



October 4, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Mark Magaña, MarkMagana@GreenLatinos.org, 202-230-2070

Chris Espinosa, ChrisEspinosa@GreenLatinos.org, 805-302-2982

GREENLATINOS CONCLUDES VISIT TO TOXIC LANDFILL IN PUERTO RICO

Calls on Environmental Agencies to Do More to Protect the Public Health of Residents

San Juan, PR – GreenLatinos concluded a two-day delegation visit with Congressman Luis Gutierrez (D-IL), leaders of national and local environmental and civil rights organizations to hear from local residents about the growing environmental and public health concerns around toxic landfills on the island that are out of compliance with existing state and federal environmental laws.

GreenLatinos President & CEO, Mark Magaña said the following upon visiting with community residents and viewing the Toa Baja landfill in Candelaria: “What we saw here in Toa Baja was shocking. Compliance violations require immediate federal intervention, and EPA must step in and help find a solution to flagrant violations of environmental standards.”

“Nobody can experience what these residents are dealing with and not feel a profound sense of injustice.” Said **Chris Espinosa, Executive Vice President & COO of GreenLatinos**. “We will continue to demand immediate redress to the issues we heard today, and look very much forward to finding solutions, in partnership with the new Director of EPA’s Caribbean Environmental Protection Division, to this situation that is completely unacceptable.”

Congressman Luis Gutierrez, who met with local residents to hear concerns about the situation and toured the perimeter of Toa Baja landfill, stated during his visit: “The government is failing the people of Candelaria. Think for a moment: if you had to live next to this landfill, would you say the government is protecting you? I think you’d have to say no.”

The visit was organized with local residents of the Candelaria neighborhood, a low-income area where the Toa Baja landfill has been allowed to expand directly adjacent to their homes. **Local** groups have demanded the immediate closure by the EPA of all landfills classified as “open dumps” that are an imminent threat to public health and the environment of the surrounding communities.

GreenLatinos, is a national non-profit organization that convenes a broad coalition of Latino leaders committed to addressing national, regional and local environmental, natural resources and conservation issues that significantly affect the health and welfare of the Latino community in the United States. GreenLatinos provides an inclusive table at which its members establish collaborative partnerships and networks to improve the environment; protect and promote conservation of land and other natural resources; amplify the voices of minority, low-income and tribal communities; and train, mentor, and promote the current and future generations of Latino environmental leaders for the benefit of the Latino community and beyond. GreenLatinos develops and advocates for policies and programs to advance this mission.