



## League of United Latin American Citizens

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April 17, 2015

National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC)  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW (MC-2201A)  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Chair May and Members of the NEJAC:

On behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the nation's oldest and largest Hispanic civil rights advocacy organization, I request that National Environmental Justice Advisory Council express its support for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Proposed rulemaking on the definition of "Waters of the United States" under the Clean Water Act (CWA), known as the Clean Water Protection Rule.

The Clean Water Protection Rule will restore critical protections under the Clean Water Act to many of our nation's streams and wetlands, ensuring that the drinking water sources of over 117 million Americans are protected from toxic pollution. The Clean Water Protection rulemaking is particularly relevant to Latino communities that live downstream from smaller and less protected upstream waters where potential for cumulative pollution places vulnerable Latino and other environmental justice communities at risk. More than half of Hispanic workers lack access to paid time off from work when they are ill. With many industrial pollution sources placed in stream and rivers in close proximity to economically disadvantaged and minority communities – Latino workers cannot afford to put their or their families' health at risk from lax enforcement of environmental protections like the Clean Water Act.

Issues related to access to clean water, air, land, and natural resources are of particular importance to LULAC. In 2009, the LULAC National Assembly approved an environmental justice resolution affirming our organization's commitment to advocating for policies that ensure that Latino communities are protected from *nuclear testing, and the extraction, production and disposal of toxic/ hazardous wastes and poisons that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water and food (full resolution attached to this letter.)*

The Clean Water Protection rule will end confusion over which waters are and are not protected under the Clean Water Act. The rule will increase certainty, improve enforcement of Clean Water Act violations, and better-protect the most vulnerable communities from water pollution, including Latinos and other underrepresented communities.

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LULAC asks that NEJAC support the Clean Water Protection rule, and advocate for a final rule with EPA on behalf of environmental justice communities – including many Latino communities. Our organization looks forward to working in partnership with NEJAC to ensure that all communities have access to safe, reliable, non-toxic waters to drink, swim, and enjoy.

If you should have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Luis Torres, LULAC National Director of Policy, at [latorres@lulac.org](mailto:latorres@lulac.org) or (202) 833-6130.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Moran". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Margaret" and last name "Moran" clearly legible.

Margaret Moran  
LULAC National President



## **Resolution - Declaration of the Principles of Environmental Justice and Environmental Bill of Rights in Latino Communities in the United States**

WHEREAS, The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is the nation's oldest and largest Latino Organization, founded in Corpus Christi, Texas on February 24, 1929; and

WHEREAS, throughout its history LULAC has committed itself to the principles that Latinos have equal access to opportunities in employment, education, housing and health care; and

WHEREAS, Environmental justice affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and right to be free from ecological destruction; and

WHEREAS, Environmental justice demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any of discrimination or bias; and

WHEREAS, **Environmental justice calls for universal protection from nuclear testing, and the extraction, production and disposal of toxic/ hazardous wastes and poisons that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water and food; and**

WHEREAS, Environmental justice demands the cessation of production of toxins, hazardous wastes, and radioactive material, and all past and current producers be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and containment at the point of production; and

WHEREAS, Environmental justice demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision making including needs assessments, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation; and

WHEREAS, Environmental justice protects the rights of victims of environmental injustice to receive full compensation and reparations for damages as well as quality health care; and

WHEREAS, Environmental justice affirms the need for urban and rural ecological policies to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring culture integrity of our communities, and providing fair access for all to the full range of resources; and

WHEREAS, Environmental justice calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experiences and an appreciation of our diverse perspectives; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the National League of United Latin American Citizens hereby declare the Principles of Environmental Justice and Environmental Bill of Rights for all Latino Communities in the United States: Right to Clean Industry, Right to Be Safe from Harmful Exposure, Right to Prevention, Right to Know, Right to Participate, Right to Protection and Enforcement; Right to Compensation, and Right to Clean up.

Approved this 18th day of July 2009.