



February 14, 2022

The Honorable Raul Grijalva  
Chairman  
Natural Resources Committee  
US House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman  
Ranking Member  
Natural Resources Committee  
US House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Westerman:

We write in support of the Environmental Justice for All Act (H.R. 2021). While we know that some progress has been made, we must acknowledge the reality of the present: Brown, Black, and Indigenous communities are still disproportionately affected by environmental and climate catastrophes facing our country. This is particularly unjust given that we had the least to do with creating them.

Our communities cannot wait, we need action to achieve our environmental liberation as soon as possible.

We know that the Environmental Justice for All Act is rooted in the moral principle that all people have the right to pure air, clean water, and an environment that enriches life. As participants in providing extensive community feedback on the initial draft, we are proud that this legislation is informed by the belief that federal policy can and should seek to achieve environmental justice, health equity, and climate justice for all communities.

We are heartened to see that the Environmental Justice for All Act amends and strengthens Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. We are enthused that this will prohibit discrimination based on disparate impact and will permit private citizens, residents, and organizations to seek legal remedy when faced with discrimination.

The core mission of GreenLatinos is to bring about racial and social justice for all communities through environmental liberation. We advocate for an equitable world that delivers clean, reliable, and affordable water; clean air that doesn't choke the lungs of the most vulnerable; and access to the beauty of our parks and coastlines and ocean for all to enjoy equitably. It is evident that the climate crisis and environmental degradation are causing a rapidly escalating breakdown in civil and human rights, threatening our basic life-sustaining needs, including access to fresh air, clean water, healthy food, adequate health care, and shelter in our communities. Any real solution to addressing this crisis will demand the unprecedented transformation of every sector of the global economy over the next decade.

### ***Water Equity***

GreenLatinos supports the provisions in the Environmental Justice For All Act that increase access to clean water for drinking, recreation, economic stability and for community health. We also believe that clean and healthy water is vital to a healthy environment. Water is a human right



and unfortunately our communities have access in disproportionate ways. As such we are pleased to see that the Environmental Justice For All Act enhances the permitting decisions under the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act. This will help ensure that permits will not be issued if the project cannot demonstrate a reasonable certainty of no harm to human health.

### ***Equitable Access and Communication***

Our communities have long been excluded from providing input into the federal environmental process. Urgently needed action on climate change and environmental justice in an equitable manner can only be achieved if we center the voices of those most impacted. That is why we are so pleased to see that the Environmental Justice For All Act ensures that federal agencies include diverse communities in public health research, data collection, and analysis. It also requires federal agencies to provide early and meaningful community involvement opportunities under NEPA when proposing an action affecting an environmental justice community. In addition, we are pleased that the act ensures robust Tribal representation throughout the NEPA process for an activity that could impact an Indian Tribe, including activities impacting off-reservation lands and sacred sites.

### ***Public Lands and Ocean***

Public Lands and Ocean are often seen as a defining feature of our nation's character. Throughout our history, exclusion, oppression, and injustices have traditionally shaped the operations of policies of land and ocean management agencies and have created real barriers of access to all overlooked communities. Latinx, Hispano, indio-hispano, communities from across the nation all have deep-rooted connections to land and ocean that define our culture and sense of place. As such we are excited to see that the Environmental Justice For All Act supports more equitable access to parks and recreational opportunities, prioritizing projects and recreational opportunities that benefit urban neighborhoods and underserved communities.

### ***Climate and Clean Air***

The public health crisis that wreaks havoc on our communities along with the climate crisis causes severe diseases like respiratory illness, cardiovascular disease, and shorter life span. Studies show that Latinx children in the U.S. are twice as likely as non-Latinx whites to die from asthma attacks. Nearly one third of Latino children live in counties where hazardous air pollutant concentrations exceed a 1 in 10,000 cancer risk level. GreenLatinos is heartened to see that the Environmental Justice for All Act authorizes \$75 million annually for grants to support research, education, outreach, development, and implementation of projects to address environmental and public health issues in environmental justice communities, including programs that improve the air frontline communities breathe and with it, boosts quality of life.

The climate crisis is already impacting Latino communities across the country. Latino communities want to see action taken to protect their health and mitigate the climate crisis. In fact, 86% of Latinx people support carbon pollution limits on power plants – a key driver of climate change. In this context, the Environmental Justice For All Act's establishment of a Federal Energy Transition Economic Development Assistance Fund is critical to our environmental liberation. Using



revenues from new fees on the oil, gas, and coal industries to support communities and workers as they transition away from greenhouse gas-dependent economies is a smart way forward.

For all these reasons, GreenLatinos is proud to support the Environmental Justice for All Act. We urge all House Committees with jurisdiction over this legislation to support it as well and to act expeditiously to bring this important bill to the House floor. Thank you for your attention.

Mark Magaña  
Founding President and CEO  
GreenLatinos