

Polling Memo and Summary for National Release  
*2015 Environmental Attitudes Survey*

Submitted to

Earthjustice and GreenLatinos

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**Latino Decisions**  
Everything Latino Politics

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## Polling Memo and Summary for National Release

### *2015 Environmental Attitudes Survey*

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Latino Decisions in partnership with Earthjustice and GreenLatinos conducted a national survey of Latino registered voters and their attitudes toward the environment. The survey, fielded between June 24 and July 8, is based on a national sample of 1,200 Latino registered voters who were interviewed by landline, cell and on-line in English and Spanish. The survey has a nominal margin-of-error of +/- 2.8%.

There is a long-standing assumptions regarding disinterest in environmental issues among working class and communities of color. Our results challenge this assumption by finding that Latinos care deeply about the environment and specifically about its impact on their families. Consistent with recent work, we find that Latinos are as engaged, if not more so, in issues of climate and environment, that they have strong personal interests in seeing the environment improved, and that these issues matter in their political calculi.

When highlighting important claims in your external communications, we believe the poll best illustrates five central claims:

1. Latino concern for climate change and environmental degradation is as high as other more commonly identified policy priorities including minimum wage increases and immigration reform.
  - a. Moreover, Latinos appear to be willing to put their money where their mouth is, overwhelmingly accepting \$5 and \$10 increases in monthly utility bills to move to cleaner, renewable sources.
2. Latinos, more than other Americans, see climate change as a consequence of human activity. Almost two-thirds (66%) accept anthropogenic explanations of global warming. Comparing our results to other national surveys of the broader population, the differences are around 14 percentage points.
3. Latino concerns are transnational, include nations-of-origin. Latinos are aware of environmental degradation and climate impact in their countries of origin and consider this when developing their views.

4. Latinos don't accept the jobs/environment trade-off. Specially, a substantial majority of Latinos believe green energy and environmental reform is either good for economic opportunity and job growth (59%) or has no effect (17%). Only 18% accepted the jobs/environment tradeoff.
5. Latinos want to reward candidates and office-holders who address the problem. Respondents reported feeling more favorably about officials who act on behalf of the environment.

Below are some specific take-aways for the press, elected officials, and the public:

- When asked to state the importance of various policies issues, environmental issues were ranked as important as immigration reform. Reducing smog and air pollution, conserving water, and protecting waterways and clean drinking water scored higher than immigration reform.
- Throughout the survey, large majorities of Latinos are concerned about global warming and climate change. Over two-thirds of Latinos, attribute climate change to "human activities." Yet, younger Latinos (ages 18-29) are more likely to attribute human causes to global warming than older Latinos (50yrs+).
- Concerns over the environment are globally oriented for Latinos, as two-thirds of them are somewhat to very worried about the effects of climate change on family living in the ancestral homelands. Immigrants display higher levels of concern over climate change and we attribute this gap to their higher levels of transnational ties.
  - You should not, however, discount the local nature of concern over water and air pollution.
  - We would encourage you to speak in terms of social proximity—people and places that are close to the respondent. In this sense, concern about home country communities and concern about clean air and water where you live are perfectly consistent.
- Over three quarters (78%) of Latinos say they have directly experienced the effects of climate change. Although we find no significant differences across different segments of the Latino population; Florida Latinos are less likely (67%) to say they have directly experienced the effects of climate change.

- Over two-thirds of Latinos say air pollution and contaminants in drinking water are somewhat to very serious threats to the health of their families. Differences also emerge across the ancestry groups, with Puerto Ricans having the highest level of concern over air pollution while Cubans display the lowest level of concern. Mexican Americans fall between these two groups. When it comes to worrying about contaminants in drinking water, Puerto Ricans are most worried, while Mexican American and Cuban American responses are similar.
- Latinos reject the claim that there is a tradeoff between protecting the environment and fostering economic growth. In the survey, six out of ten Latinos believe that enacting stronger environmental laws will improve economic growth and create new jobs.
  - There is also a willingness to pay more in electricity bills. 77% of respondents were somewhat or very willing to pay \$5 per month more to get their electricity from renewable sources, 75% were somewhat or very willing to pay 10%. Taken together, these two data points push back strongly against the economic argument for climate IN-action.
- Protecting the environment has political consequences. In the survey 72% of Latinos said are *somewhat to much more* likely to support policies and candidates that seek to protect the environment
- Cuban Americans are politically distinct among Latinos as majorities of them self-identify with the Republican Party. Yet, overall we found few differences between Cuban Americans, Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans (the three largest Latino ancestry groups) when it comes to environmental attitudes. In other words, Cuban Americans are as progressive, at times more so, on the environment as Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans.
- The survey clearly demonstrates that Latino voters care about the environment. Nonetheless, when asked if they self-identified as environmentalist the majority said no. Six out of ten Latinos said they would call themselves as someone who cares about the environment even if they don't think of themselves as environmentalists. Two important interpretations—on the one hand, this suggests room for growth in Latino involvement. On the other hand, others estimating Latino involvement with environmental issues are likely under-estimating their level of concern if the use of the label is key to their measurement.

## Gary M. Segura, Co-Founder and Principal

**Dr. Gary Segura** is a co-founder and Principal at Latino Decisions. He is also Professor of Political Science at Stanford University, and Co-Principal Investigator of the American National Election Studies (ANES). He received his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. Over the last 18 years, Segura has directed polling research that has completed over 100,000 interviews with Americans of all backgrounds on matters of social and political importance.

He has briefed members of both the U.S. House and Senate as well as senior White House officials and appeared on National Public Radio, the News Hour, Frontline, the CBS Evening News, MSNBC, and numerous other outlets. On the day after the 2010, 2012, and 2014 elections Segura led national press briefings to explain and unpack the Latino vote and his analysis was quoted in virtually every story about Latino voters in the days and weeks after each national election.

His research has been published in the most prestigious disciplinary outlets including the *American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, and the *Journal of Politics*. Segura's most recent book publications include: *"The Future is Ours:" Minority Politics, Political Behavior and the Multiracial Era of American Politics*, (Congressional Quarterly Press), *Latinos in the New Millennium: An Almanac of Opinion, Behavior, and Policy Preferences* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), and *Latino America: How America's Most Dynamic Population is Poised to Transform the Politics of the Nation* (Public Affairs).

Segura has testified as an expert on political power and discrimination in both voting rights cases and LGBT civil rights cases, and has filed amicus curiae briefs on subjects as diverse as marriage equality and affirmative action. He has served as an expert witness in the two landmark LGBT rights cases of 2013, *Windsor v. United States* and *Hollingsworth v Perry*. In 2010, he was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

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**Adrian Pantoja, Senior Analyst and Project Leader**

**Dr. Adrian D. Pantoja**, is Senior Analyst for Latino Decisions and Professor of Political Studies and Chicano Studies at Pitzer College, a member of the Claremont Colleges. He received his B.A. from the University of San Francisco and Ph.D. in Political Science from the Claremont Graduate University.

At Latino decisions, Pantoja has directed all major research on Latino environmental attitudes and has provided critical insights into how and why Latinos view issues such as carbon pollution, conservation and climate change.

His academic research is published in over three-dozen journals and edited volumes. He has delivered over one hundred presentations at academic conferences and public forums. Presentations for Latino Decisions have been given at the Netroots Nation Conference, the Civil Justice Association of California meeting, the State of Arizona's Latino Vote Symposium, and the Center for American Progress. As a consultant he has carried out research for organizations such as the Center for American Progress, the National Association of Latino Elected Officials, the Natural Resources Defense Council and others.

He has authored over a dozen political blogs and co-authored the following policy reports, *Building An All-In Nation*, *A View from the American Public*, *Anti-Immigrant Politics and Lessons for the GOP from California*, and *A Closer Look at Legal Permanent Residents' (LPRs): Motivations and Barriers to Naturalization*. Dr. Pantoja frequently provides expert political commentaries for various newspapers, newsmagazines, television, and radio programs.

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