



League of United Latin American Citizens

January 17, 2017

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United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the nation's oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization, I write to express strong opposition to the nomination of Oklahoma Attorney General, Scott Pruitt to serve as the next Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). At a time when the country is threatened by the severe effects of climate change, including record-breaking droughts, floods, extreme hot and cold temperatures, as well as increased severe weather phenomena, we need a strong leader who will take the warranted aggressive action to pursue policies that will protect our country's health and environmental future.

Latino support for aggressive action to combat climate change has been well documented over the years. The latest data come from a Latino Decisions poll conducted in November 2016. That report showed that over 72 percent of Latinos in key states believe that it is very important for the next President and Congress to act on climate. Besides the overwhelming support to act on climate, the fact is that environmental degradation, exposure to toxic pollution, and the effects of climate change are arguably some of the greatest threats to the health and safety of millions of Latinos across the United States. According to research from the American Lung Association:

- Half of all U.S. Latinos live in the country's most polluted cities.
- Although Latinos only account for about 16 percent of the labor force, they account for 43 percent of ground/maintenance and construction workers and up to 75 percent of agricultural field occupations that expose workers to environmental health hazards.
- States such as California, Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico and Texas—where the majority of Latinos live—are experiencing more intense and frequent heat waves and drought.

These facts underscore the disproportionate impact that climate change is having on Latino communities and our sense of urgency to have a strong leader at the EPA who will take aggressive action on the environmental issues of concern to the Latino community. Unfortunately, LULAC does not believe Mr. Pruitt is the right person to lead the agency. As many of our other partners have noted, Mr. Pruitt has sued the EPA multiple times to fight against fundamental clean air and water protections. He denies the science on climate change and his record seems to indicate a complete disregard for the mission of the agency he is nominated to lead.

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Achieving environmental justice for our community means opposing efforts to undermine or repeal bedrock environmental laws, including the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and National Environmental Policy Act. It also means supporting strong enforcement of existing public health and environmental laws - including civil rights laws such as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act- protecting communities from toxic waste, banning neurotoxic pesticides and toxic chemicals that endanger the health and future of our families, expanding research on the health risks and long-term impacts associated with exposure to multiple environmental pollutants, pushing for green jobs, and increasing STEM programs that prepare Latinos for opportunities in the renewable energy sector.

We need a trusted partner at the Environmental Protection Agency who will fight side-by-side with civil rights organizations like LULAC to advance environmental justice. Mr. Pruitt falls far short of the champion our communities need and deserve for this fight. For these reasons, our organization strongly urges you to oppose his nomination to be the next Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

For more information, please have your staff contact Luis Torres, LULAC National Director of Policy and Legislation, by email at latorres@lulac.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger C. Rocha, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a distinct 'Jr.' at the end.

Roger C. Rocha, Jr.
LULAC National President