



CONGRESSIONAL CONSERVATION TOOLKIT

**A GUIDE TO LAND, WATER AND CLIMATE ISSUES
& THE IMPACT ON LATINO COMMUNITIES**



Hispanic
Access
Foundation

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Chela Garcia
Director of
Conservation
Programs

Congratulations, you are currently holding the inaugural Hispanic Access Foundation Congressional Conservation Toolkit. While we launched our conservation program in 2012, it honestly took those years for us to truly synthesize and distill the vast array of information available to provide a comprehensive, yet concise, insight into the environmental issues that have a direct correlation and impact on our nation's Latino communities. We wanted the content to be meaningful and educational.

Latinos represent the largest untapped segment of the population that has a passion for the outdoors and stewardship, provides growth potential for the recreation and tourism economies, and has the willingness to protect our nation's natural resources for future generations, which we embrace as a moral obligation.

When you take this perspective and couple it with the growing electoral power of the Latino community, you find a political force that not only has the potential to shift the balance on conservation issues, but a mounting desire to do so.

In fact, many polls show Latinos carry strong concerns for the environment, which is deeply rooted in our culture and history of taking care of the land for future generations. Hispanic Access has helped elevate these concerns and ensure Latinos have a seat at the table when it comes to decision making on environmental issues. Latinos have been vocal advocates for creating new national monuments, protecting water sources like the Colorado River, encouraging the permanent reauthorization and full dedicated funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and establishing and maintaining regulations under the Clean Air Act.

In 2014, Hispanic Access launched Latino Conservation Week, created to support the Latino community in connecting with the outdoors and celebrate Latinos as stewards of our nation's natural resources. It has grown from 16 events in its first year to more than 150 events with over 190 partners nationwide. This year, Latino Conservation Week will be held July 13 – July 21, 2019 and much like this toolkit creates an opportunity for leaders such as yourself to engage with the Latino community and better understand our perspective on conservation issues

While Hispanic Access may be headquartered in DC, we have developed extensive, trust-based community networks across the country in order to establish bridges of access that provide a path for the development and rise of Latino leaders and elevate our voices in areas where we are underrepresented. We look forward to being a resource for you in the future.

Chela Garcia



PUBLIC LANDS

Public lands are a key component of our American identity and they weave a narrative of the diverse and complex history of our nation. These places preserve our shared cultural heritage, provide places to recreate and connect with nature, spend time with family and our communities, and significantly contribute to industries, local economies, and provide millions of jobs and employment opportunities. Latinos have been an integral part of this shared history. However, our access to public lands, the equal representation of our cultural heritage, and our workforce contributions are not always acknowledged or represented. Hispanic Access Foundation wishes to uplift Latino voices as stewards of public lands and also highlight the inequalities in access, cultural heritage representation, public health, and employment and economic opportunities on public lands, related industries and workforces. Programs such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Antiquities Act serve to close the gap in these inequalities for Latinos and other diverse communities.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO LATINO COMMUNITIES?

ACCESS & HEALTH

- US Latino/Hispanic population exceeds 18% in the US.
- Latinos are 30% less likely to engage in physical activity than whites.¹
- By 2020, half of all youth in America will be of color. By 2043, a majority of our country's residents will be people of color. Yet a 2014 Outdoor Foundation study found that 73 percent of Americans who participated in outdoor activities were white. In simple terms, the future of public lands depends on engaging and welcoming our diverse youth.
- Only one third of Latinos live within walking distance of a park compared to almost half of white individuals.²
- Low income neighborhoods populated by minorities and recent immigrants are desperately park-poor.³



- Latinos are 21% more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to live in urban heat islands, or immediate geographic areas dominated by heat-retaining asphalt and concrete where parks, shade-providing trees, and other vegetation are lacking.⁴

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORY

- The American Latino identity is composed of many narratives, there is not one dominant story that can completely tell the history and the contributions of Latinos, nor any particular community or culture, to the United States. Too often our stories and contributions to this nation are not represented in the narrative that our public lands portray. Thus, the protection of existing monuments, such as Cesar E. Chavez National Monument, and the creation of new parks and monuments are an opportunity to expand our nation's narrative to be inclusive of the histories and contributions of Latino communities in the United States.
- 75% of Latinos would support the creation of new parks and monuments in their state.⁵

JOBS & ECONOMY

- The outdoor recreation economy generates \$887 billion in consumer spending and 7.6 million jobs.⁶
- 94% of Latinos see public lands, such as national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas as an “essential part” of the economies in these states.⁷
- 83% of the National Park Service workforce is white, even though whites only make up 60% of the U.S. population. Workforce employment in national parks and other public land agencies does not reflect the US population, which is why it is crucial to protect our nation's public lands and increase access for Latino and other diverse communities to these places so that they have opportunities to pursue natural resource careers and become the next generation of stewards and park rangers.⁸

PUBLIC OPINION

- 68% of Latino voters want Congress to place more emphasis to ensure we protect sources of clean water, our air quality and wildlife habitat while providing opportunities to visit and recreate on our national public lands.⁹
- 94% of Latinos see public lands, such as national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas as an “essential part” of the economies in these states.¹⁰





LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND

Since its passage in 1965, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has gone on to become one of the nation's greatest tools for providing access to the outdoors and helping to preserve the lands and waters we love.

For over half a century, LWCF has served to protect America's greatest treasures: from national parks of outstanding beauty such as the Grand Canyon and Grand Teton, to historic sites embodying our nation's past such as the San Antonio Missions, the Gettysburg Battlefield and Monroe Elementary School in Kansas—the school attended by Linda Brown, of *Brown v. Board of Education*. LWCF has successfully safeguarded countless acres of natural resources, greatly enhanced access to public lands, preserved our historical legacy, and even supported local economies by boosting tourism. To this day, LWCF has helped protect more than 100 national battlefields in 42 states, supported over 42,000 parks and recreation projects across the country, in addition to protecting more than 2.2 million acres of national parks.

In addition to permanent reauthorization, fixing the funding process of LWCF is a priority. Even though the program is funded through offshore oil and gas royalties – at no cost to taxpayers – it has only been fully funded at its annual \$900 million cap twice in 54 years. On average, Congress authorizes LWCF to receive only about 46% of its allowed amount. By fully-funding LWCF municipal, state and federal sites would receive a significant boost to address numerous maintenance and development needs.

This program has played a key role in protecting not just land and water conservation, but in preserving our country's dynamic, multicultural past.



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO LATINO COMMUNITIES?

ACCESS & HEALTH

- LWCF increases access to local and state parks for Latino communities - increasing opportunities for physical activity and access to green spaces and recreational activities
- Multiple studies conclude that access to nature promotes a healthy and active lifestyle
- For many Latinos and other diverse urban communities, sites funded through LWCF often provide their only means to experience the outdoors because this program supports local and municipal parks and projects.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORY

- LWCF has helped to protect cultural and historically significant places important to our nation's diverse and shared history, such as El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro - a historic trade route between Mexico City and San Juan Pueblo New Mexico - and Monroe Elementary School in Kansas, the school attended by Linda Brown of Brown v. Board of Education.

JOBS & ECONOMY

- The outdoor recreation economy generates \$887 billion in consumer spending and 7.6 million jobs. By supporting recreation areas through local, state, and federal parks and projects, LWCF helps stimulate economic activity throughout the US.¹¹
- Initiatives such as Latino Conservation Week, MANO Project internships and fellowships with public land agencies through Hispanic Access Foundation, and programming with Latino Outdoors, Nuestra Tierra, GreenLatinos and a multitude of Latino and other diverse environmental groups - all promote programming and job opportunities on public lands supported by LWCF.

PUBLIC OPINION

- 85% of Latinos support the reauthorization of LWCF.¹²
- 94% of Latinos see public lands, such as national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas as an "essential part" of the economies in these states.¹³
- 75% of Latinos would support the creation of new parks and monuments in their state.¹³





ANTIQUITIES ACT

Since 1906, when Theodore Roosevelt signed the Antiquities Act into law granting the executive office the authority to establish national monuments, 17 presidents – nine Republicans and eight Democrats – have used the law to protect our natural and cultural heritage. More importantly, these national monument designations have received broad support. For example, the 2017 Colorado College conservation poll showed that 80 percent of voters back keeping national monuments in place, while only 13 percent support revoking them.

Through The Antiquities Act, U.S. presidents have been able to protect hundreds of millions of acres of land that have significant cultural and historical significance. These presidential designated National Monuments protect our public lands, air, water, wildlife, culturally and historically significant artifacts and sites. Furthermore, monuments help to support and grow local economies, tourism, and outdoor access. While it only permits presidents to designate new national monuments from existing public lands, it has been used to create over 130 national monuments.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO LATINO COMMUNITIES?

ACCESS & HEALTH

- The Antiquities Act increases access to public lands for Latino communities - increasing opportunities for physical activity and access to open spaces and recreational activities

U.S. PRESIDENTS WHO HAVE USED THE ANTIQUITIES ACT

REPUBLICAN



Theodore Roosevelt



William H. Taft



Warren G. Harding



Calvin Coolidge



Herbert Hoover



Dwight D. Eisenhower



Gerald Ford



George W. Bush



Donald Trump

DEMOCRAT



Woodrow Wilson



Franklin D. Roosevelt



Harry S. Truman



John F. Kennedy



Lyndon B. Johnson



Jimmy Carter



Bill Clinton



Barack Obama

- Multiple studies conclude that access to nature promotes a healthy and active lifestyle
- For many Latinos and other diverse urban communities, national monuments such as the San Gabriel Mountains, Mojave Trails, and Sand to Snow National Monuments provide much needed open space, recreation opportunities, and public land and water protections for the fast-developing Los Angeles metropolitan area, home to 15 million people.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORY

- The Antiquities Act is instrumental in the preservation of our cultural heritage and historic sites that represent the stories of all Americans such as the home of civil rights leader Cesar E. Chavez in California.
- Places such as El Morro, Browns Canyon, Sand to Snow, and Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monuments and many more are rich with archaeological sites, trails, artifacts, and histories of indigenous, Spanish, and Mexican heritage. The Antiquities Act was meant to preserve places such as these for future generations to understand our nation's diverse and complex past.

JOBS & ECONOMY

- The outdoor recreation economy generates \$887 billion in consumer spending and 7.6 million jobs. National monuments are places to recreate and enjoy the outdoors, thus the Antiquities Act helps stimulate economic activity throughout the US.¹⁴
- Initiatives such as Latino Conservation Week, MANO internships and fellowships with public land agencies through Hispanic Access Foundation, and programming with Latino Outdoors, GreenLatinos and a multitude of Latino environmental groups - all promote programming and job opportunities on public lands, including national monuments.
- Hispanic Access Foundation's Latino Heritage Internship Program and U.S. Forest Service Fellowships aim to promote access to employment opportunities through federal land management agencies. Our programs have placed Latino interns and fellows in the following national monuments: Berryessa Snow Mountain, Casa Grande Ruins, Castillo de San Marcos, Cesar E. Chavez, El Malpais, El Morro, Harriet Tubman, San Juan Islands, and Chimney Rock.



PUBLIC OPINION

- 75% of Latinos would support the creation of new parks and monuments in their state.¹⁵
- 94% of Latinos see public lands, such as national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas as an "essential part" of the economies in these states.¹⁶
- 69% of Latino voters in the West believe the presence of national public lands, such as national forests, national monuments, or wildlife refuges helps the economy in their state.¹⁶



ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE:

GREENHOUSE GASES

Hispanic Access Foundation advocates for policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and regulate air pollution and toxic chemical release into the atmosphere in order to take urgent action on reducing the impacts of climate change on communities and ecosystems. These harmful pollutants including methane, mercury, carbon, and other pollutants contribute to the warming of our planet, which exacerbate socioeconomic and public health disparities experienced by Latinos.

According to a Monmouth University Poll, 93% of liberals, 86% of moderates, and 62% of conservatives think the world's climate is undergoing a change that is causing more extreme weather patterns and the rise of sea levels. A total of 88% of liberals, 79% of moderates, and 42% of conservatives believe climate change is caused by either human activity or equally caused by natural changes in the environment and human activity combined. Climate change is not a partisan issue, it is a global and national crisis that must be addressed by Congress.

The International Panel on Climate Change report, *Global Warming of 1.5°C*, in conjunction with the Global Change Research Program report, *Fourth National Climate Assessment*, both point to the need for comprehensive and urgent climate solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions if the United States and the world are to avoid catastrophic consequences to both the human and natural environments in the coming decade.

Greenhouse gas emissions from our nation's fossil fuel consumption pollute the air we breathe and worsen extreme weather events, heat and aridification, drought, and wildfires, further contributing to the vast socioeconomic disparities in our country. Communities that lack access to resources and services to prepare, recover, and adapt to these pressing and severe threats are more vulnerable to the current and looming public health and economic consequences of climate change.

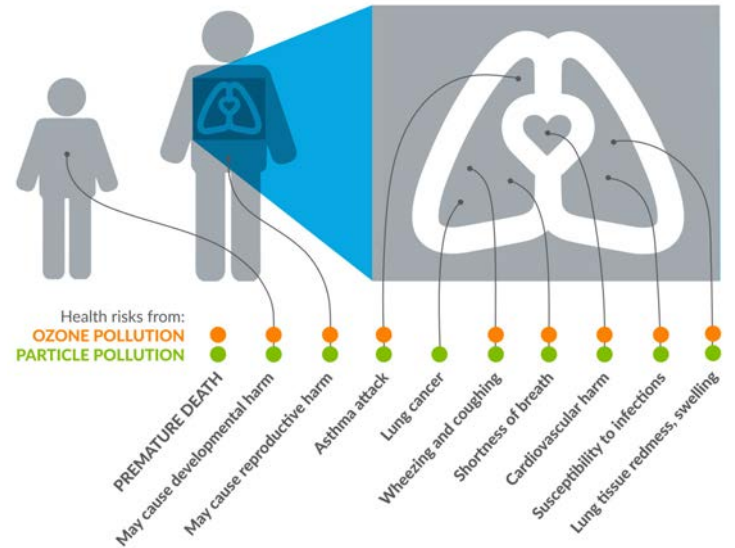
Latino communities across the United States have already experienced disproportionate health and economic impacts of poor air quality, extreme heat and aridification, wildfires, drought and other severe effects of climate change. With our nation's shifting demographics and Latinos on track to becoming 30% of the U.S. population by 2050, Latinos will continue to experience these severe consequences at a disproportionate rate.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO LATINO COMMUNITIES?

ACCESS & HEALTH

- Latinos are 165% more likely to live in counties with unhealthy levels of particulate matter pollution, and 51% more likely to live in counties with unhealthy levels of ozone than are non-Hispanic whites.¹⁷
- More than 1.81 million Latinos live within one half mile of existing oil and gas facilities. As a result, many Latino communities face an elevated risk of cancer and respiratory health risks due to air toxics emissions from oil and gas development.¹⁸
- Latino children are 60% more at risk than their white counterparts of having asthma attacks exacerbated by air pollution. As climate change worsens air quality, Latinos will be disproportionately impacted.¹⁹
- In 2015, 19.5% of the Hispanic population was not covered by health insurance, as compared to 6.3% of the non-Hispanic white population.²⁰
- Asthma costs the U.S. \$56 billion — \$50 billion in direct healthcare costs and \$6 billion in lost productivity. A third of these total costs can be attributed to urgent care services associated with asthma.²¹
- The poverty among Latinos in 2016 was 19.4%, compared to the national poverty rate of 12.7%. This means that 1 in 5 Latinos will not have the economic resources to prepare, adapt, or cope with health issues, disasters, increasing temperatures, job insecurity, and other consequences of climate change.²²

Air pollution remains a major danger to the health of children and adults.



Source: American Lung Association

JOBS & ECONOMY

- The United States federal and state governments gave away \$20.5 billion a year on average in 2015 and 2016 in production subsidies to the oil, gas, and coal industries, including \$14.7 billion in federal subsidies and \$5.8 billion through state-level incentives.²³
 - ◆ 78% of Latino voters, compared to 68% of all voters, think that increasing the use of renewable energy sources like wind and solar will create jobs.²⁴
 - ◆ 86% of Latino voters prefer that the government invest in clean, renewable energy like solar and wind, while just 11% of Latinos prefer investments in fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas.²⁵
- Currently, climate change and air pollution's external effects - alone - are approximately in the range of costing \$2.2 - \$5.9 trillion per year, while the all-in-all cost of the global energy supply is around 5 trillion USD per year.²⁶
- The US Department of Energy reported that 3,384,834 Americans were directly employed by the clean energy industry (which includes the energy efficiency, smart grid, and energy storage industries; electric power generation from renewables; renewable fuels production; and the electric, hybrid, and hydrogen-based vehicle industries) in 2016.
 - ◆ 87% Latino voters, with all wages and benefits equal, would prefer to work in the clean energy industry rather than at a fossil fuel company or oil refinery.²⁷

- Proportionally, solar employment accounts for the largest share of workers in the electric power generation sector. This is largely due to the construction related to the significant buildout of new solar generation capacity. Solar technologies, both photovoltaic and concentrating, employ 43% of the Electric Power Generation workforce. This is followed by fossil fuel generation employment, which accounts for 22% of total Electric Power Generation employment.
- Latinos comprise 19% of the total electric power generation workforce and 21% of wind and solar employment compared to comprising only 16% of national workforce averages.²⁸

PUBLIC OPINION

- Three in four Latinos want corporations and industry (77%), citizens themselves (74%), President Trump (74%), and the U.S. Congress (73%) to do more to address global warming.²⁹
- A large majority of Latinos (68%) think the U.S. should reduce its greenhouse gas emissions “regardless of what other countries do.”²⁹
- 81% of Latinos support requiring fossil fuel companies to pay a carbon tax.²⁹
- Half of Latinos “strongly support” funding more research into renewable energy (55%), regulating carbon dioxide as a pollutant (50%), or providing tax rebates for people who purchase energy-efficient vehicles or solar panels (48%).²⁹
- Many Latinos are willing to take political action on global warming. A majority of Latinos, 60%, would vote for a candidate for public office because of their position on global warming.²⁹
- 80% of Latino voters, compared to 65% of all voters, think the highest priority for meeting America’s energy needs is to reduce our need for more coal, oil and gas by expanding our use of clean, renewable energy that can be generated in the U.S.³⁰
- 74% of Latino voters in the West want to encourage solar power in their state, followed by 54% want to encourage wind power, 26% natural gas, 7% oil, and 4% coal.³¹
- 81% of Latino voters would like to continue tax incentives for solar and wind energy production.³²

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

The EPA’s mission is to protect human health and the environment. To implement this mission, the EPA is obligated to implement programs under the Clean Air Act, which aims to reduce emissions of toxic air pollutants that cause cancer or other serious health effects; cause smog, haze, acid rain, or contribute to poor air quality; and phase out the production and use of chemicals that destroy stratospheric ozone.

CLEAN AIR ACT

The Clean Air Act aims to protect public health and welfare nationwide and enacted by Congress in 1970, requires the EPA to establish national ambient air quality standards based on the latest science, and requires states to adopt enforceable plans to achieve the standards. The law calls for new stationary sources to be built with best technology, and allows less stringent standards for existing stationary sources.

The following regulations set in place under the EPA were important to improving air quality and protecting human health. These regulations were especially significant for Latino communities because of the disproportionate exposure to fossil fuel emissions and related health issues that Latino families endure.

Crucial regulations that were implemented by the EPA, under the purview of the Clean Air Act and in the best interest of protecting public health and welfare nationwide, are now facing significant rollbacks and proposals

to repeal such regulations. It is important for Congress to understand the depth of these rollbacks and use its oversight authority to question these rollbacks and deregulations because they are in stark contradiction to the legal obligation of the EPA and the Clean Air Act to protect human health, air quality, and the environment. The following regulations have been or are in the process of being repealed by the EPA within the last year:

- **2016 New Source Performance Standards** - curbed emissions of methane, smog-forming volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and toxic air pollutants such as benzene from new, reconstructed and modified oil and gas sources, while providing greater certainty about Clean Air Act.
- **Clean Car Standards** - The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in the Department of Transportation (DOT) has set fuel efficiency standards for cars and light trucks since 1975. The EPA has also set greenhouse gas emission standards since 2010. These combined standards improve the fuel economy of cars, lower emissions, improve air quality and save families on gas money.
- **Clean Power Plan** - In 2015, the EPA established the Clean Power Plan rule, which set limits on carbon emissions from the fossil fuel power sector, with a projection to reduce carbon emissions by 32% of 2005 levels by 2030. The CPP allowed states the flexibility to create plans to figure out how to best achieve these emissions reductions.
- **Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS)** - sets limits on the amount of mercury and other hazardous air pollutants (HAP) from power plants.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

While not under the direct purview of the EPA, it is important to understand the full scope of regulations that the federal government is capable of enacting to reduce fossil fuel emissions.

- **BLM Methane Waste Prevention Rule** - adopted in November 2016, sought to prevent the loss of natural gas through venting, flaring, and leaks on public lands. BLM estimated that, as a result of the rule, oil and natural gas producers operating on public lands would capture enough methane to supply approximately 740,000 households. The rule was also estimated to reduce methane emissions by up to 180,000 tons per year.³³





ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE:

HEAT & DROUGHT

Our nation's greenhouse gas emissions and resulting climate change are leading to higher temperatures and record-setting heat waves, drier and more arid conditions in the Southwest, and more frequent and severe droughts. These conditions are having troubling consequences on public health and access to services, job security, and economic productivity. Latino communities are disproportionately impacted by these conditions and Latino voters are not only aware of these impacts, but are ready for Congress to take action to address climate change, prepare for and mitigate extreme heat and drought, and protect our nation's precious water resources.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO LATINO COMMUNITIES?

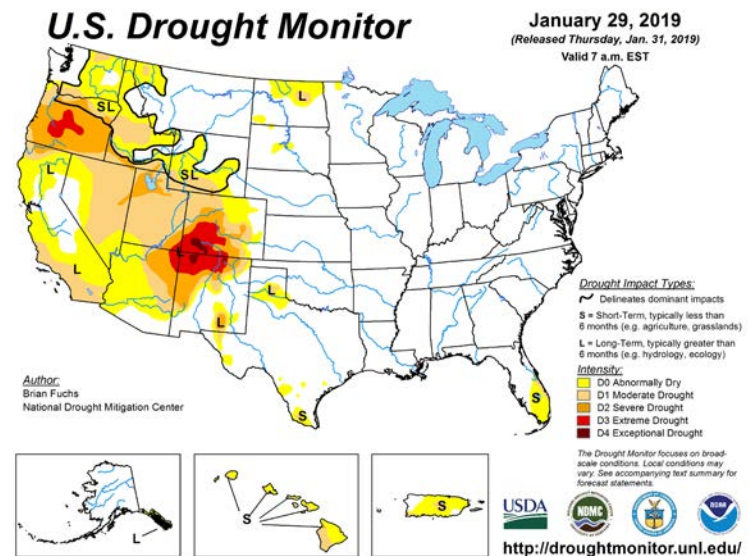
ACCESS & HEALTH

- Earth's globally averaged temperature for 2017 made it the third warmest year in NOAA's 138-year climate record, behind 2016 (warmest) and 2015 (second warmest).³⁴
 - ◆ Increased daytime temperatures, reduced nighttime cooling, and higher air pollution levels associated with urban heat islands can affect human health by contributing to general discomfort, respiratory difficulties, heat cramps and exhaustion, non-fatal heat stroke, and heat-related mortality.³⁵
 - ◆ Latinos are 21% more likely than whites to live in urban heat islands, or immediate geographic areas dominated by heat-retaining asphalt and concrete where parks, shade-providing trees, and other vegetation are lacking.³⁶
- There are 2.5 - 3 million farmworkers in the United States, 80% of whom are Latino.³⁷
 - ◆ Nationally, farm and construction workers accounted for nearly 58 percent of occupational heat deaths from 2000 to 2010, and Latinos had three times the risk of heat-related death on the job than did non-Latinos.³⁸
- Over a two-week heat wave in California in 2006, 655 deaths, 1,620 hospitalizations, and more than 16,000 excess emergency room visits, resulted in nearly \$5.4 billion dollars in costs. Major heat waves such as this are expected to occur more frequently in the future with increasing global temperatures.³⁹

- In 2015, 19.5% of the Latino population was not covered by health insurance, as compared to 6.3% of the white population that is uninsured, which means Latinos are less likely to have access to healthcare services to prevent and treat these extreme heat health threats.⁴⁰

JOBS & ECONOMY

- Higher temperatures are intensifying heat waves and drought in the Colorado River basin, California, and across the southwest U.S.
 - ◆ Workers in agriculture, construction, utilities, and manufacturing are more vulnerable to heat waves and higher temperatures, leading to lost productivity, increased healthcare costs, and economic strain.⁴¹
 - ◆ 16.8% of Latinos are natural resource laborers (agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting), compared to 10.3% of whites. Higher temperatures and heat waves will thus disproportionately impact Latino laborers.⁴²
 - ◆ The California drought led to losses of more than 10,000 jobs and the fallowing of 540,000 acres, at a cost of \$900 million in gross crop revenue in 2015.⁴³
- In the Southwest, agriculture accounts for 79%⁴⁴ of water withdrawals. Across the Colorado River Basin, 43%⁴⁵ of agricultural water use is sourced from the Colorado River.
 - ◆ Between 2000 and 2014, annual Colorado River flows averaged 19% below the 1906–1999 average, the worst 15-year drought on record. Approximately one-third of the flow loss is due to high temperatures now common in the basin, a result of human caused climate change.⁴⁶
 - ◆ The Colorado River alone drives a \$1.4 trillion dollar economy and 16 million jobs annually, sustaining over 35 million people, including one-third of the nation's Latinos.⁴⁷
- There are 2.5 - 3 million farmworkers in the United States — whose livelihoods depend on agricultural production, water availability, and workable temperatures — 80% of whom are Latino.⁴⁸



PUBLIC OPINION

- 82% of Latinos see climate change as a threat to water supply — more than any other demographic group.⁴⁹
- 70% of Latino voters in the west perceive long term drought as a threat.⁴⁹
- 71% of Latino voters perceive pollution of rivers, lakes and streams and 68% perceive pollution of drinking water supplies as threats.⁴⁹ Fossil fuel extraction and production, wildfires, drought, and air pollution can all contribute to poor water quality and water pollution.
- 88% of Latinos believe that cuts to funding for protections for water quality is a serious problem.⁵⁰



ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE:

WILDFIRES

Our nation's greenhouse gas emissions and resulting climate change are leading to higher temperatures, record-setting heat waves, and drier and more arid conditions in the Southwest. These conditions matched with underfunded forest management and more people living in fire-prone areas has led to more severe wildfires that impact more people. Since 2000, an average of 73,200 wildfires burned an average of 6.9 million acres, a figure which has nearly doubled the average annual acreage burned in the 1990s (3.3 million acres). In 2017, wildfires burned 10 million acres.⁵¹

These conditions are having severe consequences on public health and access to services, job security, and economic productivity. Latino communities are more vulnerable to experiencing these wildfire impacts and Latino voters are not only aware of these impacts, but are ready for Congress to take action to address climate change, provide more funding for forest management, and ensure communities have access to the services they need to respond to wildfires and have the resources to plan and adapt before and rebuild after a wildfire disaster.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO LATINO COMMUNITIES?

ACCESS & HEALTH

- Breathing in smoke can have immediate health effects, including: coughing, trouble breathing normally, stinging eyes, a scratchy throat, runny nose, irritated sinuses, wheezing and shortness of breath, chest pain, headaches, an asthma attack, tiredness, and a fast heartbeat. Extended or over exposure to fire smoke can lead to aggravated chronic heart, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), bronchitis and pneumonia.⁵²
- In 2015, 19.5% of the Latino population was not covered by health insurance, as compared to 6.3% of the white population that is uninsured, which means Latinos are less likely to have access to healthcare services to prevent and treat these health threats caused by wildfires and resulting air pollution.⁵³
- The socioeconomic vulnerability to wildfires and potential for land to burn correlate with places with high Latino populations. Latinos, African-Americans, and Native Americans experience a 50% greater vulnerability to wildfire than other census tracts. These socioeconomic vulnerabilities and lack of resources

turn hazards into disasters and drastically reduce the ability for these communities to prepare and recover from wildfires.⁵⁴

- A Duke University report outlines the barriers and challenges experienced by Latino and immigrant communities dealing with disasters:⁵⁵
 - ◆ Lack of inclusion of all community members in disaster planning
 - ◆ Linguistic barriers in disaster preparedness and response
 - ◆ Lack of readily available translated and understandable preparedness materials
 - ◆ Lack of easily accessible translated emergency alerts
 - ◆ Lack of translated signage and culturally sensitive bilingual/multilingual service providers
 - ◆ Lack of cultural competence by service providers
 - ◆ Failure to inform immigrants of their right to disaster aid
 - ◆ Failure to address fears of deportation and public charge and distrust of government
 - ◆ Discrimination and racial profiling leading to exclusion of individuals from shelters and aid and inquiries about immigration status
 - ◆ Lack of transportation assistance (especially for migrant workers)
 - ◆ Unclear process for responding to loss of documents (by USCIS)
 - ◆ Failure to acknowledge structural inequities and different social structures in diverse, rural communities
 - ◆ Lack of coordination between different government agencies and tiers in disaster response.

JOBS & ECONOMY

- In 2017, 63% of the nationwide acreage burned by wildfires was on federal lands (6.3 million acres). The other 37% of the acreage burned occurred on state, local, or privately owned lands. Wildfires on public and private lands have direct consequences for recreation and tourism, tax revenue, and communities across the country, including Latinos.⁵⁶
 - ◆ The outdoor recreation economy generates \$887 billion in consumer spending and 7.6 million jobs, \$65.3 billion in federal tax revenue, and \$59.2 billion in state and local tax revenue.⁵⁷



- ◆ 94% of Latinos see public lands, such as national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas as an “essential part” of the economies in these states.⁵⁸
- In 2017 alone, the federal fire fighting suppression costs totaled \$2,918,165,000.⁵⁹ Federal suppression costs accounts for approximately 8% of total wildfire costs.
 - ◆ Overall, short-term expenses such as relief aid, evacuation services, and home and property loss comprise around 35% of total wildfire costs.⁶⁰
 - ◆ Related costs from long-term damages, which can take years to fully manifest, account for approximately 65% of total wildfire costs, which states, local entities, individuals and businesses primarily bear in damages and costs due to ecosystem degradation, loss of recreation and tourism economies, depreciated property values, lost taxes and business, and landscape rehabilitation.⁶¹
 - ◆ 12 million Americans are socially vulnerable to wildfires. In other words, a wildfire event could be devastating. Wildfire vulnerability is spread disproportionately across race and ethnicity, with census tracts that were majority African-American, Latino or Native American experiencing 50% greater vulnerability to wildfire compared to other census tracts.
 - ◆ Wildfires since 1984 have affected nearly 6 million people, directly caused over 1,900 deaths, and generated more than \$52 billion in economic costs.⁶²
 - ◆ Communities in lower-income brackets and communities of color tend to live in the most vulnerable housing and lack adequate resources to take loss-reduction and evacuation measures.
 - ◆ Many low-income families are uninsured, and low-income families that rent their homes are reliant on landlords or public housing agencies to enact structural loss prevention measures.
 - ◆ In California, for example, many individuals in rural areas, low-income neighborhoods, and immigrant communities do not have access to the resources necessary to pay for insurance, rebuilding, or continual investment in fire safety, thereby increasing their vulnerability to wildfire. These disparities became very clear after the 2017 wildfires in Sonoma County, California, where price gouging on rentals worsened an already dire housing shortage.⁶³

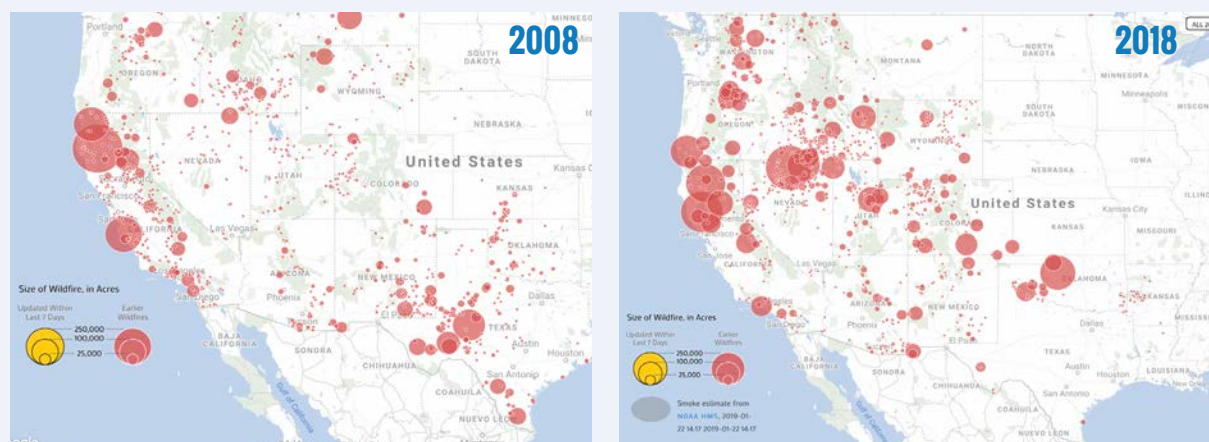
PUBLIC OPINION

- 67% of Latino voters in the West think wildfires are more of a problem now than 10 years ago, 41% of whom attribute this to climate change, 33% to drought, and 28% to more people living in fire prone areas.⁶⁴
- 41% of Latino voters in the West think uncontrollable wildfires that threaten homes and property is either an extremely or very serious problem in their state.⁶⁵
- 87% of Latino voters, compared to 84% of total voters, think it is either extremely or very important to fund forest management to prevent catastrophic wildfires.⁶⁶

THE SPREAD OF WILDFIRES

COMPARING WILDFIRES AND SIZE BETWEEN 2008 AND 2018.

MAPS PROVIDED BY ECO WEST
[HTTPS://VIS.ECOWEST.ORG](https://vis.ecowest.org)



ENDNOTES

- ¹ <https://hispanicfederation.org/images/pdf/healthylatinolo.pdf>
- ² <https://hispanicfederation.org/images/pdf/healthylatinolo.pdf>
- ³ <https://www.tpl.org/sites/default/files/cloud.tpl.org/pubs/benefits-park-benefits-white-paper12005.pdf>
- ⁴ <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/nuestro-futuro-climate-change-latinos-report.pdf>
- ⁵ <https://www.coloradocollege.edu/other/stateoftherockies/conservationinthewest/2012/>
- ⁶ <https://outdoorindustry.org/advocacy/>
- ⁷ <https://www.coloradocollege.edu/other/stateoftherockies/conservationinthewest/2012/>
- ⁸ <https://www.hcn.org/issues/48.14/why-has-the-national-park-service-gotten-whiter>
- ⁹ <https://www.coloradocollege.edu/other/stateoftherockies/conservationinthewest/2012/>
- ¹⁰ <https://www.coloradocollege.edu/other/stateoftherockies/conservationinthewest/2012/>
- ¹¹ <https://outdoorindustry.org/advocacy/>
- ¹² <https://www.coloradocollege.edu/other/stateoftherockies/conservationinthewest/index.html>
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- ¹⁴ <https://outdoorindustry.org/advocacy/>
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- ¹⁷ <https://www.lung.org/assets/documents/research/asthma-in-hispanics-english.pdf>
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- ¹⁹ <https://www.momscleanairforce.org/ecomadres/>
- ²⁰ <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=3&lvlid=64>
- ²¹ <https://www.lung.org/assets/documents/research/asthma-in-hispanics-english.pdf>
- ²² <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2017/hispanic-heritage.html>
- ²³ http://priceofoil.org/content/uploads/2017/10/OCL_US-Fossil-Fuel-Subs-2015-16_Final_Oct2017.pdf
- ²⁴ <https://www.coloradocollege.edu/dotAsset/ba179e0c-886d-47f2-82ed-ee2865foa6f4.pdf>
- ²⁵ http://www.greenforall.org/latinos_lead_the_way_in_the_green_economy
- ²⁶ <http://bit.ly/2WJnImF>
- ²⁷ http://www.greenforall.org/latinos_lead_the_way_in_the_green_economy
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- ³² <https://www.coloradocollege.edu/dotAsset/g819da94-f03e-4527-9bob-1f38614e6438.pdf>
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- ⁵² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29272827>
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- ⁵⁴ <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0205825>
- ⁵⁵ <http://bit.ly/2Sg6rCU>
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- ⁵⁷ https://outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/OIA_RecEconomy_FINAL_Single.pdf
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- ⁶⁰ <https://headwaterseconomics.org/wp-content/uploads/full-wildfire-costs-report.pdf>
- ⁶¹ <https://headwaterseconomics.org/wp-content/uploads/full-wildfire-costs-report.pdf>
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- ⁶⁶ <https://www.coloradocollege.edu/other/stateoftherockies/conservationinthewest/topicreports/latino-voters.html>

ABOUT HAF

Hispanic Access Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that connects Latinos with partners and opportunities improving lives and creating an equitable society. Our vision is that all Hispanics throughout the U.S. enjoy good physical health, a healthy natural environment, a quality education, economic success and civic engagement in their communities with the sum improving the future of America. For more information, visit www.hispanicaccess.org.

HAF was actively involved in elevating the Latino community's voice around the Browns Canyon, San Gabriel Mountains, Boulder-White Clouds, Sand to Snow, Mojave Trails, and Castle Mountains National Monument efforts. Additionally, HAF has launched the initiatives Por la Creación Faith-based Alliance, which unites Latino faith leaders around the protection of God's creation and creating tomorrow's environmental stewards, and Latino Conservation Week, which includes more than 150 conservation and outdoor-related events across the country.



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