



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**WASHINGTON, DC**— *In commemoration of Hispanic Heritage Month, GreenLatinos, and the NCLR Action Fund issued the following statement highlighting the contributions of Latinos to environmental and conservation leadership, and reiterating their call for strong action to address climate change:*

“As we lift up and celebrate our collective legacy, we must also address the shared challenges that we face so we can continue to most effectively serve our nation in our different capacities. This includes climate change, one of the biggest threats all Americans face, but particularly Latinos who are at a disproportionate risk.

Among Cesar Chavez’s last public remarks before his death in 1993, he said, ‘those who live in the area of grape vineyards are constantly exposed to cancer, birth deformity, miscarriages, sterility, respiratory difficulties and death. You find toxic substances in the fields, streets, soils, air, water, playgrounds, parks, and the poison and killing of children continues unabated.’

As a civil rights leader and tireless advocate, Chavez regularly included messages of environmental protection in his social justice advocacy. Chavez’s call of attention to our environment and the land that sustains us are echoed by a new vanguard of leaders today.

Pope Francis, who many consider to be the first Latin American Pope, said the following in his historic encyclical on the care of our common home, ‘I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.’

These two iconic leaders are representative of a continuous legacy of Latino leadership on environmental and conservation issues. Hispanics face an increased vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and power plant pollution.

- Nearly 2 in 5 Latinos lives within 30 miles of a power plant.
- As a result, Hispanics—particularly children and the elderly— risk greater exposure to increased extreme heat and weather, smog and air pollution.
- Latinos are also more likely to suffer from asthma attacks, required more days off from school or work as a result of pollution-related illness, and pay higher food prices.

Whether it's breathing toxic air from a nearby power plant, drinking unclean water, worrying about not having a home due to rising sea levels, or suffering from air quality-related respiratory illnesses, climate change is keeping many Latinos and other underrepresented communities from fully benefitting from a healthy and productive quality of life, which in turn affects our economy and productivity as a nation.

As we commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month and celebrate the legacy of Latino environmental and conservation stewardship, our organizations, as well as the community as a whole, urge strong action on climate change.

- [Nearly 80 percent](#) of Hispanics consider climate change to be a somewhat serious or very serious problem, up almost 7 percent from a year ago.
- Additionally, more than half said they considered climate change a deciding factor in their vote for president.

Last year, the Environmental Protection Agency released the Clean Power Plan, which sets the first ever limits on carbon pollution from power plants, which disproportionately affects Latinos.

- The Clean Power Plan is expected to prevent 3,600 premature deaths, 90,000 asthma attacks in children, and 300,000 missed work and school days every year by 2030
- It is expected to produce up to [\\$54 billion](#) in public health and climate benefits.
- Additionally, the Clean Power Plan is expected to save consumers more than [\\$200 per year](#) on their electricity bills by 2030.

While this is the most significant step our country has taken to address climate change, nearly 30 state attorney's general have sued to block the Clean Power Plan from being implemented. Now, more than ever the legacy of Latino environmental and conservation stewardship is needed to demand strong action on climate change."

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