

## National Hispanic Environmental Council



### **STATEMENT BY ROGER RIVERA, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL HISPANIC ENVIR. COUNCIL**

Today the National Hispanic Environmental Council (NHEC) announced its strong support for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's new proposed standard designed to cut carbon emissions from power plants by up to 30 percent by 2030.

Roger Rivera, NHEC President, stated "NHEC strongly supports EPA's new standard, which is urgently needed. Latinos have long been distinctly and disproportionately impacted by carbon pollution, especially from coal fired power plants. Today's new standard is a major step forward in protecting the health of Latino communities nationwide, but especially those most vulnerable -- our children and elderly".

Except for the deniers, climate change -- and the resulting climate justice challenge -- is here, is real, and is increasing. From extreme drought, to extreme weather, to frequent wildfires and more -- the economic, social, and health impacts are clear and mounting.

Numerous studies over the last decade have shown the strikingly harmful effects from airborne carbon pollution on Americans -- but in particular our nation's 50 million Latinos. Over 50% of Hispanics live in areas that do not meet the federal government's safe air quality standards; 7 out of the 25 most polluted U.S. cities have a Latino population over 40 percent; and Latinos are approximately 33% of the residents of the 10 worst polluted U.S. cities.

Carbon based air pollution causes or exacerbates respiratory and pulmonary illness, and it especially worsens asthma, which is a scourge for Latinos. Over 2 million Latinos have asthma, and Latino children are 60% more likely to have asthma than non-white children. And according to the CDC, for Puerto Rican children living in Puerto Rico the asthma rate was 30%, with a death rate 2.5 times higher than on the mainland.

The new EPA standard is backed by hard science, uses sound metrics, and gives states common-sense, practical flexibility to meet its energy, industrial, and regulatory objectives. And since power plants are the largest source -- almost 40% -- of the nation's carbon emissions, the standard is rightfully directed at the sector most responsible.

EPA's carbon pollution standard is a critically needed tool to safeguard the health and well-being of millions of Latinos. It will also help significantly address the environmental and climate justice challenges facing our community. NHEC strongly supports it and will work with our fellow Latino organizations towards its successful implementation.

NHEC is an advocacy, policy, and programmatic organization. Founded in 1998 and with almost 4,000 members across the country, NHEC is the oldest and largest national Latino environmental **and** natural resource organization in the country.

NHEC seeks to educate, engage and empower our community on environmental and conservation issues; encourage Latinos to preserve and protect our environment; and provide an advocacy voice for Latinos before government and green group decision-makers. We operate programs that accomplish this mission, and furthers our guiding credo: “**...because it’s our environment too**”.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Roger Rivera  
703-683-3956 or

Juan Rodriguez  
703-861-6064