

Martín Witchger, League of Conservation Voters  
Testimony to the EPA Hearing  
February 6, 2014

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Good morning. I am here today as a member of the diverse Latino community in the United States, to SUPPORT the EPA in regulating carbon pollution from new power plants with the strongest possible rules. Carbon pollution has disproportionate negative impacts on our Latino communities, and as the fastest-growing population in this country, Latino voices on this issue must be heard.

My name is Martín Witchger, and as an environmentalist, a young person, and a Latino, I support the EPA in strongly regulating carbon pollution from power plants. I also work at the League of Conservation Voters and engage Latinos—online and offline—in environmental and climate issues across the United States.

While Latinos are a diverse and broad population, we are definitely environmentalists—as several of my colleagues and friends have demonstrated before me and will later today.

I too, in my work, know this to be true. I recently sent out a poll to the thousands of our Latino members of the League of Conservation Voters, asking them what environmental issues were most important to them. The top two issues were curbing climate change and addressing toxic pollution in our communities. We Latinos understand these issues, they're important to us—for the health of our families, our communities, and our planet.

I'd like to speak for a moment to the public health aspect of these carbon regulations. My older brother, Felipe, has asthma, and I myself also suffered from asthmatic conditions in my childhood. While I don't believe our asthma was caused by poor air quality in our neighborhoods growing up, I understand the first hand experiences endured by the millions of Americans—and millions of Latinos among them—that suffer from asthma. Many of those children and adults afflicted with these illnesses live in communities with poor air quality—including more than 1/2 of all Latinos who live in the 25 most ozone-polluted cities in the country.

When I think of my brother and his asthma attacks as a kid, I believe NO family should have to endure that. Especially if it is because they live in the United States today where smog and poor air quality persists due to the warming climate brought on by the *unlimited* spewing of harmful carbon pollution by power plants. For our health, the EPA needs to instate strong rules to limit carbon pollution from power plants.

I have grown up in the climate generation. Many of my friends are climate organizers working with fellow young adults and students to be climate voters, climate activists, and motivating each other to address climate change—the single biggest issue our society has ever faced.

I plan to dedicate my career to addressing the climate crisis. To me, and to fellow young adults inheriting our world, we know we this is a huge challenge—but understand it is a necessity to get off fossil fuels NOW and to build a clean, safe, and just energy economy.

I am here today on behalf of those Latino members I work with, on behalf of my brother and all those with asthma, and together with the rest of my generation, to bring their message to you, and to ask the EPA to limit carbon pollution from all power plants with the strongest rules possible. Thank you.