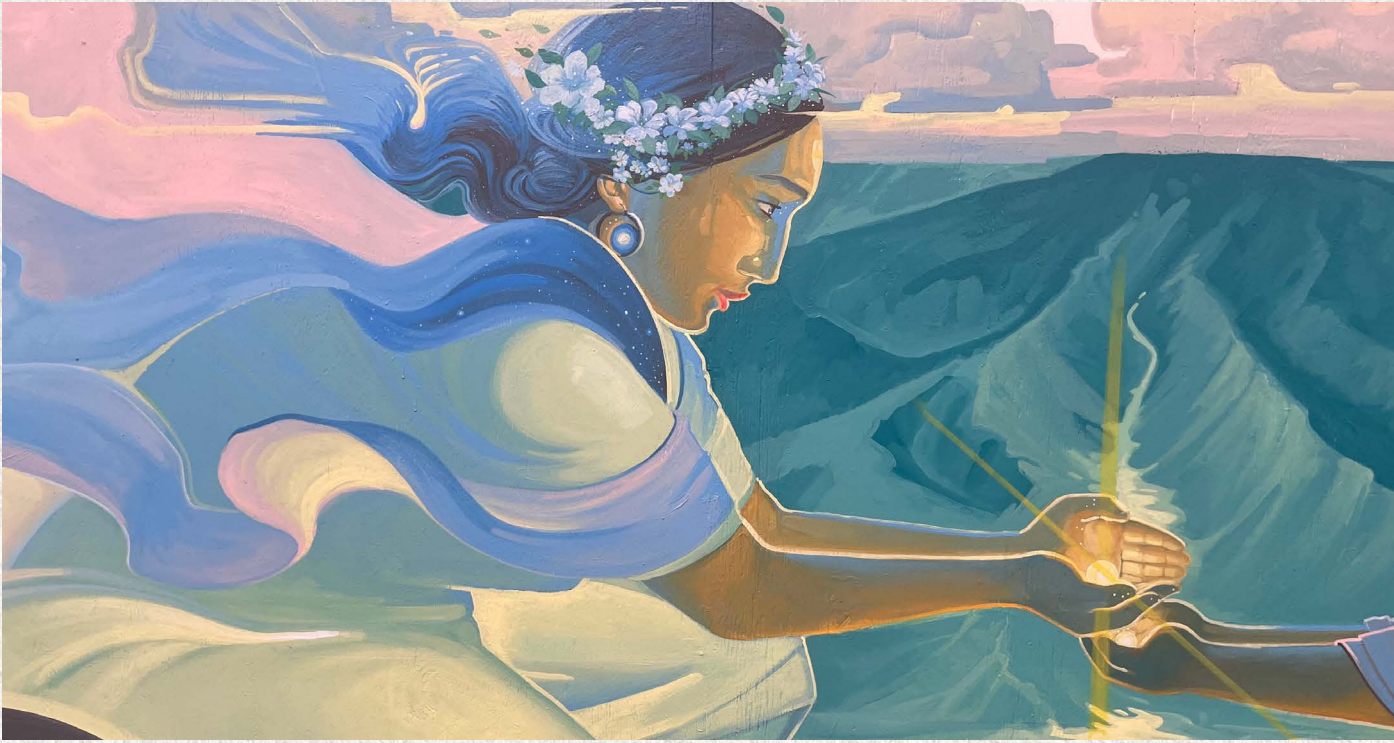
While some effective climate measures have been implemented, there are concerns false solutions may perpetuate environmental injustices while delaying necessary transitions to renewable energy.

A GreenLatinos analysis of funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) in five states with significant Latino/a/e populations found promising trends in investments, but also revealed that IIJA funding does not meet the pace of action needed to combat the worst of the climate crisis. We must hold our government accountable to financing long-term solutions that contribute to the environmental liberation of the Latino/a/e community and beyond.

The LCJF remains committed to advocating for essential policies that prioritize the needs of Latino/a/e communities, including an equitable clean energy transition, climate resilience investments, strong worker protections, and meaningful community engagement in climate policy decisions. By providing data-driven insights and empowering Latino/a/e voices, the LCJF works towards a just and sustainable future for all, emphasizing the importance of directing resources to overburdened neighborhoods, supporting clean energy job growth, and addressing historical environmental injustices. As we move forward, it's crucial to hold policymakers accountable for financing long-term solutions that contribute to the environmental liberation of the Latino/a/e community and beyond, while continuing to fight against the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure and false solutions that endanger our *gente* and *La Madre Tierra*.

CHAPTER 1

ENERGY JUSTICE



Fossil fuels are entrenched in many of our communities' economies and are literally suffocating the life out of *nuestra comunidad*. The burning of oil, gas, and coal are dangerous and harmful, exposing people to toxic pollutants that poison our air, land, and water and damage our health. All together, the pollution from fossil fuels burned for transportation, electricity and heat generation, industrial production, and powering buildings make up the vast majority of the human-caused greenhouse gas emissions that are the primary cause of global heating.

Historic discrimination has spawned an unjust legacy in which Black, Indigenous, Communities of Color (BIPOC) and low-income communities bear the greatest burden of direct exposure to toxic pollutants and increased vulnerability to a changing climate. Latino/a/e communities in the U.S. are more likely than their non-Latino/a/e white counterparts to live near congested transportation hubs and near polluting fossil fuel infrastructure, leading to significant increases in childhood asthma, premature birth, cardiovascular ailments, and other health problems.

The changes that would lead to a phaseout of fossil fuels and rapid, sharp cuts in eliminating carbon emissions to prevent runaway climate change impacts are clear and feasible, but frustratingly still out of reach today. The fossil fuel industry remains deeply embedded in national and global power structures, with policies crafted to favor fossil fuel use and suppress cleaner, more sustainable alternatives. False solutions that perpetuate, expand and reinforce colonial-imperialism have taken hold and undermined progress. Focusing on carbon capture and storage (CCS) technologies and hydrogen energy utilization instead of necessary divestments from fossil fuels is a distraction that is putting Latino/a/e communities in harm's way while impeding the real solution: the transition to 100% renewable energy.

The transition to renewable energy and a zero-emissions transportation system has its own challenges. While this shift offers public health benefits and economic opportunities, it also requires increased mineral extraction for materials essential to batteries and clean energy technologies. To ensure a just and equitable transition, we must ramp up recycling and reuse of batteries and solar panels. To the extent that additional extraction is necessary, we must enact policies and regulations that prioritize human rights, Indigenous sovereignty, labor protections, community well-being, and environmental safeguards. We must also address outdated mining regulations that favor the interests of polluting industries over people and the environment.

In this chapter, we explore the ways in which the Latino/a/e community experiences harms from the global over-reliance on fossil fuels, and the benefits of phasing out oil, gas, and coal, and justly transitioning to a renewable energy and zero-emissions transportation future. We also address the complexities of mineral mining practices that protect communities and the environment.



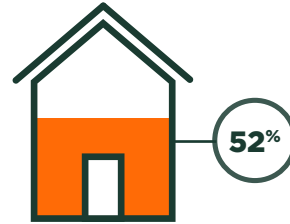
COMMUNITIES AT THE FOREFRONT: LEADING THE PATH TO CHANGE

GOAL ► Investing in modern, affordable, climate-resilient, community-based renewable energy programs will make clean energy abundant and affordable, and reduce energy waste.

KEY DATA

HOUSING

Nearly **52% of Hispanic- or Latino-led households in the U.S. are renters**; renting is a barrier to solar & energy efficiency access.



35-40% of rental units in multifamily buildings and **45% of single-family rentals** are in areas with substantial annual economic losses due to extreme weather events.

Latino/a/es on median energy costs for households in major cities is **24% more than white households**.

At least 24 states have passed “energy choice” laws which prohibit local governments from restricting gas use in buildings and stifle efforts to lower energy burden and pollution through equitable electrification.

OBJECTIVES

Break the fossil fuel stranglehold and remove obstacles that block Latino/a/e families from accessing clean, affordable energy in their homes.

- Electrify all new buildings, and all forms of public and commercial transportation to reduce exposure to toxic pollutants in the communities where we live, work, and play.
- Ensure equitable investment to enhance affordability for housing and transit.
- Require the next version of the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) to mandate that new buildings be wired for EV charging, include energy efficient heating systems, and provide electrical outlets for heat pump water heaters.
- Challenge utility monopolies and their anti-competitive practices, such as attempts to roll back net energy metering (NEM), to ensure fair access to rooftop solar and other distributed clean energy solutions for Latino/a/e communities.

DID YOU KNOW? ENERGY INJUSTICE

Latino/a/e communities face disproportionately high energy costs due to profit-driven utility systems and volatile fossil fuel prices. Rising costs and frequent rate hikes lead to energy debt, putting low-income and households of color at risk of disconnections. This energy insecurity can be life-threatening, especially during extreme weather events. With projected 8% increases in energy costs this summer, vulnerable communities face deepening energy injustice and a cycle of energy poverty, impacting those least able to bear the burden.

Scale up holistic home retrofit programs to alleviate energy burdens. Bring down the cost of energy for Latino/a/e families by reducing energy usage through weatherization and efficient heating, cooling, and cooking appliances, along with large-scale community solar and health benefit programs.

- Require states and program administrators of Solar for All to develop community solar programs that are accessible to renters.
- Establish on-bill financing or direct install initiatives that cover 100% of upfront costs for renter energy efficiency upgrades.
- Integrate health and safety repairs, including hazard remediation, into efficiency programs for renters.
- Enact renter protection policies preventing rent hikes when landlords invest in energy improvements.
- Ensure robust enforcement and implementation of the updated Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-Department of Agriculture (USDA) energy efficiency standards for new affordable housing apartment development and starter homes



LCJF IN ACTION**SUNSET PARK SOLAR: A COMMUNITY-LED CLEAN ENERGY INITIATIVE****Background**

Sunset Park Solar is Sunset Park's first community-owned solar initiative, aiming to deploy solar panels on local rooftops for grassroots control of renewable energy in the neighborhood. The first project is a 725-kilowatt solar array on the Brooklyn Army Terminal rooftop that will serve 150-200 households with 20% electricity bill savings. The project will be owned and operated by a partnership between UPROSE, Brooklyn's oldest Latino community-based organization, located in Sunset Park, and its development partner Working Power.

**Challenges**

Sunset Park Solar addresses a longstanding challenge for neighborhood residents: people pay too much for electricity that hurts their pocketbooks, public health, and the planet. Instead of costly, polluting power plants that contribute to asthma and climate change, Sunset Park wants renewable energy that creates local workforce development, electric bill savings, and community wealth. However, in a densely populated place like Brooklyn, most residents and businesses don't own their properties, so they can't build solar power for themselves.

Community-owned solar is a solution to these multiple challenges. The initiative's main challenges have been to address the lack of site control and to build relationships with public and private site owners. Many owners know about solar energy, but they are less familiar with the benefits of community-owned solar and the complex development process. Funding was also an important challenge because many community-owned solar projects come from a grassroots vision but do not have access to low cost, non-extractive capital to get the project started.

Solutions

The project will allow residents to benefit from solar energy without needing to own property or install panels themselves. Sunset Park Solar also trained six Sunset Park residents in solar installation. The project's co-ownership by UPROSE will direct electricity revenues to a Community Dividend Investment Fund for investment in just transition infrastructure projects to be decided by community members.

Blueprint for Community Solar

Recognize the needs and priorities identified by communities themselves (rather than by external residents or organizations), which could include a community-identified need for community owned solar.

Establish a partnership with tested and trusted impact community solar developers. Map out potential sites for a community solar array and discuss with site owners. Develop a plan for engaging residents, training workers, and using the revenues generated from the array for community needs.

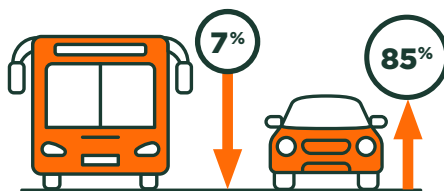
Recruit residents to be subscribers through multilingual, accessible education and new and existing outreach. Train local workers, and build the project.

TRANSIT JUSTICE

GOAL ▶ Moving people and goods in ways that are accessible, affordable and clean.

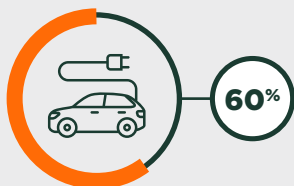
KEY DATA

TRANSIT



Commuting by car is on the rise for Latino/a/es | Between 1990 and 2018, the percentage of Latino/a/es who commute by car increased from 79.8% to 85.3%, while public transit commutes declined from 11.1% to 6.6%.

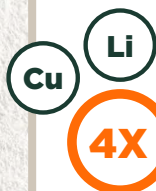
Over **790,000 late-shift workers**, who are disproportionately low-income people of color, use public transit and face average commute times twice as long as those with car access.



A majority (60%) of Latino/a/es say it's important to shift to renewable energy and electric vehicles to minimize climate change.

A 2022 survey found **43%** of Latino/a/e respondents would **"definitely" or "seriously consider" an EV as their next vehicle.**

Latino/a/es are **exposed to 23% higher levels of particulate matter (PM) 2.5** from vehicles than the U.S. average because a disproportionate share of people of color and individuals below the federal poverty level, including Latino/a/es, live within 150 meters of a major highway.



The **demand for copper and lithium is expected to grow 40 times by 2040** to meet our clean energy needs by 2050. **15 metric tons of CO₂ emissions** are released per metric ton of lithium mining.

Mining can pose serious risks such as increased greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss, water issues, air pollution, corruption, safety hazards, wildlife and human displacement, and the destruction of Indigenous sacred sites.

OBJECTIVES

Invest in safe, liveable neighborhoods connected by high-quality, zero-emissions public transit.

- Invest in infrastructure modernization and maintenance, prioritizing states and municipalities most lacking adequate public transportation options for residents.
- Adopt land use policies that promote compact, walkable neighborhoods with shaded, green spaces, adequate stormwater runoff and drainage, well-maintained sidewalks, safe cycling and micromodal areas in roadways (dedicated lanes), equitable transit-oriented development, including microtransit and ridesharing; and disincentivize highway capacity expansion.
- Incentivize non-vehicle mobility programs with safeguards that ensure they benefit frontline communities, such as congestion pricing, zero-emissions zones, complete streets (streets that are safe and accessible to all users), and clean freight corridors.

Reduce harms from transportation hubs and arteries by accelerating development of low- and zero-emissions transport for goods.

- Support policies to transition government fleet vehicles to zero-emissions.
- Invest in solar and wind energy integration in EV infrastructure to reduce reliance on fossil fuel-based electricity.
- Protect independent truck owners from absorbing the burden of the EV transition through offset costs and subsidies, development of accessible and functional charging networks, and scaling up production of zero-emissions trucks to lower vehicle costs.
- Mitigate the environmental, social, and economic harm from historic decisions to establish highways through communities by limiting vehicular pollution.
- Issue an executive order with specific time-bound actions that will drastically reduce emissions from the shipping and freight sector.
- Reduce vehicle pollution by rerouting or shrinking highways in favor of expanding public transit.

Implement strategies to improve EV accessibility, addressing technology literacy, language barriers, cost awareness, and environmental benefits education.

- Deploy electric charging infrastructure that is convenient, safe to access, and affordable while prioritizing deployment in frontline communities with low EV-charging access.
- Develop a market for used EVs to provide more affordable options and expand access to a wide range of consumers.
- Develop equitable incentive programs to make EVs affordable for lower and middle-income buyers.



Design modular electric vehicle battery over cell-to-pack construction for reuse and prevention of waste colonialism.

- Advocate for open access to proprietary software, tools, and information crucial for battery repair and assessment.
- Support legislation mandating third-party access to reliable battery state-of-health information for effective repurposing.

POLICY TRACKER

CLEAN VEHICLE STANDARDS

These policies collectively drive the transition to cleaner vehicles, significantly improving air quality in urban areas and along major transportation corridors.

Federal

CAFE (Corporate Average Fuel Economy) standards are fuel economy standards for vehicles in model years 2027 and beyond. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) new standard is only slightly more stringent than the previous one. NHTSA should revise standards to be more ambitious, aligning with climate goals.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Light-Duty Vehicle (LDV) Rule established the strongest-ever pollution standards for cars. It projects a 50% reduction in fleet-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2032.

EPA Heavy-Duty Vehicle (HDV) Phase 3 GHG Rule is a new standard for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from heavy-duty vehicles projecting a 1 billion metric tons reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2055. EPA should accelerate implementation for the largest vehicles to maximize impact.

State

Advanced Clean Cars II (ACC II) Standards is a state-level clean car standard first enacted in California. Since 2022 it has been adopted by 12 states (CO, DE, MA, MD, NJ, NM, NY, OR, RI, VA, VT, WA) and the District of Columbia.

Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT) and Heavy Duty Omnibus (HDO) Rules are regulations for emissions from trucks and heavy-duty vehicles. Ten states (CA, CO, MA, MD, NM, NY, NJ, OR, RI, VT, WA) adopted since 2020. Broader implementation of stricter emissions standards for heavy-duty vehicles is necessary.

Reform outdated mining laws and regulations such as the 1872 mining law, which neither contains environmental protection provisions nor requires mining interests to pay royalties.

- End land giveaways by stopping the transferring of public land claims to mining interests.
- Increase mining royalties and use royalties to fund environmental restoration, enhance on-site biodiversity, clean up widespread pollution from abandoned mines and support affected communities.
- Require mining companies to dedicate revenues for mine reclamation.
- Modernize land management by replacing the outdated claim system with a leasing approach to better regulate mining on public lands.
- Prevent land speculation by introducing limits on staking claims to avoid misuse that blocks other valuable uses of public lands.
- Implement recommendations to improve mining on public lands developed by the Interagency Working Group on Mining Laws, Regulations, and Permitting and similar mining reform proposed in the Clean Energy Minerals Reform Act.

Improve mining permitting and performance in regulatory agencies.

- Require mining operators to earn Tribes' Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) before conducting operations that would disturb Tribal cultural sites, sacred sites, and resources. When FPIC isn't obtained, projects must cease operations.
- Streamline agency coordination between mine developers and all relevant government bodies at federal, Tribal, and state levels.
- Ensure local benefits by requiring mining companies to negotiate agreements that provide tangible advantages to affected communities and Tribes.
- Boost operational transparency by creating a public portal for mine monitoring data and allow the public to report concerns for investigation.
- Standardize permit requirements to establish clear baseline data standards for mine proposals to facilitate efficient regulatory review.

Implement battery recycling strategies to minimize excessive mining and create a sustainable supply chain.

- Develop and implement policies that keep already-extracted minerals in use for as long as possible to reduce the need for more extraction or disposal processes.
- Prioritize direct recycling methods over pyrometallurgical processes.
- Ensure any hydrometallurgical recycling adheres to strict environmental and labor standards.
- Focus on circular economy strategies to reduce the need for additional mineral extraction.
- Support research and innovation in sustainable battery technologies.

REDUCING FOSSIL FUEL POLLUTION AND PLUGGING REMEDIATING ABANDONED OIL WELLS

GOAL ▶ Protecting our *comunidades* from pollution generated by oil and gas infrastructure; remediating environmental hazards from orphan and abandoned oil and gas wells.

KEY DATA

FOSSIL FUEL POLLUTION



Oil and gas operations release methane, which is 80 times stronger than CO₂ in the short term, as well as health-harming pollutants such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NOx), which react together to form ground-level ozone pollution.

Proximity to oil and gas operations is linked to higher risk of cardiovascular disease, impaired lung function, childhood asthma, cancer, anxiety, depression, developmental disorders, preterm birth, and impaired fetal growth.

Emissions from approved liquified natural gas (LNG) exports would be equivalent to over 1,000 coal-fired power plants or 850 million gas-powered vehicles annually.



17.3 million people live within a half-mile of oil and gas wells, including 1.6 million Hispanics, 919,000 African Americans, 311,400 Asians, and 260,000 Native Americans.

There are 3 million abandoned wells in the U.S. More than 2 million are “unplugged,” or not properly sealed to prevent air and water quality degradation.



OBJECTIVES



Reduce pollution from existing fossil fuel operations.

- Enact and implement strong rules targeting pollution from oil and gas production (e.g., methane, benzene, VOCs, particulate matter, ozone) including the EPA Section 111 rules requiring oil and gas operators to implement pollution mitigation measures.
- Finalize and implement EPA's Methane Emission Reduction Plan, which was part of the IRA.
- Halt all new natural gas pipelines until the Department of Energy's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) finalizes new rules governing leaks from natural gas pipelines.
- Require facilities to ratchet down pollution as new technologies become available and allow agencies to increase protections when communities grow and climate-change or pollution vulnerabilities change over time; disallow the use of industry created certification programs for technology upgrades and ensure methane reduction of oil and gas only happens under government oversight that puts community protection first.
- Close loopholes allowing for emissions during construction and maintenance; enforce regulations and require repairs using independently verified observational measures, prioritizing disproportionately burdened communities.
- Demand that setbacks or "buffer zones" of at least 1,500 feet be established around active oil and gas wells to protect communities in close proximity to the risk.
- Conduct a robust review of National Ambient Air Quality Standards to develop stronger standards for ozone pollution.
- Invest in data collection and monitoring to better understand public health impacts of the oil industry's connection to exacerbating the climate crisis, particularly on overburdened communities of color.
- Ban hydrofluoric acid — a highly dangerous substance used in the petroleum refining processes.
- Responsibly manage the phaseout of refineries and infrastructure with careful oversight to ensure they operate as safely as possible, requiring fenceline monitoring and other precautions until they are safely decommissioned.

Phase out fossil fuels as part of a just transition to renewable energy.

- End policies that favor fossil fuels over renewable energy and artificially lower fossil fuel costs by ending all public subsidies to oil, gas, and coal.
- Divest all public financial investments from the exploration, production, and distribution of fossil fuels.
- Ensure polluters pay the full costs of their license to operate, including bearing the cost of cleanup of Superfund sites and other environmental incursions by increasing the Superfund excise tax.



- Enforce policies such as extended producer responsibility laws that require producers to fund fossil fuel damage cleanup (polluter pays principle).
- Enable accountable public power, starting with reforming the Tennessee Valley Authority, to reach 100% clean energy by 2035 and removing barriers for municipalities and co-operatives to establish accountable public power systems and take over their investor-owned utility generation and distribution networks.

Plug and remediate orphan and abandoned oil wells.

- Ensure robust implementation of the Department of the Interior's (DOI) Orphan Well Program in combination with state bonding funds to cover costs for wells with no identified owner.
- Mandate uniform reporting requirements from states.
- Create a transparent national database where data can be stored and shared with all members of the public.
- Reduce future orphan well burden through enhanced plugging rules, assurances of private funding to plug wells, and reforms to idle well management and transfer rules.

Stop approving liquified natural gas (LNG) exports and fossil fuel infrastructure.

- Direct federal agencies to deny permits for development and expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure including export terminals, processing plants, pipelines, and petrochemical plants.
- Direct the Department of Energy to expand public interest reviews to account for all the harms of LNG exports, including environmental justice and cumulative impacts, and deny all permits for LNG exportations to countries with whom the U.S. does not have a free trade agreement.
- Declare a climate emergency and reinstate the crude oil export ban.
- Local governments should use their zoning authority to phase out fossil fuel extraction in their jurisdictions.

LCJF IN ACTION**ADVOCACY TO ACTION:
LA CITY'S GROUNDBREAKING
OIL & GAS BAN****Background**

On December 2nd, 2022, the City of Los Angeles took a historic step by passing an ordinance to ban new oil and gas extraction activities and phase out existing oil drilling within the city. This groundbreaking decision marked a pivotal moment in the fight to protect public health and the environment, setting a strong precedent for other municipalities nationwide.



The City's ordinance was the result of years of tireless advocacy from the STAND-LA Coalition, made up of grassroots frontline and environmental justice groups, which played a critical role in driving this policy forward. This action by Los Angeles signaled a growing recognition of the need to address the harmful impacts of oil extraction on vulnerable communities.



Following in the footsteps of the City's bold move, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a similar ordinance on January 24th, 2023, to ban new oil and gas extraction activities and phase out existing operations in unincorporated areas of the county. This county-wide ordinance, along with Culver City's earlier ban in 2021, contributed to a regional momentum that underscores the importance of coordinated action.

Challenges

Over the past year, the City and County of Los Angeles have faced the complexities of implementing these sweeping ordinances. Coalition partners, including STAND-LA, have been instrumental in supporting the efforts to phase out existing oil operations and ensure a just transition for affected communities. Their advocacy has been key in addressing the challenges of such a significant policy shift.

In September 2024, the LA County Superior Court overturned Los Angeles's ordinance banning new oil drilling and phasing out existing wells, perpetuating environmental racism and undermining the hard-fought efforts of communities who spent over a decade advocating for this life-saving policy. But the fight is far from over. STAND LA will continue to pursue other pathways to ensure a fossil-free future for LA.



Solutions

In line with these efforts, the County began amending the regulations governing the Inglewood Oil Field, the largest urban oil field in the country, as part of its broader strategy. Additionally, the creation of a Just Transition Taskforce has been actively working to develop a framework for a fair and equitable transition for workers and to address the environmental remediation of former oil sites.

AVOIDING THE FALSE SOLUTIONS TRAP

GOAL ▶ Arming Latino/a/es with the skills and information to recognize greenwashing, disinformation, and false solutions that impede critical climate action.

KEY DATA

FALSE SOLUTIONS

False solutions that claim to address climate change often fail to scale effectively, prove prohibitively expensive, and have not demonstrated the ability to significantly reduce or slow down greenhouse gas emissions.

CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) is unproven, risky technology. There are fewer than 15 CCS projects operating in the U.S. as of September 2023, and nearly all of them use the captured carbon to pump more oil out of the ground through a process called “enhanced oil recovery.”

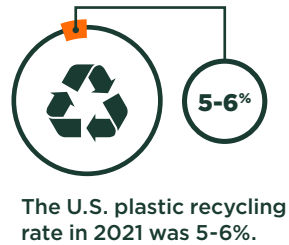
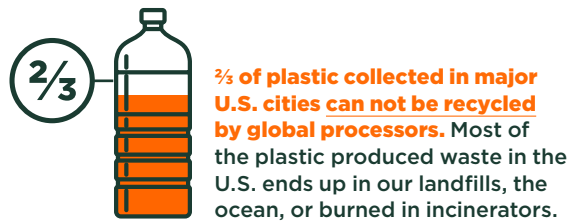
CCS endangers public health and safety. In 2020 a CO₂ pipeline ruptured in rural Mississippi; more than 300 people were evacuated and 45 people were hospitalized.

FOSSIL FUEL-BASED HYDROGEN PRODUCTION PERPETUATES THE USE OF COAL AND GAS.

Fossil-fuel based hydrogen often fails to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Depending on the type of production, it can stress water resources, especially in already water-stressed areas.

Hydrogen produced using electricity from the current fossil fuel-dominated grid can increase carbon emissions and disproportionately impact frontline communities

RECYCLING OF PLASTICS



85% of the 73 municipal solid waste incinerators in the U.S. are disproportionately located in communities of color, rural, or low-income areas that expose them to toxic chemicals from burning plastics.

Latino/a/e communities are most impacted by the **U.S. being the largest global plastic polluter, with shipments surpassing tens of thousands of tons annually to Latin America.**

MARINE GEOENGINEERING (ALSO KNOWN AS MARINE CARBON DIOXIDE REMOVAL)

Both marine and terrestrial enhanced weathering (EW) — a proposal to spread large quantities of rock over extensive land or sea areas — would require about 2 metric tons of rock to absorb 1 metric ton of CO₂.

Ocean application could disrupt food webs, soil and water quality. The CO₂ footprint from mining the rock used in EW is comparable to global coal mining and highly energy intensive, offsetting the prospective carbon capture benefits.

Other unproven geoengineering solutions include altering cloud/ocean reflectivity, marine carbon dioxide removal via mineral/biomass dumping or electric currents, deep water pumping, and ice preservation using microbeads or saltwater.

These marine geoengineering strategies may disrupt marine chemistry, altering nutrient levels, and destabilizing delicate ecosystems.



OBJECTIVES

Recognize false solutions as dangerous distractions used by climate deniers to slow critical action to address the climate crisis.

- Sunset public investment and subsidies that spend taxpayer dollars on expensive, unproven, inefficient technologies such as CCS that have failed in research and pilot projects to effectively or adequately reduce climate harms.
- Prioritize resiliency policies and funding opportunities to enhance natural, biological carbon sequestration processes like conserving mangroves, seagrasses, mature and old growth trees and other natural areas, salt marsh restoration, soil improvement, and forest restoration.
- When evaluating whether to greenlight a carbon management project, prioritize closure of power plant facilities and focus on transitioning energy to non-polluting renewable energy.
- Prohibit the conversion of public lands for CCS operations.
- Require at a minimum that none of the carbon sequestered be used for enhanced oil recovery.
- For power plants using CCS, require additional rigorous monitoring and verification of CO₂ from the point of capture to point of permanent sequestration.
- Account for any public health impacts during site assessments associated with the addition of CCS equipment and operations on site.
- Work collaboratively across the administration with EPA, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), Department Of Energy (DOE) and other agencies to improve safeguards to protect communities from harms associated with carbon removal technologies including pipelines and underground storage facilities.
- For projects using CCS, ensure the safest possible path forward to diminish the possibility of seismic activity caused by underground storage and transport of CO₂ occurring in and around the project site.
- Meaningfully engage with frontline communities including on individual projects with proposed CCS or any other purported carbon-reducing technology.
- Implement transparent public disclosure policies for large-scale industrial carbon removal projects, clearly communicating all potential hazards, risks, and uncertainties to ensure informed decision making and public awareness.

Ban outdoor marine geoengineering experimentation.

- Protect ocean, marine ecosystems, and coastal communities by creating a similar moratorium as the United Nations' biodiversity convention moratorium on geoengineering.
- Develop strict regulations on ocean alkalinity enhancement and other marine interventions.



Halt the production and use of blue hydrogen, which is derived from gas and paired with carbon capture.

- Require a comprehensive evaluation of potential environmental and health repercussions and include public review periods before project approval in any hydrogen projects.
- Enforce rigorous hydrogen standards by rejecting proposals failing to meet the Just Solutions Hydrogen Energy report.
- Ban the development of new hydrogen projects derived from fossil fuels. Advance only green hydrogen produced from water using solar and wind power plants or renewable energy.
- Optimize green hydrogen usage only when it is essential and more beneficial than alternatives like energy efficiency, transmission upgrades, and direct electrification.

Hold petrochemical companies accountable for public deception about plastic waste management.

- Advocate for reducing the amount of plastic produced at its source and stop promoting plastic recycling as a viable solution for reducing plastic pollution.
- Stop classifying waste incineration or "waste-to-energy" as a form of "low-carbon energy" or renewable energy and remove it from the CLEAN Future Act.
- Incinerators should not be included in state definitions of renewable energy and should not receive state renewable energy subsidies.
- Phase out incineration and ban new incinerator proposals including waste-to-energy, chemical recycling, advanced recycling, plastic-to-fuel, gasification, and pyrolysis.



KEY DATA

CLIMATE DISINFORMATION



62% of Latinos reject or are uncertain about common false claims on disinformation

Due to the ongoing and developing nature of the issue, Spanish climate disinformation remains underreported, resulting in limited statistical information available on its prevalence and impact.

AMONG SPANISH-SPEAKING LATINO/A/ES, HOWEVER, A MAJORITY HAVE HEARD AND BELIEVE SEVERAL PROMINENT CLIMATE DISINFORMATION NARRATIVES:

57% believe the false claim that transitioning away from oil and gas will eliminate millions of jobs;

50% believe the false narrative that climate change is a naturally occurring cycle and not caused by human impacts like burning fossil fuels

49% are concerned that clean energy will lead to higher prices and inflation.

Inoculate Latino/a/e communities against rampant disinformation.

- Major social media platforms should enhance their policies and allocate resources to moderate and remove Spanish-language climate disinformation effectively.
- Advocates should collaborate with members of Congress, particularly the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, to introduce and support legislation that holds social media companies accountable for the spread of climate disinformation in Spanish.
- Increase awareness about the impact of climate disinformation on Spanish-speaking communities through strategic communication, coalition-building, and public education campaigns.
- Utilize tools such as the WhatsApp chatbot by [Maldita.es](https://maldita.es) to automatically identify, fact-check, and respond to Spanish-language climate disinformation, enhancing media literacy and providing accurate information to Spanish-speaking communities.
- Utilize the newly established Department of Justice Office of Environmental Justice to support lawsuits against tech companies for poor climate information practices.
- Task the Federal Trade Commission with investigating and reporting on media platforms' approach to climate change disinformation policies and prepare a public-facing report on practices, and solutions.
- Work with Spanish-language media and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists to expose disinformation campaigns in traditional media.

POLICY TRACKER

DISINFORMATION

It is vital for Latino/a/e communities to receive accurate information in order to make informed decisions about the climate crisis and address their unique challenges and needs to protect their well-being. The following bills in the U.S. House of Representatives must become law:

Language-Inclusive Support and Transparency for Online Services (LISTOS) Act

The Language-Inclusive Support and Transparency for Online Services (LISTOS) Act will mandate social media platforms provide language-inclusive support, significantly improving the moderation and removal of Spanish climate disinformation and enhancing access to accurate information for Spanish-speaking communities.

Platform Accountability and Transparency Act (PATA)

The Platform Accountability and Transparency Act (PATA) aims to enhance transparency and accountability among social media platforms by mandating data access and robust content moderation policies. This legislation will empower analysts and advocates working to combat climate disinformation, improving their ability to understand and mitigate the spread of false information related to climate change.



CHAPTER 2

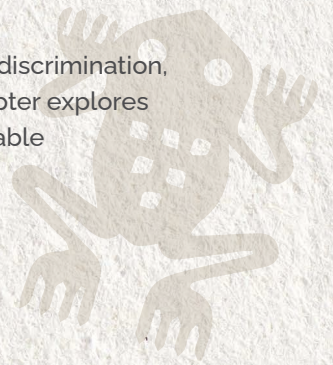
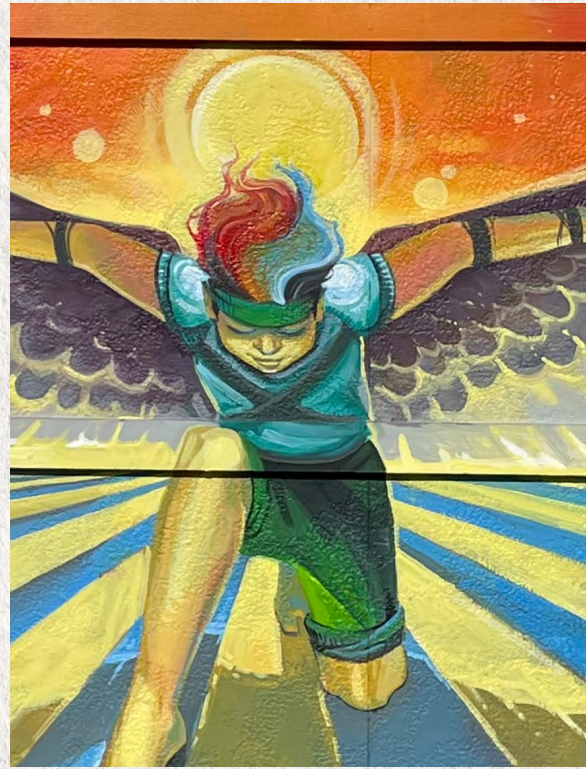
BEARING THE BURDEN

Latino/a/es are the backbone of the modern U.S. economy, responsible for \$3.2 trillion of the nation's GDP, even while socioeconomic disparities and marginalization. Moreover, climate change disproportionately impacts *nuestra comunidad* without safeguards to protect us from climate disasters. *Nuestra comunidad* is heavily represented in industries such as agriculture, construction, maintenance, factory work where the risk of heat-related injuries and other health harms, even death, are exacerbated by climate change. This environmental injustice hinders the entire U.S. economy.

The impacts on *nuestra comunidad* can also be felt internationally. As climate change intensifies, accelerated by unrepentant globalized, industrial capitalist expansion, communities in the Global South are overwhelmingly displaced and forced to seek climate refuge. As a consequence, the world can now expect that every 1°C of global warming will force an additional 1 billion people into unlivable conditions.

Polling data from 2023 reveals strong climate awareness among Latino/a/es: 71% reported that climate change impacts their local community and 81% identified global climate change as a top concern. But awareness is not enough. An equitable energy transition must address systemic barriers and environmental disparities to strengthen Latine/a/e labor and leadership power in the clean energy workforce, spending power for clean energy solutions, focus on infrastructure investment, protect workers in Latino/a/e-heavy industries, and address climate-driven displacement.

By alleviating barriers to socioeconomic well-being and redressing the effects of discrimination, we can create benefits that extend far beyond Latino/a/e communities. This chapter explores policies aimed at ensuring environmental safety and climate resilience for vulnerable populations.



BUILDING CLIMATE-RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

GOAL ▶ Investing in policies that help communities be better able to withstand the impacts of climate change, from storms and flooding to extreme heat and cold that strain power grids.

KEY DATA

CLIMATE IMPACTS

Latinos are 21% more likely than white individuals to reside in urban heat islands — areas predominantly covered by asphalt and concrete, with a scarcity of parks, shade-providing trees, and other vegetation.

Only 19% of Latino/a/e children have nearby recreational green spaces, compared to 62% of white children.

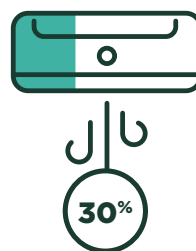
The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) states that creating or improving access to public green spaces can lead to a 25% increase in the number of people who are active at least three times a week.



56% of Latino/a/es indicated they experienced an **extreme weather event** in 2021.



One of four Latino/a/es live in a county that has experienced a federal disaster declaration for flooding in 2023.



About 30% of Latino/a/e households do not have air-conditioning.

OBJECTIVES

Invest in the solutions that specifically address communities' individual vulnerabilities to climate change to include socioeconomic and physical impacts of climate-driven disasters.

- Invest in smart, sustainable adaptation to enable frontline communities to withstand climate impacts.

- Stabilize the grid to prevent blackouts and brownouts during extreme heat events with investments in resilient, distributed energy systems like rooftop and community solar with battery storage and microgrids.
- Increase investments in habitat restoration and resilience projects, port electrification projects and EPA's environmental restoration and management programs, and eliminate grant match requirements that create barriers to access.
- Implement an improved cost-benefit analysis into the Stafford Act that incorporates the impacts of extreme heat and wildfire smoke.
- Urge the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to classify extreme heat and wildfire smoke as a major disaster in order to help unlock funding for crucial mitigation and repair measures for frontline communities, especially resilient solutions like rooftop and community solar with battery storage, accessible cooling centers, and air filtration systems.
- Improve access to health care, including removing barriers to health insurance for undocumented community members by supporting state ballot measures to expand Medicaid in the 11 states that have not yet done so.
- Invest in safe, affordable, climate-resilient housing, with health-protective heating and cooling standards, that is also energy efficient and powered by renewable energy.
- Ensure robust implementation of HUD's flood risk management standard.

Implement targeted heat equity interventions to mitigate disproportionate impacts of urban heat islands in Latino/a/e communities.

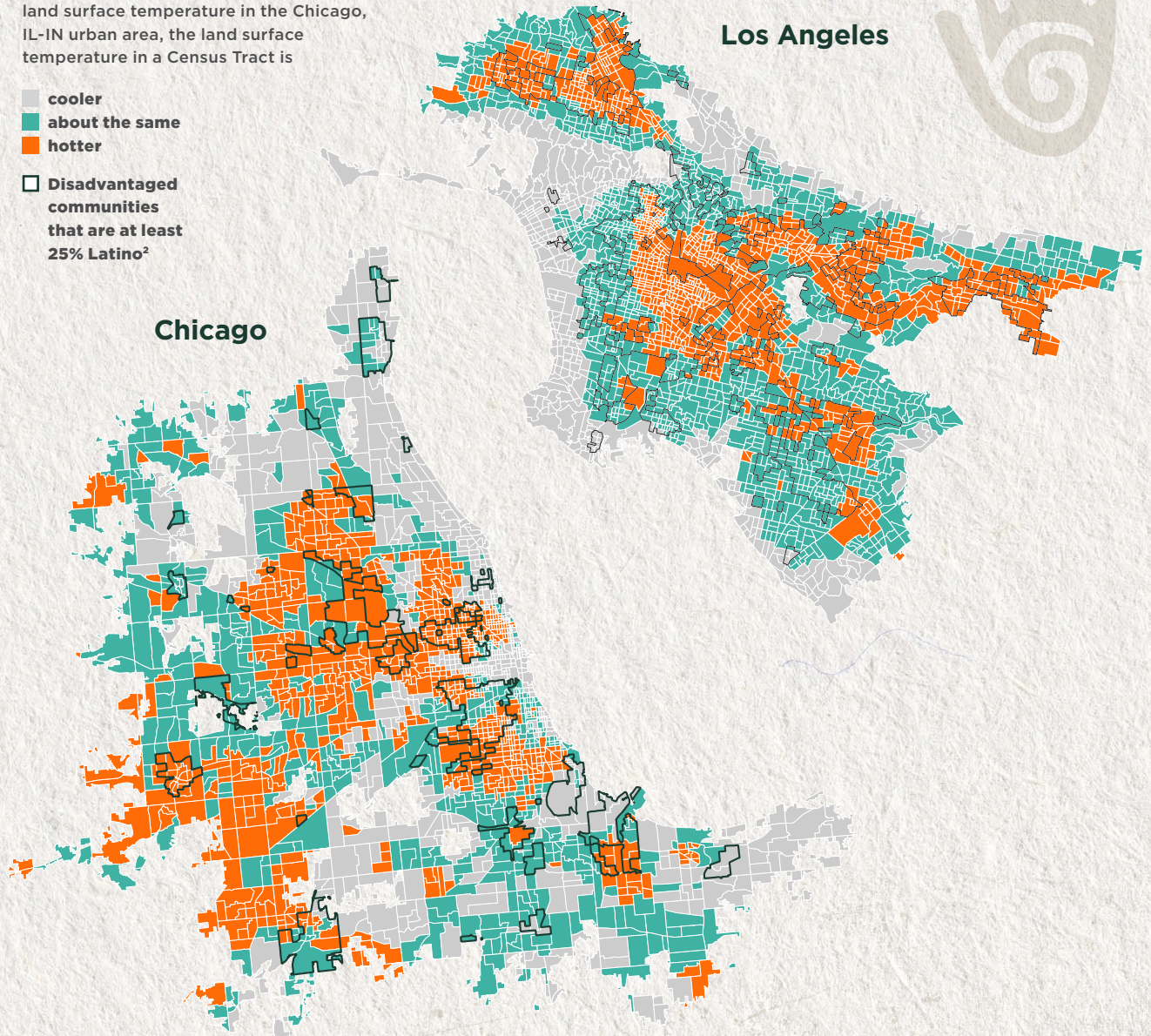
- Prioritize urban greening projects in Latino/a/e neighborhoods with the highest heat risk and lowest tree canopy and green spaces
- Require the preservation, expansion, and access to green spaces to reduce heat island effects, improve air quality, manage stormwater, and allow recreation.
- Provide more funding for the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) program to support the creation of heat preparedness plans, and establish publicly funded chief heat officers.
- Prioritize green roofs, cool pavements, and permeable pavements in Latino/a/e communities with highest threats of being Urban Heat Islands (UHI).
- Update zoning codes to incentivize heat-mitigating features like green roofs, white roofs, cool pavements, permeable pavements, and tree planting in communities with highest threats of UHI.
- Require a minimum percentage of native, drought-resistant plants and trees for all new developments, major retrofits and city landscaping projects as the design standard.
- Actively work to debunk the stigma around climate-induced mental health problems and normalize conversation about emotional well-being and provide culturally appropriate resources that align with Latino/a/e values and experiences through dedicated research and strategic communication.

Urban Heat Island Injustice

Chicago and Los Angeles heat inequity map that reflects average land surface area across the respective city overlaid with disadvantaged Latino communities.

Compared to the May-October¹ average land surface temperature in the Chicago, IL-IN urban area, the land surface temperature in a Census Tract is

- cooler
- about the same
- hotter
- Disadvantaged communities that are at least 25% Latino²



1. Average daytime land surface temperature for May-October 2013-2023. Calculated from MODIS data provided by NASA Land Processes Distributed Active Archive Center (LP DAAC).
2. Disadvantaged community status data obtained from the Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST, Council on Environmental Quality).

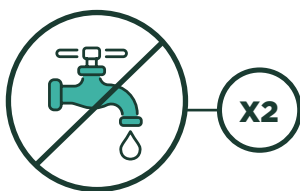
Created by Juan Declat-Barreto, Senior Social Scientist for Climate Vulnerability, Union of Concerned Scientists

DID YOU KNOW?**URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM**

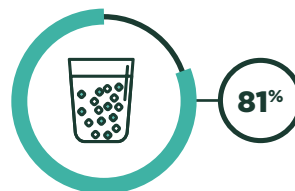
GreenLatinos was selected in 2023 to be one of 12 National Pass Through Partners for the Inflation IRA USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program. This program is the only federal urban forestry partnership program that is equity focused and community centered. GreenLatinos will award \$20 million dollars to municipalities and community-based organizations for vital urban forestry work in disadvantaged communities. This work is possible thanks to the IRA, which increased funding for the program by \$1.8 billion and advances Justice40 work, as 100% of the funding managed by GreenLatinos must benefit underserved communities at the forefront of systemic inequity.

PROVIDING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO CLEAN, HEALTHY, AND AFFORDABLE WATER

GOAL ▶ Developing equitable access to clean, healthy and affordable water infrastructure for all communities who have been at the forefront of systemic inequities.

KEY DATA**WATER ACCESS****X2**

Latino/a/e households are twice as likely as white households to **live without basic plumbing**.

**81%**

A global tap water study found **microplastics in 81% of all samples**.

Water systems in counties that are 25% or more Latino/a/e violate drinking water contamination rules at twice the rate of those in the rest of the country.

Communities with more Black and Latino/a/e residents are more likely to face **harmful PFAS levels in their drinking water**.

Communities with large numbers of Hispanic/Latino/a/e residents are disproportionately impacted by **water service lines that may contain lead**.

One study showed Black and Latino/a/e neighborhoods in California are more likely to have unpaid water bills and have **disproportionately higher amounts of debt**.

99% of plastics used are made from fossil fuels and the creation of plastic emits over **170** carcinogenic and or neurotoxic chemicals.

OBJECTIVES

Develop equitable access to clean water infrastructure for all underserved communities.

- Continue federal re-investment in repairing and replacing aging water infrastructure, and reduce federal lead action levels from 15 parts per billion (ppb) to 5 ppb.
- Demand the EPA strengthen the Draft Lead and Copper Rule Improvements to ban toxic polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and chloride polyvinyl chloride (CPVC) pipes and use recycled copper as lead replacements.
- Put technical assistance and funding programs, like the USDA-EPA partnership on wastewater and sanitation, and redesign and resource pre-disaster adaptation programs like FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Program (BRIC) to ensure that communities that have been historically underinvested are prioritized to benefit from said programs.
- Ensure that both federal and state policies regarding equitable distribution of infrastructure funding through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) and Drinking Water SRF are equitable, effective, and incentivizing climate resilient infrastructure.

Protect access to clean water for all.

- Require states receiving federal funding that follows Justice 40 to adopt bans on residential shutoffs due to inability to pay for utilities.
- Require water utilities to seek alternatives to bottled water, such as distributing low-cost filters that prevent contamination from heavy metals, lead and other pollutants to customers while seeking long-term solutions.
- Establish and fund a permanent nationwide water and sewer assistance program for low-income households, which includes strategies to reach renters and hard-to-reach populations as well as technical assistance to utilities to help them participate in the program.
- Defend the Safe Drinking Water Act's new PFAS standards against industry lawsuits, while supporting utilities to implement protections without burdening communities.
- Address comprehensive water challenges: quality, affordability, and sustainable management, particularly focusing on impacts to agricultural workers and rural Latino/a/e communities.

Stop industry efforts to grow plastics and petrochemicals production by 3.8% every year through 2023 and adopt ambitious actions that address the global plastics crisis.

- Stop the expansion of ethylene cracker plants which use fracking and methane as the main ingredient for the production of single-use plastics.
- Hold corporations accountable for their wasteful products by pushing legislation for producer responsibility for packaging.



- Enact and enforce legislation that regulate plastics such as the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act, and the Protecting Communities from Plastics Act.
- Call on the administration to stop pursuing policies that perpetuate false solutions and focus on recycling and waste management in the Global Plastic Treaty negotiations. Instead, the administration should push forward a treaty with effective regulations on reducing plastic production.



LCJF IN ACTION

ALLENSWORTH: THE BEACON OF HOPE

Background

Allensworth is a community in California that was founded in 1908 by distinguished Black military men and academics, including the formerly enslaved Col. Allen Allensworth, to be a self-sustaining Black community focused on education. Known as the “Tuskegee of the West,” the community initially flourished, even establishing Tulare County's first public library.



Challenges

After Col. Allensworth's murder and the denial of promised water rights, many Black residents left. Water security has been a persistent issue since Tulare Lake was drained for agriculture and corporate agribusiness began exploiting California's Central Valley's aquifer. These activities degraded the landscape, resulting in water insecurity, soil pollution, and the worst air quality in the United States, all now worsened by climate change. Racism and invisible redlining continue to confine rural communities of color to the most polluted areas in the valley.

Solutions

The Allensworth Progressive Association (APA), the community's development nonprofit, continues Col. Allensworth's legacy. APA is creating a model for self-reliant, innovative, and climate-resilient communities of color. Through regenerative agriculture, SmartAg, mutual benefit principles, workforce development, education, a resiliency center and a solidarity economy, Allensworth is building a sustainable future for itself and other rural communities of color in Central Valley.

Blueprint for a Holistic Approach to Community Resilience

What makes Allensworth stand out is their adaptability and multi-faceted approach to ensuring long-term resiliency that others should be using as guiding principles. This includes establishing similar models that APA is working on as mentioned in the solutions section and advocating for institutional changes at various governmental levels. Additionally, implementing climate-resilient infrastructure, developing tailored water management strategies, and fostering knowledge-sharing platforms among rural communities of color are crucial steps towards building sustainable and resilient communities in the Central Valley.

PROTECTIONS FOR ALL WORKERS

GOAL ▶ Protecting laborers from extreme weather events, harmful chemical exposure, and ending the widespread exploitation of workers who lack protection in low-wage industries.

KEY DATA

WORKERS AT RISK



Latino/a/es are **more likely to participate in weather-exposed industries**, including construction, landscaping, and agriculture, making them more susceptible to extreme weather events.



33% of low-wage workers are Hispanic.

HISPANIC WORKERS ACCOUNT FOR ONE IN FIVE WORKERS IN FOOD MANUFACTURING AND SERVICES, CONSTRUCTION, BUILDING SERVICES, AND AGRICULTURE.

Yet 23% of the fatalities in workplaces are among Latinos and disproportionately among immigrant workers.

Latino/a/e workers are 43% more likely than non-Hispanic whites to live in areas with future labor hour reductions due to extreme temperatures.

83% of U.S. farmworkers are Latino/a/e and **45%** experienced heat-related illness in 2022.

Latino/a/es are one of the **fastest-growing segments of the workforce**, making up **18% of the U.S. workforce** and projected to reach **30% by 2050**.



OBJECTIVES

Enhance safety regulations for workers in industries impacted by the climate crisis.

- Ensure proper EPA health protections from pesticides and toxic materials handled by workers and ban the most toxic pesticides and fertilizers including all organophosphates (OP), while adopting safer alternatives.
- Cancel registration for all OP pesticides used by farmworkers for crops that the EPA cannot prove to be safe.
- Implement the new federal standard established by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) to protect workers from heat-related illness and death.

Protect all workers' access to information and protections.

- Increase opportunity and access to multilingual worker protection resources across relevant agencies.
- Develop and implement weather warning alert systems for emergency climate risks, including forecasted extreme heat days for workers in the languages they speak. These should be developed by the USDA and the Department of Labor (DOL) in partnership with the National Weather Service (NWS).
- Develop and enforce worker training on issues such as pesticide safety and heat stress in languages workers can understand, with particular attention to speakers of Indigenous languages and workers with limited literacy skills.
- Protect all whistleblowers, regardless of immigration status.

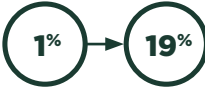


CLIMATE DISPLACEMENT AND MIGRATION

GOAL ▶ Defining and addressing root causes of global climate displacement and migration, focusing on climate-displaced peoples and the climate refugee crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean.

KEY DATA

CLIMATE DISPLACEMENT



1% of the world is already too hot to live in. By 2070 that will increase to 19%.

In 2020, **extreme weather displaced three times more people than conflict**, making it a leading global cause of displacement.

Central America is one of the most climate-vulnerable places in the world, already causing climate migration to occur.

Climate change intensifies other root causes of migration like persecution, violence, and economic instability.

OBJECTIVES

Recognize climate displacement as a condition for legal protections.

- Develop, improve and codify Executive Order 14013, "Programs to Resettle Refugees and Planning for the Impact of Climate Change on Migration," and ensure inclusion of safe pathways for climate migrants.
- Approve and extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for migrants from countries affected by climate disasters.
- Support the passage of the Climate Displaced Persons Act (S.3340/H.R. 6455), a policy that establishes a new migration pathway for climate-displaced persons and a whole-of-government approach to global climate change resilience.
- Pass bill H.R.2826, which establishes a pathway for climate-displaced persons into the U.S.

Expand and strengthen existing pathways for climate-displaced individuals through administrative actions

- Direct U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to provide comprehensive training to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents on climate displacement issues and appropriate responses.
- Establish Priority 2 designation for refugees in camps that have experienced significant climate impacts, such as flooding or other climate-related disasters.
- Reverse current limitations on asylum that undermine due process, and expand asylum eligibility based on climate and environmental conditions that make it "unsafe to be returned" or increase threats of social persecution and violence.
- Create a Parole Program for Climate Displaced people, possibly modeled off of the Cuba, Nicaragua, Haiti, Venezuela program.

DID YOU KNOW?

JUSTICE-BASED COMMUNICATION ON CLIMATE-LINKED MIGRATION

Intentional communication about climate migration is critical. According to the 2023 [report](#) *Dangerous Narratives*, harmful messaging can sometimes be used by well-meaning actors framing messaging around migrants in hopes "to accelerate climate action, while scapegoating the most vulnerable people." Intentional, justice-based framing of climate displacement should resist the urge to highlight the quantity of displaced individuals when advocating for climate-displaced individuals. These "threat" narratives can be used against the immigrant rights movement and fuel fear-based narratives by right wing actors to promote a militarized/closed border response to a growing number of climate migrants. Instead, when creating messaging around this issue: 1) Lead with values; 2) Point to the villain; and 3) Offer a new vision that addresses the root of the problem.

Redress environmental harm domestically and in the Global South.

- Support adaptation policies and climate change-related solutions abroad to reduce forced climate migration.
- Develop strategies to mitigate incidence and impact of domestic climate migration in the U.S. and its territories.
- Ensure the U.S. meets its commitments to public financing for climate mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damages for developing countries and supports an ambitious [New Collective Quantified Goal \(NCQG\)](#) for climate finance.



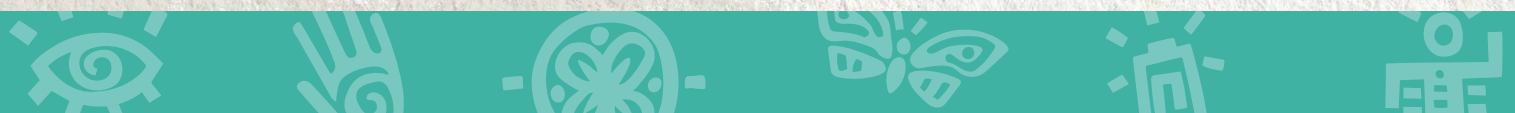
- Advocate for U.S. leadership on ambitious climate policy at the global scale at all international climate conferences including Bonn and the Conferences of the Parties (COP).
- Put forth an ambitious 2025 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) by COP29 that provides specific targets for phasing out fossil fuels rapidly.
- Establish NDCs that include greenhouse gas emissions reductions that amount collectively to 43% by 2030 and 60% by 2035 for the world to stand a chance to keep global warming to 1.5°C, with developed countries taking the lead with higher ambition and stronger targets.
- Call on countries to respond to the climate crisis through urgently implementing the Global Stocktake outcomes and reflecting equity through fair shares, climate justice and adequate finance in their enhanced NDCs.
- Expand technical assistance and support World Bank policies that remove barriers to financing a just energy transition in the Global South.
- Ensure that domestic climate policies avoid creating burdens on frontline communities in the Global South, such as policies that may drive demand for extractive resources in the region.

DID YOU KNOW?

GLOBAL PROGRESS SINCE PARIS

The Global Stocktake (GST) is a process that helps countries and stakeholders assess their progress towards meeting the goals of the Paris Climate Change Agreement. The first GST was held at the UN climate conference in Dubai in December 2023. The final outcome text of the GST includes a number of specific efforts to help the world achieve a more sustainable future, including:

- **Energy:** Transition away from fossil fuels by 2050, and increase renewable energy capacity by 2030. This includes increasing the share of renewable energy sources in global electricity generation to at least two-thirds by 2030.
- **Deforestation:** Halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation by 2030.
- **Transportation:** Boost zero-emission transportation and decarbonize the transportation sector.
- **Methane:** Reduce methane emissions.
- **Consumption and production:** Transition to sustainable lifestyles and patterns of consumption and production, along with circular economy approaches.
- **Nature:** Conserve, protect, and restore nature and ecosystems.
- **Finance:** Transform the international financial system to support low-emission, climate-resilient development. The GST also recognizes that financial support needs to significantly scale up beyond the current commitment to double adaptation finance.



POLICY TRACKER

CLIMATE DISPLACED PERSONS ACT

Despite the burgeoning links between climate change and cross-border migration, our domestic and international migration policies do not reflect the realities of climate-related displacement. The Climate Displaced Persons Act (CDPA) ([S.3340/H.R. 6455](#)) would strengthen both areas of U.S. policy. It establishes a new migration pathway for climate-displaced persons and a whole-of-government approach to global climate change resilience. The CDPA amends the Immigration and Nationality Act to reflect the role climate change and extreme weather increasingly play in global migration. Key provisions of this legislation include the creation of a new U.S. resettlement program for people forcibly displaced by climate change with a minimum of 100,000 new visas annually. It also authorizes the president to support programs in countries facing the worst impacts of climate change that build resilience and help people stay in their homes, for example: loss and damage funds, climate finance programs and international investments in disaster preparedness.



CHAPTER 3

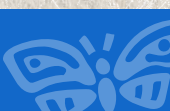
THIS LAND AND WATER



Latino/a/e relationships with the lands and waters of our country are culturally rich and diverse. Indigeneity, diaspora, migration, and colonialism are among the many complex factors that influence who we are and how we relate with nature. Concerns related to sovereignty and representation of U.S. territories highlight historical and contemporary exploitation of people, land, and water resulting from colonialism. This exploitation fundamentally altered the Americas' and the Caribbean's ecosystems and created many of the environmental injustices that *nuestra comunidad* currently faces. While Latino/a/es account for the largest racial/ethnic population growth in the U.S. in the last decade, patriarchal and white supremacist oppression has deprived us of our access to nature at disproportionately high rates. Our neighborhoods lack thriving biodiversity, open spaces like parks and waterways, and *nuestras comunidades* have disproportionately low access to federal conservation and recreational land and water. This inaccessibility is directly linked to inequities for the increased health, wealth, and safety of communities.

Nature is declining at an ever-increasing rate. The ongoing conversion of natural lands and waterways for extractive uses has destroyed wildlife habitat, imperiled species, and exacerbated climate pollution to the point of the present extinction crisis. We are of this land and water. It is our cultural imperative to defend the more-than-human world and accomplish the international 30x30 and half-earth goals.

Nuestra comunidad's prosperity and wellbeing rely on restoring our traditional relationships with nature. 86% of western Latino/a/e voters support Tribally protected areas for the vast cultural and ecological benefits that Tribal land and water management offers this nation. To address these disparities and address our disproportionate burdens, it is critical for all to: have access to nature; be represented in the stories and places we conserve; have influence on land and water management decisions; and be resourced to conserve and restore nature. This is possible through a just expansion of our conservation lands system, integration of traditional ecological knowledge in all levels of land and water management when permitted by Tribes, and support for Tribal co-management of land and water.



STEWARDSHIP OF THE NATURAL WORLD AND HERITAGE SITES

GOAL ▶ Promoting traditional ecological knowledge in land management; protecting and restoring the natural world and advancing equitable access to nature's benefits; and augmenting equitable practices for a just energy transition.

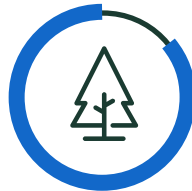
KEY DATA

ACCESS TO NATURE



50%

We've lost approximately half the coral reefs, **85% of wetlands**, and the U.S. loses roughly one football field-sized patch of natural land every second. Current efforts, such as those by America the Beautiful for All Coalition, are ensuring that at least 30% of the world's oceans and habitats are protected by 2030.



86%

86% of Latino/a/es support the creation of new national parks, national monuments, national wildlife refuges, and Tribal protected areas.

Only 25 of more than 400 National Park units specifically preserve Latino/a/e histories; most are related to Spanish colonial or military history and do not accurately represent the diversity of Latino/a/e heritage on public lands.

Marine conservation areas interpreting Latino/a/e culture or history are emerging, but this is a major gap in marine protected area (MPA) management plans.

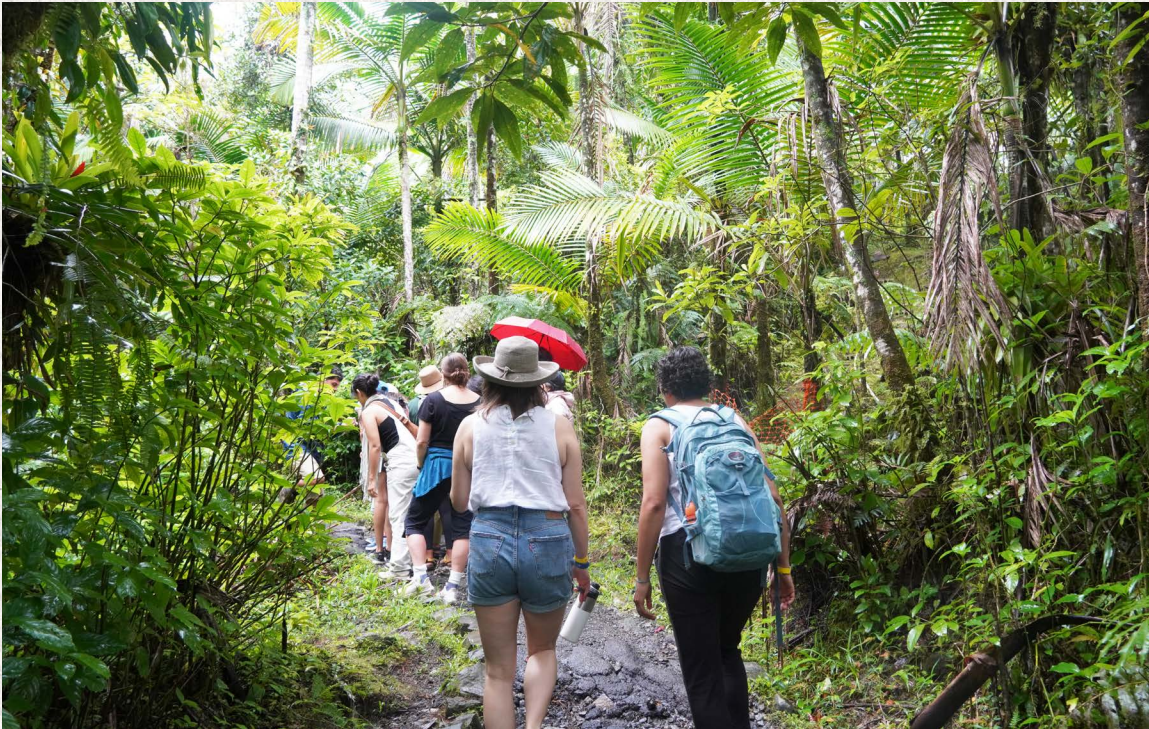
U.S. Latino/a/es are 67% more likely than white residents to live in an area that is nature deprived.

In 2017 California, Hispanic or Latino/a/e residents make up 38.2% of the total population, but only 1.7% of them live within 1km of coastal access.



42%

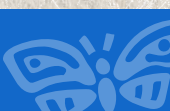
A 2022 poll of U.S. Latino/a/e voters found that more than **42%** of respondents said they **sometimes feel unwelcomed and experience hostility when visiting coastal areas.**



OBJECTIVES

Direct federal agencies to utilize powers to conserve wildlife, lands, water, and marine areas of significance to Latino/a/e culture, histories, and community health.

- Designate — and finalize management plans for — wilderness study areas, wildlife refuges, areas of critical environmental concern, national conservation areas, marine protected areas, and backcountry conservation areas in regions with close proximity to Latino/a/es.
- Designate national monuments through the use of the Antiquities Act in collaboration with Latino/a/e community members and Latino/a/e-serving organizations to reflect our histories and elevate our stories.
- Oppose and halt efforts to extract oil and gas in areas such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, develop the US-México border wall across the Rio Grande and other sensitive lands across the southern border, and authorize land use conversion for sprawl development on public lands.
- End the auction of U.S. public lands and water to fossil fuel companies. Halt all new permits for fossil fuel exploration, production, and infrastructure.
- Implement the Public Lands Rule at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) by prioritizing conservation and restoration opportunities near nature-deprived census tracts; establish or expand National Wildlife refuges in and near urban areas and frontline communities.



POLICY TRACKER**PARKS AND RECREATION ACCESS**

Aiming to increase parks and outdoor recreation areas in underserved communities, stimulate jobs and improve public health.

LegislationOutdoors For All Act & Parks, Jobs, and Equity Act

These bills would stimulate jobs in outdoor recreation and stewardship, and increase outdoor recreation space in nature-deprived communities. Lawmakers should prioritize investing in parks for communities of color and pass the Outdoors for All Act or advance future legislation modeled after the Parks, Jobs and Equity Act to provide access to nature for all.

Transit to Trails Act & A. Donald McEachin Environmental Justice for all Act

These bills would fund public transportation to outdoor recreation areas in underserved communities. They have not advanced in Congress, stalling progress on making public lands and water accessible to low-income communities. Congress should pass this legislation.

Living Schoolyards Act & Protect America's Children from Toxic Pesticides Act

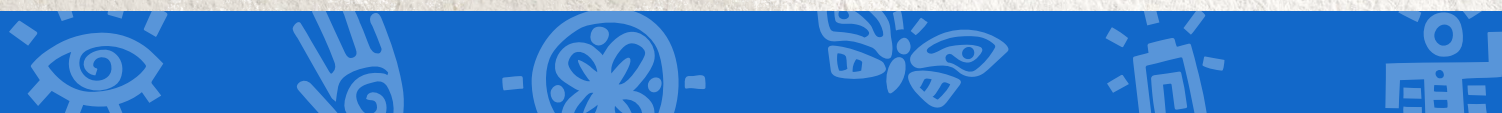
These bills improve children's health in nature everywhere and in schoolyards. The Pesticides Act must be reintroduced in Congress and both must advance in committee and be passed by Congress.

ProgrammingHUD Transit to Trails Program

This is a \$1 million investment in a program operated by Nature For All for local public transportation to the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument and Angeles National Forest. This investment improved access to natural areas for urban communities in the Los Angeles area. Other states and localities should replicate this model to eradicate transportation barriers to outdoor access.

Conserve, connect, and restore at least 30% of lands, water, and ocean by 2030 to enhance biodiversity everywhere; ensure equitable access to nature; and ameliorate climate disaster.

- Prioritize America The Beautiful Challenge grants for Tribal and Indigenous-led proposals and proposals in frontline communities.
- Direct the DOI to use its authority to phase down oil and gas production on federal lands and water to near-zero by 2030.



- Energy development on public lands should favor renewable energy investment and land restoration without jeopardizing conservation efforts such as preserving migratory corridors.
- Defend and strengthen the Endangered Species Act by robustly funding the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and NOAA Marine Fisheries Service, and enact ambitious regulatory safeguards for wildlife habitat.
- Seek collaborative agreements between Tribes and federal agencies to ensure access for ceremonies and gathering of sacred plants and integrate traditional knowledge into land management practices and conservation or restoration efforts.
- Establish a dedicated Tribal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program to support Indigenous-led conservation efforts.
- Enhance Tribal access to the LWCF State Assistance Program.
- Ensure that marine protected area and national monument designations, as well as management planning and execution, include Indigenous community input and partnership to preserve sites of cultural importance for agriculture and fishing.
- Adequately resource biodiversity augmentation, tree shade projects, and interpretive signage at Latino/a/e conservation units of cultural or historical significance.

Enhance opportunities and create a welcoming environment for all people to enjoy and influence public lands, water, and the ocean.

- Establish a Latino/a/e Heritage Conservation Program at the National Park Service.
- Permanently authorize and increase the Historic Preservation Fund, focusing on equitable storytelling of diverse Latino/a/e and Hispanic histories, and designating National Historic Register sites to conserve pre-colonial Indigenous and mesoamerican history, arts and labor history, and Puerto Rican history.
- Assess and address barriers to nature access, healthcare, housing, education, childcare, and paid leave for migrant and Latino/a/e residents and workers in national park recreation economies such as gateway communities.
- Adequately fund and implement the DOI's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan.
- Provide multilingual interpretation at conservation and recreation areas.
- Ensure all can participate in public land and ocean decision making by ensuring participation is safe and accessible for non-citizens, providing language interpretation, and prioritizing community partnerships for outreach efforts.
- Provide an America The Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands pass to new naturalized U.S. citizens, remove barriers to cashless entry to National Parks and host citizenship swearing-in ceremonies on appropriate recreational lands.
- Require agencies administering public lands and water to report transparently on compliance with Executive Order 14035 for a diverse, inclusive, and equitable federal workforce.



LCJF IN ACTION

NATIONAL PARK PASSES FOR NEW CITIZENS

The Need

U.S. residents of color are three times more likely to live in nature deprivation compared to white residents. Barriers to enjoying federal recreational lands include distance, transportation, cost, technology, and lack of familiarity with public lands systems. Several National Parks have gone cashless, preventing the unbanked 4.5% of U.S. households from enjoying some of our most treasured public lands and waters. Unbanked rates are highest among Black, Latino/a/e, Native American, low-income, disabled working-age peoples, and single-mothers.

The Proposal

The America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass covers entrance fees and day-use fees on federal recreational lands for one year. GreenLatinos member Lou Medina initiated a proposal for the U.S. departments of Interior, Agriculture, and Homeland Security to cooperatively gift these passes to new naturalized citizens as a way to address barriers to access cashless sites for unbanked individuals, and to host naturalization ceremonies on appropriate recreational lands.

Scaling up

This proposal is endorsed by nearly 70 organizations and a thousand individuals, demonstrating nationwide support for ensuring all may enjoy our perpetually protected, expansive, and scenic public lands and water. Organizations and community members can meet with their local U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Field Office, and local federal recreation land managers to initiate inter-agency cooperation to promote this proposal. Aim to form cross-sector partnerships including naturalized-citizen leadership to raise awareness about the unique local challenges and opportunities for equitable access to nature.

A FAIRER PLAYING FIELD

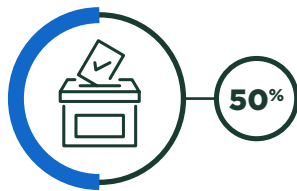
GOAL ▶ Opening avenues for community engagement and public participation, improving access to workforce development and services, and removing investment barriers to the just energy transition.

KEY DATA

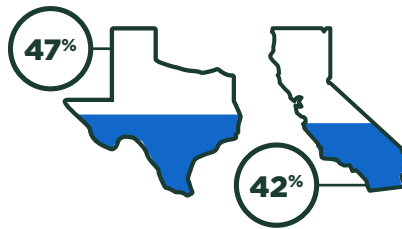
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Spanish was the most common non-English language spoken in the U.S. in 2019, spoken in **62%** of non-English speaking households. Nevertheless, language remains a barrier to government services, information, and participation.

In 2021, **Latino/a/e households held only one-fifth of the wealth of white households**. However, Latino/a/e households experienced a **42% gain** in median wealth from 2019 to 2021.



Latino/a/e voters represent **50% of the total growth in eligible voters since 2020**.



Latino/a/es make up a plurality of eligible voters in the two most populous states, Texas (47%) and California (42%).

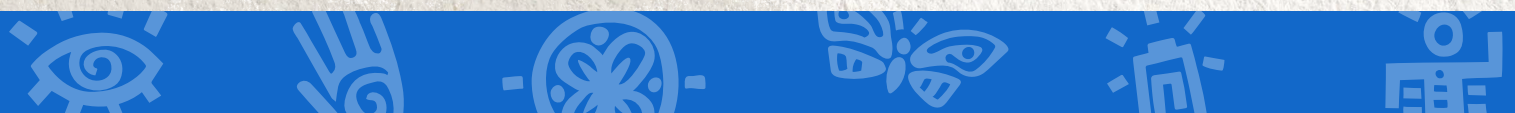


DID YOU KNOW?**HISTORICAL CLIMATE INVESTMENTS**

President Biden and the U.S. Congress have taken groundbreaking climate action with the passage and implementation of two pivotal climate action laws: the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA). Along with these cornerstone climate packages, the Biden administration rolled out the Justice40 Initiative which commits 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments to flow to communities at the forefront of systemic inequities.

OBJECTIVES**Address barriers to public participation.**

- Require accessibility services, including translation and interpretation, at all stages and documents of public participation processes.
- Collaborate with local ethnic media to disseminate public notices directly to multilingual and multiethnic communities.
- Eliminate the presence of Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers at public forums to encourage participation from undocumented persons and mixed-status families.
- Strengthen the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and ensure robust implementation of regulations overseen by the White House Council on Environmental Quality to prioritize environmental justice and climate considerations in federal projects.
- Ensure information is accessible to people with disabilities, providing American Sign Language interpretation, descriptions of images, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant websites in multiple languages as needed.
- Expand technical assistance to ensure that the communities that need investment the most can gain access to federal programs.



DID YOU KNOW?

THE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT (IIJA) AND LATINO/A/E COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

In fall of 2023, GreenLatinos issued a report on the first two years of IIJA investments through the lens of Latino/a/e community priorities as identified in the [Latino Climate Justice Framework](#). The study analyzed IIJA investments across five federal agencies and 23 programs in five states totalling \$3.169 billion across 308 individual projects.

Potential

The IIJA demonstrates much potential for agencies to coordinate and produce concentrated place-based transformation, provide seed funding to set critical initiatives in motion, scale up successful programs, and increase access to previously out-of-reach resources. There are several examples of programs that reach every state within the purview of this [analysis](#). Furthermore, while specific benefits vary on an individual project basis, investments were made in Latino/a/e communities across various geographical areas and densities of Latino/a/e populations throughout the scope of the analysis.

Shortcomings

While these investments in climate and ecosystem health advanced by IIJA-funded programs are historic, the IIJA is not a silver bullet solution to our disproportionate issues. The total level of IIJA funding is inadequate to meet national and global climate and ecosystem goals. This is clear from the nation's significant backlog for numerous issue-areas including but not limited to public land maintenance, drinking water infrastructure, and climate pollution remediation. With projections of an accelerating rate of adverse and costly climate impacts, it is reasonable to assume that climate change will exhaust the investments in the IIJA long before U.S. communities will have been able to adapt to those impacts. It bears further inquiry if local, state, and federal systems can adopt long-term finance solutions that contribute to the environmental liberation of the Latino/a/e community and beyond.

Create pathways to careers in sustainability, nature, environment and energy.

- Encourage strategies to create and sustain an inclusive, diverse, and equitable federal workforce and leadership including but not limited to: professional development opportunities, training, and transparent monitoring of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) indicators.
- Develop and resource workforce initiatives, including an expanded American Climate Corps, to prepare workers and young people for good-paying, sustainable, and unionized jobs in the clean energy and nature stewardship industries.

- Ensure programs are accessible and welcoming to people of color and varying age groups and that specific programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps are designed to allow for later career shifts and retraining for people in exploitative, uninsured sectors such as farmworkers.
- Establish a federal jobs guarantee offering incentives for green jobs, such as social safety benefits and family-sustaining wages, and support project labor agreements.
- Strengthen worker safeguards by enhancing anti-discrimination policies, protections against exploitation of undocumented workers, and reform of temporary foreign worker programs.
- Ensure job transition support for fossil fuel workers.
- Support minority-led entrepreneurship initiatives and businesses by providing targeted grants, low-interest loans, and technical support to transition to clean energy, sustainability, or ecosystem restoration sectors and help build personal and community wealth.

DID YOU KNOW?

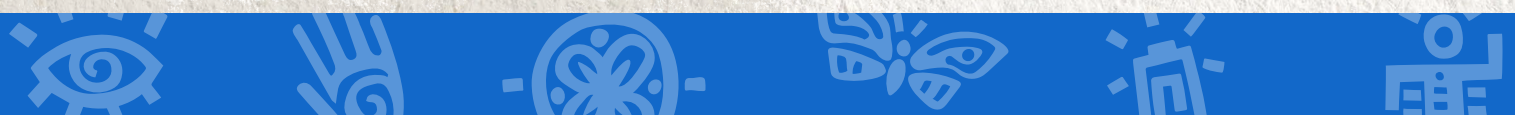
AMERICAN CLIMATE CORPS

The Biden administration launched the [American Climate Corps](#) in 2024 to stimulate the climate, conservation, and restoration workforce. To ensure equity, the programs must:

- provide comprehensive supplemental support services (e.g. child care, health insurance, housing, food assistance) to workers;
- change the federal law and regulation that would allow for increasing the maximum living allowance;
- increase the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, which members receive upon completing their service;
- clearly outline which positions offer workforce certification and skill-based training; and
- adhere to the Justice40 Initiative by transparently reporting on the percentage of benefits to marginalized communities through job creation or project outcomes.

Ensure funding decisions reflect the needs of front line communities and prioritize community health and wellbeing over profit.

- Reform grant scoring to equally value community experience and local knowledge alongside previous government grant experience.



- Increase direct funding for community-based organizations and frontline groups, reducing favoritism towards states and municipalities.
- Ensure environmental justice expertise is represented on advisory boards and in decision-making bodies.
- Implement robust data collection and share public, transparent reporting on Justice40 and the America the Beautiful Initiative with target communities with full transparency.
- Encourage private investors to divest from fossil fuels and remove disincentives, such as credit rating downgrades or Federal Reserve policies, which fail to account for the climate risk of continued fossil fuel dependence and push investors away from redirecting funding to renewable energy.
- Caution financial institutions against discrimination on the basis of immigration status as IRA funds are dispersed to communities through the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund in the form of loans and other financial mechanisms.
- Enforce and leverage the Community Reinvestment Act for all federal funding related to Justice40 and the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.

POLICY TRACKER

SUPREME COURT OVERTURNS THE CHEVRON DOCTRINE

In June 2024, the Supreme Court overturned a longstanding precedent, known as the Chevron Doctrine, which required courts to defer to federal agencies' interpretations of ambiguous statutes.

The court's decisions in *Relentless, Inc. v. Department of Commerce* and *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo* hand polluting industries and their elected allies the keys to weaken environmental protections by making it easier to challenge once-settled federal agency regulations. The upshot is likely to result in increased pollution and other environmental harms in Latino/a/e and other marginalized communities.

The Supreme Court should be held accountable for this decision, as it undermines decades of environmental progress and overturns years of court precedent. Congress needs to consider legislation to reinstate agency deference or clarify environmental laws to limit judicial interpretation.

REMOVING BARRIERS TO IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

GOAL ▶ Improving pathways to citizenship and rights for immigrants, and self-determination for all Latino/a/e people, including Indigenous communities.

KEY DATA

IMMIGRANTS



62% of Latinos reported having been stopped by police without cause.



Latino/a/es make up 39.5% of all domestic workers, a field in which people are typically employed in private households and often experience forms of abuse like overtime and no pay and 12-hour shifts with no breaks.

Immigrant workers experience **300 more workplace deaths** and **61,000 more injuries** annually than native-born workers.

44% of Latino/a/e immigrants are less likely to report crimes due to immigration status.

A Gallup survey found **11% of Hispanics** reported having **relocated permanently or temporarily as a result of extreme weather**.

OBJECTIVES

Adopt comprehensive immigration reform.

- Provide a path to citizenship for undocumented people and family reunification, including by adopting the Dream Act, preventing deportation for certain types of immigration cases, and creating a path to lawful permanent resident status for long-time recipients of Temporary Protected Status and similar programs. Prioritize naturalization in the U.S. immigration system.
- Reform protocols at the border to ensure that immigrants are provided full access to asylum and refugee protections. This includes the demilitarization of the U.S. Southwest border, divesting from border enforcement, immigration detention reforms and eliminating detention centers, and ending racial profiling.
- Issue work permits to immigration benefit applicants while paperwork and application is processed.
- Reintroduce House Bill H.R. 541-Keep Families Together Act to limit separation of families at or near U.S. borders or ports of entry.
- Expand access to "cancellation of removal" for long-term noncitizen parents of children with disabilities.

- Allow noncitizen spouses with pending provisional waivers to apply for work permits while awaiting green card processing.

Protect Latino/a/es from discrimination in the workplace regardless of immigration status.

- Support the finalization of a strong OSHA rule that includes domestic workers so they are protected by critical federal labor laws.
- End the exclusion of migrant workers from legal protections for overtime pay and minimum wage.
- Establish joint employer liability by implementing policies that hold multiple employers in a subcontracting chain jointly liable for labor law violations and worker protections.

DID YOU KNOW?

CLIMATE IMPACTS IN TRANSIT

For many Latino/a/e migrants, the journey to the U.S. is a gauntlet of climate-related hazards. They traverse scorching deserts, dense jungles, and swollen rivers, facing extreme heat, dehydration, and other environmental dangers. U.S. border policies like "Prevention Through Deterrence" exacerbate these risks by pushing migrants into more remote, perilous areas. This also leaves them at risk of facing violence from criminal organizations during their journey in addition to climate-related hazards.

As climate change intensifies, so do these dangers. Migrant deaths along the southern border have surged: Nearly 8,000 migrants have died on the Southern border since 1998 — a rate of about one death per day for over two decades. Many succumb to heat exposure and lack of water. This weaponization of climate impacts against climate-displaced communities underscores the urgent need for safe, legal migration pathways. Those displaced by the climate crisis deserve the chance to relocate with dignity, free from the perils of an increasingly hostile environment.

ENERGY JUSTICE FOR PUERTO RICO

Puerto Rico's status as a U.S. territory creates unique obstacles to environmental justice. Its 3 million citizens lack voting representation in Congress, limiting their ability to influence federal policies and enforcement. The island's division into 78 *municipios*, each with its own government, creates a fragmented approach to environmental issues.

The Jones Act has imposed economic restrictions on Puerto Rico for over a century, while the 2019 PROMESA law established a federal Fiscal Control Board with authority over Puerto Rico's finances. These laws undermine local governance, including environmental protection efforts.





Puerto Rico has long been at the frontline of the climate crisis in the U.S. and across the world. In the context of Puerto Rico, climate justice involves confronting the complex socio-political and economic inequalities that have exacerbated our environmental injustices and turned natural occurring weather events into climate disasters.

DID YOU KNOW?

PUERTO RICO'S ONGOING CLIMATE CRISIS

It has been more than six years since Hurricane Maria impacted Puerto Rico – an unprecedented climate disaster that left unimaginable death and destruction from which the archipelago still has not recovered: The more than 3,000 lives lost, the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of residents, the ongoing plague of blue tarps on rooftops, the yearlong blackout, the months of missed schooling, the long anxious wait for promised help to arrive. There is no doubt that both U.S. federal, and Puerto Rico governments failed to manage the crisis and protect the people. The United States Commission on Civil Rights later investigated the federal response to Maria in Puerto Rico, and concluded that civil rights had indeed been violated.

Hurricane Maria was neither the first nor last disaster in Puerto Rico. Since 2017, Puerto Rico has experienced three hurricanes — Irma, Maria, and Fiona — devastating earthquakes, tropical storms, flooding, and a global pandemic, among other challenges. All these disasters have laid bare the archipelago's complex economic, social, political, and environmental vulnerabilities.



Over the last decade, Puerto Rico has experienced a consistent poverty rate of over 40 percent, a lower median income than any U.S. state, austerity measures imposed by a federal fiscal control board, and a dramatic 11.8 percent decline in population. These statistics are firmly rooted in more than 100 years of discriminatory policies and an unjust balance of power between the federal government and the people of Puerto Rico.

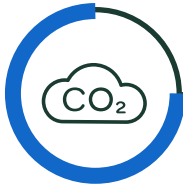
The historic discrimination by the federal government has allowed for the inequitable delivery and even total exclusion from federal benefits, including those designed to alleviate poverty such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid, FEMA and HUD programs intended for disaster response and recovery, and programs intended for climate resiliency, mitigation and adaptation. For example, Puerto Rico is explicitly excluded from accessing the recently won tax credits and rebates for electric vehicles, solar energy installs, or energy efficiency upgrades in the IRA and IIJA.

In 2019, Puerto Rico passed Act 17, known as the Puerto Rico Energy Public Policy Act, which, among other things, commits Puerto Rico to powering itself exclusively from renewable-energy sources by the year 2050. Achieving energy justice and creating a resilient, decentralized energy system in Puerto Rico is not just about reaching climate goals — it is literally a matter of life and death.



KEY DATA

ENERGY ON PUERTO RICO



8.9 MIL
TONS

\$1.4 billion is spent per year on imported fossil fuels causing **8.9 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions** per year.

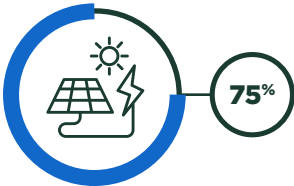


Puerto Rico **only generates 6% of the energy it consumes** using local energy sources.

Due to the importation of fossil fuels, **the average price of electricity in Puerto Rico is higher** than any other state in the US, except Hawaii.

The PR100 study conducted by the national laboratories of the DOE, concluded that **Puerto Rico can generate 100% of its energy using renewable energy sources** without impacting agricultural lands or natural reserves.

On average, residents, hospitals, schools & more in Puerto Rico **spend 24 hours and 8 minutes without electricity service per year**, compared to the annual average of 2.7 in the United States.



If Puerto Rico achieved **75% distributed solar energy**, it would reduce emissions to 2.6 million tons per year, a decrease of 70%.



In 2024, **94% of Puerto Rico's electricity came from power plants fueled by fossil fuels**, mainly oil and natural gas.

OBJECTIVES

Chart an energy path for Puerto Rico that transforms its energy landscape to renewables, and fosters resilience, equity, and long-term sustainability.

- Stop the construction of new gas plants and LNG terminals and install community-owned rooftop solar and battery storage.
- Prohibit the use of disaster relief funding from FEMA to build out new fossil fuel infrastructure. Instead it should be used for widespread transition to affordable rooftop solar and battery storage.
- Require and enforce distributed renewable energy in the Integrated Resource Plan when the plan is revised in 2024.
- Preserve agricultural and ecologically sensitive lands by preventing large-scale utility solar farms without proper community and environmental impact assessments.
- Transform Puerto Rico's electric grid and reject massive electricity rate hikes on customers as a "solution" to pay back the multibillion-dollar debts incurred by Puerto Rico's government, specifically, PREPA.
- Demand robust accountability measures to any company or institution operating Puerto Rico's electric transmission and distribution system, specifically when they do not prioritize safe, affordable, and resilient power.
- Stop the hazardous operation of New Fortress Energy and subsidiaries in San Juan including the approval of a 220-foot gas pipeline.
- Implement recommendations from the 2020 Energy Proposal, "Queremos Sol".

Ensure energy and environmental justice for impacted communities.

- Require Applied Energy System (AES) corporation to be held accountable to clean up its failure to properly dispose of coal ash, which is contaminating the air, soil, and water.
- Accelerate the closure of the AES coal plant prior to its set closure of 2027.
- Enact adequate remediation of contaminated groundwater and soil and require that AES guarantee full compliance with the 202 law prohibiting coal ash disposal.
- Urge the EPA to approve components of Puerto Rico's proposed energy plan that mandates the shutdown of fossil fuel power plants in San Juan, Palo Seco, and Aguirre.
- Support swift action to reduce sulfur dioxide (SO₂) emissions from San Juan, Palo Seco, and Aguirre plants.
- Call for the rejection of planned components that would delay SO₂ reduction or impede accurate pollution measurement.



Treat Puerto Rico as an equal partner in the U.S. with adequate access to benefits, services, and funding, and liberate it from restrictions that impair its ability to swiftly transition to 100% clean renewable energy.

- Integrate the PR100 Energy Justice principles for citizen participation in all energy related decision-making processes on the federal and local level.
- Demand that the government take urgent action to address the climate crisis by adopting a comprehensive public policy on climate change.
- Foster a collaborative, inclusive approach to environmental justice across all U.S. territories, addressing the unique needs of BIPOC populations while leveraging shared experiences and resources.

DID YOU KNOW?

EQUAL REPRESENTATION FOR ALL

Like Puerto Rico, other U.S. territories such as Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands grapple with limited political representation at the federal level. This lack of voting power in Congress significantly hampers their ability to shape national environmental policies that directly impact their lands and communities. This reflection is not based on their behalf, but rather understanding that territories should be able to have fair representation and a comprehensive approach that addresses their shared challenges while respecting their individual needs and cultural contexts. We advocate to ensure that their local voices are amplified, have fair representation, and create mechanisms for these territories to actively participate in shaping the environmental policies that affect their futures.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We're deeply grateful for the collective effort and invaluable contributions that brought the Latino Climate Justice Framework 2025-2028 to fruition. This initiative stands as a testament to the power of community collaboration and shared purpose. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the diverse array of individuals and organizations whose dedication made this framework a reality. The Latino Climate Justice Framework 2025-2028 truly embodies the spirit of unity and collective action within our community and we sincerely thank everyone involved!

LCJF COALITION

Ceres

Richard Juang &
Kelsey Condon

Center for Biological Diversity

Gladys Delgadillo &
Gabriela Sarri-Tobar

Climate Reality

Jamiah Adams

EarthJustice

Robert Valencia

Farmworker Justice

Alexis Guild

Latino Outdoors

Jazzari Taylor

Moms Clean Air Force

Liz Hurtado

Progressive Reform

Catalina Gonzalez

Sachamama

Juan Patino

SierraForever

Louis Medina

The Idaho Organization of Resource Councils

Irene Ruiz

Union of Concerned Scientists

Verónica López Gamboa

Zero Waste Project

Dennis Uyat

LCJF INAUGURAL PARTNERS

Corazon Latino

Felipe Benitez

Mi Familia Vota

Katara Burrola

WCVI

Lydia Camarillo

CHISPA

Estefany Carrasco

UnidosUS Action

Rafael Collazo

Hispanic Federation

Julietta Lopez

Farmworker Justice

Iris Figueroa

HACU

Antonio Flores

Azul

Marce Graudiņš

MANA

Amy Hinojosa

GreenLatinos

Mark Magaña

LULAC

Art Motta

Presente

Matt Nelson

EcoMadres

Isabel González Whitaker

NHMA

Elena Rios

NHCSL

Kenneth Romero

Poder Latinz

Yadira Sanchez

Comité Dialogo Ambiental

Ruth Santiago

Latino Outdoors

Luis Villa

UPROSE

Elizabeth Yeampierre

Sachamama

Carlos Zegarra

LCJF COLLABORATORS

Allensworth Progressive
Association
Antonio Delgado
Beatriz Soto
Cristobal Jimenez
Cynthia Burgos López
Emma Lane
Ericka Lozano-Buhl
Hernaliz Vázquez Torres
Jayleene West
Joshua Low
Katara Burrola
Laura Esquivel
Maritza Maymí-Hernández
Maritza Ramirez
Mary Ann Ormond
Mayra Reiter
Nancy Treviño
Sebastian Baez
Sumiko Neary
Sary Nitza Rosario Ferreira
Zach Palma

LCJF REVIEWERS

Ahmed Gaya
Angel S. Fernandez-Bou
Carlos Guevara
Cristina Muñoz De La Torre
Gabriela Roque
Jonathan Castillo Polanco
Lia Parada
Maria Chavez
Maria Cecilia P. Moura
Maritere Padilla Rodríguez
Rachel Cleetus

GREENLATINO BOARD MEMBERS

Jackie Nuñez (Jacqueline
Nuñez de Villavicencio)
Juan Declet-Barreto
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Orson Aguilar
Raul E. Garcia
Yvette Arellano

GREENLATINOS STAFF

Ana Esmeralda González
Aileen Marquez
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Mark Magaña
Oliva Juarez
Patricia Garcia-Nelson
Pedro Hernández
Rachna Vas
Rosario (Rosy) Rubio
Val Z. Schull

LCJF COMMUNICATIONS LEADS

Danielle Crockett
Elisabeth Soto
Gabrielle Levy
Marlene Peralta
Mina Lee
Tina Li
Xavier Chambers

TRANSLATION BY

Translation Cenzontle

REPORT DESIGNED BY

Annie Dore

ARTWORK BY

Hijos del Sol



LCJF
LATINO
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