

California Latinos Show Overwhelming Support for Protecting Public Lands and Addressing Climate Change

LOS ANGELES – A statewide survey of California voters, commissioned by the nonprofit Hispanic Access Foundation and conducted by David Binder Research, finds that even in the midst of economic challenges posed by the pandemic, an overwhelming majority of voters overall (89%) and Latino voters (92%) believe investments should still be made to protect California's land, water, and wildlife. The poll also found that Latino voter support for proposals to help achieve that investment and address the climate crisis outpaced that of the overall voting public.

"Latinos are continuing to show their strong support for climate action and concern in environmental issues affecting their communities," said Maite Arce, president and CEO of Hispanic Access Foundation. "Whether it's aimed at bringing new opportunities for conservation and climate or to fill the gaps that Latinos and other communities of color face in the outdoors and in the realm of environmental justice, this poll provides a clear message for the state's leaders."

California's Latino voters exhibited strong consensus behind proposals to conserve and protect the outdoors, as well as creating more equity in those efforts:

- 93 percent of Latinos support protecting public lands of historic, scientific, or scenic value as national monuments in California (compared to 92 percent of total)
- 87 percent of Latinos support creating new national parks, national monuments, national wildlife refuges, and tribal protected areas to protect historic sites or areas for outdoor recreation in California (compared to 82 percent of total)
- 85 percent of Latinos support setting a goal of conserving 30% of California's land and inland waters, and 30% of California's ocean areas by the year 2030 (compared to 74 percent of total)
- 83 percent of Latinos support dedicating funding to address air and water pollution in lower-income parts of California (compared to 72 percent of total)
- 82 percent of Latinos support directing funding to ensure that lower-income people and communities of color have adequate access to parks and natural areas in California (compared to 74 percent of total)
- 78 percent of Latinos support gradually transitioning to 100% of California's energy being produced from clean, renewable sources like solar, wind, and hydropower over the next 10 to 15 years (compared to 70 percent of total)
- 77 percent of Latinos support designating portions of existing public lands where wildlife migrate each year as areas that should not be open to oil and gas drilling (compared to 76 percent of total)

"Broad support for public lands spans all generations, racial and ethnic groups, and political affiliations in California," said Martin Martinez, Pastor at Bethel Christian Fellowship in Fontana, Calif. and member of Por la Creación Faith-based Alliance. "We need to act now to address climate issues and take steps to ensure that our community is not only prepared to step up, but that we are fulfilling our moral obligation to care for and protect our public lands, waters and air."

Large majorities of Latino voters say uncontrollable wildfires that threaten homes and property (81 percent), climate change (68 percent), and air pollution and smog (63 percent) are serious issues with 46 percent agreeing that pollution more likely affects communities of color than other parts of the state compared to just 6 percent that consider it less likely.

In addressing these issues, 60 percent of Latinos prefer their members of Congress prioritize ensuring we protect clean water, air quality, and wildlife habitats, while providing opportunities to visit and recreate on our national public lands compared to only 11 percent wanting the focus to be on producing more domestic energy by maximizing the amount of national public lands available for responsible oil and gas drilling and mining. Additionally, a combined 82 percent of Latinos think oil and gas development on public lands should be stopped or strictly limited while only 13 percent think that it should be expanded.

Within the first-week of his Administration, President Joe Biden issued two executive orders that directly addressed public lands and climate issues. The first was a 30x30 announcement that commits the nation to conserving 30 percent of its lands and waters by 2030 and the second was a pause on new oil and gas leases on public lands in order to appropriately analyze the federal oil and gas program. This poll shows that the proposals behind both these executive orders have received tremendous support across from California voters.

The poll surveyed 600 registered voters in California who voted in the 2020 presidential election. Additionally, the survey oversampled Latino registered California voters who met the same voting criteria as the base sample, and the survey was offered in English and Spanish. The survey was conducted between March 11-15, 2021 and has a margin of error of ± 4.6 percent for the base sample, ± 5.9 percent for the oversample. Interviews were conducted by phone and online, using contact information from the state voter file, with online respondents recruited via text message.