

## **Congresswoman Sylvia R. Garcia Remarks** **Interior Subcommittee on Appropriations**

Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you Chairwoman Pingree, Ranking Member Joyce, and committee members for having me here today to share my Fiscal Year 2023 Appropriations priorities. I am proud to represent Texas' 29<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, which includes Houston, South Houston, Pasadena, Jacinto City, and Galena Park. My district is about 78% Latino. The average yearly household income is about \$48,000. And about 1/3 of my district is uninsured. For my district, environmental issues are social justice issues. They are racial justice issues. In the last decade, a slew of chemical and natural disasters have impacted the air quality of the Greater Houston area. Additionally, Harris County residents struggle with air quality control and air monitoring due to high amounts of ozone pollution and smog. For example, air monitors uncovered usually high levels of a cancer-causing chemical, formaldehyde, in Houston in 2021. My community has made great strides to monitor air quality more closely and more equitably--through local community, state, federal, and private initiatives. Increasing the number of air monitors is one step in the right direction, so that we can ensure communities of color are not disproportionately impacted by poor air quality and we can hold bad actors accountable. But more needs to be done. That is why I am proud to champion a request this year among my colleagues for strong, robust funding for FY23 Clean Air programs. Specifically, I am asking the committee, and my colleagues, to robustly fund the **Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) State and Tribal Assistance Grants Programs.** The EPA State and Tribal Grants program offers a variety of clean water and clean air initiatives. My letter asks for strong funding for this program, specifically for air monitoring and pollution abatement programs. This funding would greatly help communities like mine, across the country, that have long been underserved. Everyone deserves the right to breathe clean air. These monitors can mitigate the harmful pollution that leads to poor health outcomes, higher healthcare costs, and potential long-term disabilities and illness that prevent people from working. I am proud to see that the committee prioritized strong funding for this program last year, after I sent a solo request letter about this. This year, my Congressional colleagues are joining me in the request. We already have a handful of cosigners, and I sincerely hope the committee once again prioritizes funding for this critical program that benefits everyone, but in particular, communities like mine—low or middle income and racially and ethnically diverse. These communities have been the victims of environmental injustice for decades, and we must do better. Thank you for consideration of these requests. I sincerely appreciate the time and the hard work of the Committee as you consider Member priorities while drafting the FY23 Appropriations bills. I am happy to answer any questions you might have, and I yield any remaining time.