

EPA Listening Session on Carbon Pollution Standards for Existing Fossil Fuel Power Plants

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Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Lucía Oliva Hennelly and I am here on behalf of the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), a non-partisan environmental organization with more than 750,000 members nationwide. EDF is dedicated to working toward innovative, cost-effective solutions to environmental problems, building on a foundation of sound science, economics, and law.

I am also here on behalf of a community of which I am a part: the rising Latino generation, the fastest growing young demographic in the country. Raised as a bilingual, bicultural native of Santa Fe, New Mexico—the state with the highest percentage of Latino population, nearly 50 percent—I am here today to support EPA in regulating carbon pollution from existing power plants. I urge EPA to issue the strongest possible standards, to safeguard the futures of communities like my own.

Each month, 50,000 Latinos turn 18. At 18, I had just graduated from high school with several years of soccer at Santa Fe's 7,000-foot elevation under my belt. I was on my way to college, and would go on to complete a Master's of Science in an interdisciplinary environmental sciences program.

Here's what my story doesn't include. Latinos are more likely than others to suffer illnesses associated with exposure to air pollutants, like asthma and chronic bronchitis. Many of the people here today will testify to the health impacts of carbon pollution on communities around the country, but the Latino community is one of the hardest hit: our community members are 30 percent more likely to suffer from asthma than non-Hispanic whites¹ and well over one-third of Latinos live within 30 miles of a power plant.² You don't play soccer safely at high elevation when you have asthma, and you certainly can't concentrate properly on your school work when you can't breathe. Carbon pollution from existing power plants is the largest source of carbon pollution in the country, and one of the largest sources in the world.

¹ *2013 National Latinos and the Environment Survey: Executive Summary*. Sierra Club and National Council of La Raza. <http://www.sierraclub.org/ecocentro/survey/2012%20Latinos%20and%20the%20Environment%20Survey_Exec%20Summary_English.pdf>. (last visited 6 Nov. 2013).

² *US Latinos and Air Pollution: A Call to Action*. Natural Resources Defense Council. <<http://www.nrdc.org/air/files/LatinoAirReport.pdf>>. Sep. 2011. (Last visited 6 Nov. 2013).

This is why I am here today, to support EPA in regulating carbon pollution from existing power plants with the strongest possible rules.

Carbon pollution is also a leading cause of global climate change, the impacts of which affect our communities, Latino communities, more and more each year. One expected climate impact in the U.S. is more smog in areas with poor air quality, translating to more asthma attacks for our young people. In states like my home state of New Mexico, with large Latino populations, climate change is exacerbating already stressful water shortages and contributing to some of the largest and deadliest wildfires in our nation's history³. Our Latino communities need EPA to regulate existing power plants and curb carbon pollution. Our lives are depending on it.

When one community bears a greater share of these burdens than do others, these issues transcend health and climate concerns and become issues of social and environmental justice. The vast majority of our Latino communities support government action to limit carbon pollution, and we support "more energy from clean sources."⁴ This is why I am here today, to support EPA in regulating carbon pollution from existing power plants by issuing the strongest possible standards. Latinos represent one in three American 18-year-olds. What's at stake is the health and the success of a rising generation.

We look forward to the EPA taking action to ensure the health and security that will come from achieving significant reductions to carbon pollution, and thank you for your consideration.

³ Easterling et al. *Warming and Earlier Spring Increase U.S. Forest Wildfire Activity*. *Science*. <<https://www.sciencemag.org/content/313/5789/940.full>>. 6 Jul. 2006. (Last visited 6 Nov 2013).

⁴ *2012 National Latinos and the Environment Survey: Executive Summary*. Sierra Club and National Council of La Raza. <http://www.sierraclub.org/ecocentro/survey/2012%20Latinos%20and%20the%20Environment%20Survey_Exec%20Summary_English.pdf>. (Last visited 6 Nov. 2013).