

Brown Girl Surf • Conservación ConCiencia • Corazón Latino • EcoMadres • GreenLatinos • Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities • Hispanic Federation • Hispanics In Philanthropy • Latino Outdoors • League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) • MANA, A National Latina Organization • Mi Familia Vota • National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts • National Hispanic Media Coalition • National Latinx Psychological Association • Responsible Alpha • Rio Grande International Study Center (RGISC) • Sachamama • Suazo Business Center • UNIDOSUS Action Fund

For Immediate Release - August 5, 2022

Press Contact: Edder Diaz-Martinez, edderdiazmartinez@greenlatinos.org

The Climate and Energy Provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 Bring Promise and Concern to Latino/a/x Communities

The undersigned Latino/a/x organizations and individuals sign onto the following statement regarding the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022

Washington, DC - This week, the Senate is scheduled to vote on passage of the *Inflation Reduction Act of 2022* (IRA) – including \$369 billion in Climate Change, Environmental Justice, and Energy programs.

The negotiation of the IRA comes after decades of tireless advocacy from environmental justice communities, climate organizations, and many others advocating for the need to pass a substantial climate crisis package that will halve U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 to avert irreversible climate catastrophe that disproportionately impacts Latino/a/x communities and other communities of color.

For generations, Latinos/as/xs have been at the frontline of environmental injustice, disproportionately exposed to toxic pollution from power plants, highways, ports, and other industrial facilities concentrated in our communities, compromising the health and wellbeing of Latino/a/x families. We recognize Majority Leader Schumer for his efforts to negotiate a climate package agreement which includes many historic investments over the next decade that will meaningfully improve the lives of Latino/a/x *comunidades*. The investments include provisions for clean air, clean transportation, drought response and preparedness, cleanup of toxic pollution, boosting community clean energy development, instating low-income electric vehicle tax credits for new and used vehicles, expanding air pollution monitoring, charging fees to oil and gas companies emitting methane, purchasing zero-emission port equipment, and investing in coastal restoration projects. Also critical for Latino/a/x communities are provisions that make health coverage and prescription drugs more affordable and increase corporate tax minimums, ensuring the wealthy are paying their fair share.

Along with all the positive items included in the package, there are significant and deeply concerning trade-offs, with handouts given to the fossil fuel industry, many of whom are experiencing record breaking profits at the expense of cash-strapped consumers. Included in the IRA are provisions requiring the Interior Department to make 2 million acres of our public lands and 60 million acres of offshore waters available for oil and gas leasing each year for a decade. This would lock us into more fossil fuel production – a primary driver of climate change and a major contributor to local pollution, poisoning communities of color.

This is especially concerning for our comunidades. Latinos/as/xs in the U.S. are [165%](#) more likely to live in counties with unhealthy levels of particulate matter pollution, and [48%](#) of Latinos/as/xs in the U.S. live in counties that frequently violate ground-level ozone standards. 1.81 million Latinos/as/xs in the U.S. live within a half-mile of an oil or gas facility, with increased exposure to pollutants from oil and gas air pollution. Instead of ambitiously cutting fossil fuel production and deployment, the IRA relies on development of additional hydrogen production, carbon capture and nuclear energy to get to the estimated 40% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. These are not optimal nor community-first pathways to achieving our climate - or equity - goals.

It is critical for the Biden Administration to continue doing everything in their authority to pursue executive action to make up for the shortcomings in this bill including freezing new oil and gas permits and denying new federal permits for fossil fuel infrastructure. We also call on the Administration and Congress to finally codify environmental protections for frontline EJ communities by passing The Environmental Justice for All Act.

As an active comunidad of Latino/a/x ambientalistas, we assert that any meaningful action to address the climate crisis must also address our disproportionate issues including: climate migration, language access to information, immigrant access to benefits, environmental racism, and the significant historical trauma brought on by the centuries of environmental injustice suffered by Latino/a/x *comunidades* and other communities of color. As we take stock of this moment, GreenLatinos, and the undersigned organizations, commit to further educating our community about this landmark proposal while reaffirming our commitment to protecting our land, water, ocean, air, and *cultura* to achieve our environmental liberation.

Felipe Benitez, Executive Director and Founder, Corazón Latino

“Families across the country are experiencing an aggregation of emergencies from medical to climate disasters and now serious inflation. It is an enormous relief that Congress has agreed to a much-needed line of defense against ongoing health, financial, and climate catastrophes through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). We expect for the provisions of this legislation to change lives by centering our needs as well as by honoring Madre Tierra. The environmental investments included in the IRA are especially critical to long term sustainability of our ecosystems and the quality of life for our next generations. We believe that when we take care of our Madre Tierra, she will take care of us. We must continue to act with urgency to tackle the climate crisis.”

Corolina Pena-Alarcon, Manager, Ecomadres

“Moms Clean Air Force Program, EcoMadres support this statement on the Budget Reconciliation: Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and its provisions for climate, energy and our communities. Latinos and communities of color bear a disproportionate burden from climate impacts and are living on the front lines of the climate crisis. We join GreenLatinos in urging Congress to move quickly to get the IRA passed. Our families and communities need these fiscally responsible investments to advance environmental justice, create jobs and help revitalize rural economies now and for the future.”

Mark Magaña, Founding President & CEO, GreenLatinos

“For too long Latino/a/x communities have borne the brunt of environmental injustices—from living in heavily polluted areas caused by fossil fuel industries to being on the frontlines of climate disasters caused by the climate crisis. The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 has historical investments for frontline environmental justice communities, clean energy, transportation, coastal restoration, and drought preparedness that we desperately need in order to act on climate change, but it is time to stop investing in polluting fossil fuel industries and false solutions that harm the health of our Latino families and communities. We will continue to fight for our communities to be liberated from disproportionate environmental burdens, free to breathe fresh air, drink pure water, access clean transportation, and enjoy our majestic public lands, ocean, and waters. Adelante!”

Laura M. Esquivel, Vice President of Federal Policy and Advocacy, Hispanic Federation

“We commend Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, climate organizations, and all our allies who tirelessly negotiated for the introduction of this bill. For decades now, Latinx communities have been at the forefront of climate disasters and environmental injustice, having been disproportionately exposed to pollution from various industrial facilities, which impact the health and wellbeing of Latinx and their families. Through this historic bill, our Latinx communities will receive affordable health care, lower prescription drugs, and affordable clean energy, bringing us closer to climate equity. Yet, we recognize that this bill came at a trade-off for fossil fuel production – the major contributor to climate change and toxic pollution that poisons our communities. We call on President Biden to use his executive authority to address the shortcomings of this bill and other issues that disproportionately impact our Latinx communities, including immigration reform and social safety-net benefits for territories like Puerto Rico. We urge the Biden administration and Congress to pass the Environmental Justice for All Act, to codify environmental protections for all communities.”

Luis Villa, Executive Director, Latino Outdoors

“While some provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act attempt to bring us closer to a just and sustainable future, others maintain the status quo. As a country and society, we have to do better. Spinning our wheels is no longer an option. We have to change our discourse and actions from being squarely focused on a growth economy to being aimed at championing a restoration economy.”

Katara Burrola, Colorado Environmental Organizer, Mi Familia Vota

“Environmental racism is no secret. Many BIPOC communities are standing together for justice and reparations. Finally, the IRA is here; its climate investments being a major step towards the healing of our gente and our Grandmother Earth. Though the fight carries on and we must argue against tradeoffs and payouts to the fossil fuel industry that cause much of this harm, we are looking forward to an equitable clean and green future because we won't give up until it is fully realized. Juntos lo haremos!”

Felix Sanchez, Chair & Co-Founder, National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts

“Marginalized communities suffer most when the environment is not protected, they are greatly impacted by regressive tax policies and the high cost of medical treatment and prescription drugs, which is why this bill must be urgently passed”

Art Motta, National Director of Policy and Legislation, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

“The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) believes in improving the quality of Latino lives through environmental sustainability and conservation for our community through strong enforcement of existing public health and environmental laws, expanding research on the long-term impacts of pollutants, and preparing Latinos for green jobs and opportunities in the energy sector. It requires us to hold our government accountable for the meaningful engagement of our community in the development, implementation, investment, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies at every level.”

Adriana Dominique Guerrero, Executive Director, Brown Girl Surf

Gladys Delgadillo, Climate Organizer, Center for Biological Diversity

Raimundo Espinoza, Executive Director, Conservación ConCiencia

Lena Rodriguez, SVP, & Government Relations, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)

Ana Marie Argilagos, President and CEO, Hispanics in Philanthropy

Amy Hinojosa, President & CEO, MANA, A National Latina Organization

Brenda Victoria Castillo, President & CEO, National Hispanic Media Coalition

Oscar Rojas Perez, Ph.D., Senior Advisor on Public Policy, National Latinx Psychological Association

Gabriel Thoumi, CEO, Responsible Alpha

Tricia Cortez, Executive Director, Rio Grande International Study Center (RGISC)

Silvia E Castro, President and CEO, Suazo Business Center

Jackie Nuñez, Founder, The Last Plastic Straw

Rafael Collazo, Executive Director, UNIDOSUS Action Fund

Carlos Zegarra, Executive Director, Sachamama