

## Submission from Hispanic Access Foundation

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives,

Hispanic Access Foundation welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the COP30 Presidency Roadmap. As a national nonprofit working to improve the lives of Latino communities across the United States, we emphasize that a transition away from fossil fuels must be grounded in **equity, community engagement, and inclusive access to resources and decision-making**.

### **(a) Critical Barriers to Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels**

From our work with frontline Latino communities, the most critical barriers include:

#### **1. Structural Inequities and Limited Access to Resources**

Many Latino and other frontline communities face barriers to participating in the clean energy transition due to limited access to financial capital, workforce opportunities, and clean technologies. These inequities are compounded by historic underinvestment in these communities and environmental injustice.

#### **2. Information and Language Gaps**

A lack of culturally relevant, linguistically accessible information limits awareness of climate risks, clean energy programs, and entry points into participation opportunities that transition away from fossil fuels.

#### **3. Institutional Trust Deficits**

Communities that have been historically excluded from decision-making processes often lack trust in institutions, slowing adoption of policies and programs.

#### **4. Workforce and Economic Transition Challenges**

Workers in fossil fuel-dependent sectors face uncertainty, with insufficient pathways for reskilling, job placement, and economic mobility.

#### **5. Policy and Governance Gaps**

Climate and energy policies often fail to incorporate community input or address localized needs, resulting in solutions that are not equitably distributed or effectively implemented.

### **(b) Key Levers to Accelerate the Transition**

#### **1. Community-Driven Engagement and Education**

Investing in trusted, community-based organizations to deliver culturally relevant education and outreach can significantly increase participation in clean energy programs and climate solutions.

#### **2. Workforce Development and Leadership Pipelines**

Programs that train and place Latino and other underrepresented individuals into clean

energy careers—such as conservation corps, technical training, and leadership development—are critical to ensuring an inclusive transition.

### **3. Targeted Financial Mechanisms**

Expanding access to grants, subsidies, and low-cost financing for clean energy adoption in underserved communities can remove economic barriers.

### **4. Inclusive Policy Design**

Embedding equity requirements and community consultation into climate policy ensures that solutions reflect real needs and deliver shared benefits.

### **5. Partnerships Across Sectors**

Cross-sector collaboration between governments, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and the private sector can accelerate scalable, community-centered solutions.

## **(c) Best Practices and Lessons Learned**

### **1. Faith-Based Climate Engagement**

Our organization's Por La Creación Faith-Based Alliance engages Latino faith leaders in environmental stewardship, demonstrating the effectiveness of values-based messaging in advancing climate action.

### **2. Network-Based Leadership and Capacity Building**

Hispanic Access Foundation advances equitable climate and conservation outcomes through interconnected leadership networks that build capacity across sectors. **Our Conservation Network** connects and empowers Latino professionals working on land, ocean, and waterway conservation, climate action, and equitable access to public lands, while strengthening community engagement. **The Hispanic Leadership Network** equips pastors to lead and support multigenerational Latino congregations, integrating community priorities—including environmental stewardship—into faith-based initiatives. **The Community Navigator Program** supports 180 local leaders and organizations by providing guidance on funding opportunities, grant development, and training to overcome systemic barriers to accessing federal resources.

### **3. Community Science and Data Empowerment**

Through initiatives like El Aire Que Respiramos (The Air We Breathe), Latino residents are trained to monitor air quality (PM2.5), generating localized data that informs local and regional advocacy and policy. This model demonstrates how community-led data collection can drive accountability and action.

#### **Key Lesson:**

Solutions are most effective when communities are not just beneficiaries, but co-creators and leaders of climate strategies.

## **(d) Advancing a Just, Orderly, and Equitable Transition**

A just transition must reflect the diverse realities of communities by:

### **1. Centering Equity and Environmental Justice**

Policies must prioritize those most impacted by pollution and climate change, ensuring they receive tangible benefits from the transition.

### **2. Recognizing Different Starting Points**

Communities vary widely in economic capacity, infrastructure, and exposure to climate risks. Flexible, place-based approaches are essential.

### **3. Ensuring Meaningful Participation**

Frontline communities must have a seat at the table in decision-making processes at all levels.

### **4. Protecting Workers and Supporting Economic Mobility**

Transition strategies should include robust support for workers, including retraining, wage protections, and pathways into quality jobs.

### **5. Investing in Community Resilience**

Beyond energy systems, investments must strengthen public health, air quality, and access to nature—key priorities for Latino communities.

### **Conclusion**

Transitioning away from fossil fuels is not solely a technical challenge—it is a **societal transformation**. Success depends on whether we can build systems that are inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the needs of all communities.

Organizations like Hispanic Access Foundation demonstrate that when communities are empowered with knowledge, resources, and leadership opportunities, they become powerful drivers of climate solutions.

Please let us know if you have any questions.