

My name is Jackie Weidman and I will be testifying on behalf of Nicole Hernandez Hammer, who unfortunately couldn't be here today. I'd like to request that the following comments be submitted for the official record:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments. My name is Nicole Hernandez Hammer. I am the Assistant Director of climate change research for the Florida Center for Environmental Studies and a Latino outreach consultant for the Union of Concerned Scientists.

As a sea level rise researcher, I work to better understand the causes and impacts of sea level rise on coastal regions of the United States. As a Latina, I'm particularly interested in what the sea level rise implications are for U.S. Hispanic communities.

We know that most of the amount of sea level rise we have seen over the last 100 years is a direct cause of human induced climate change. And we know that the primary cause of climate change is carbon pollution, and the primary source of carbon pollution is fossil-fuel fired power plants. That's why the proposed standards we are discussing today are so important. When they are finalized, they will put the first-ever national limits on the amount of carbon pollution that power plants can emit, and that will be a big step toward protecting our communities from the damage caused by climate change – including sea level rise.

Sea level rise is one of the many impacts of climate change and it poses severe consequences for many communities across the country. Sea level rise is linked to polluted water, loss of land and

fiercer storms. There is a lot of information on which places will be underwater in the next 20, 40 and 80+ years, and the projections are grim.

Nationally, there are efforts underway to figure out what kind of people are most at risk to sea level rise: are they rich or poor? young or old?

So far, though, there is little information on what sea level rise means for Latinos. But I have compared Climate Central's list of the most vulnerable U.S. locations to sea level rise and noticed they all had something in common — I have family in these places: New York, California, North Carolina, Florida, and Texas. Comparing the Climate Central list to the 2010 census report, I discovered that these are the same places that have the largest and/or fastest growing Hispanic communities in the country.

For example, according to a 2008 report from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Miami is the number one most economically vulnerable place to sea level rise in the world. Its population also happens to be close to 70% Hispanic.

I grew up in Southeast Florida. It is where I've chosen to work and raise my family. It's a wonderful place that I am lucky to call home. For us, sea level rise is not just a future threat. We are already seeing impacts now. Cities in our region have lost drinking water wells to saltwater contamination and as a result are drilling new wells inland; there are hundreds of millions of dollars being spent on projects to manage the ever growing frequency of urban flooding during seasonal high tides and projected billions to be spent in the next 20 years; mayors and city officials are meeting to learn more about the issue and to gather resources and tools to adapt to these problems. And at times, there has even been discussion on how to manage retreat from

urban areas that, in the next 30 - 50 years, may be unsalvageable from permanent inundation. My colleagues in other coastal states have similar stories of urgent adaptation needs. We are dealing with the impacts of what ultimately amounts to bad choices, weak policies and soft regulations, that have exacerbated the problem of climate change and now the consequences are at our front door. But there is still a narrow window of time for us to make the right choices, take responsibility and act to mitigate carbon emissions. The best way to do that is to finalize the proposed standards for power plants that we're discussing today, and place the first-ever national limits on pollution that power plants can emit.

As Hispanics, we are paying close attention to this issue because we know that our communities will suffer disproportionately. Because of the rate of sea level rise and the severity of its consequences the immediate future of our local economies, public health and natural resources all hang in the balance.

Many Hispanics, like me, are first-generation immigrants and understand the sacrifices that are required when starting a new life in a new country. These are sacrifices that we gladly make to provide a better life for ourselves and our families. But while we work to build a future, the looming threat of sea level rise is endangering what we are working so hard for. As our leaders, we rely on you to take all possible steps to mitigate this threat. We know that these hard choices can't be put off any longer and that what that these choices will determine what kind of future we leave for the next generation.

As a Hispanic American who cares about clean air, public health, and climate change, I urge you to finalize strong carbon standards that reduce carbon pollution from power plants. Thank you for taking this significant next step to tackle climate change and protect our air, health, and economy.