UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Institute
Climate & Health Dashboard

Cleaner Air, Healthier Communities: A Policy Advocacy Toolkit for California's Latino Communities

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This policy toolkit builds on LPPI's Latino Climate and Health Dashboard.

The UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute acknowledges the Gabrielino and Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (the Los Angeles basin and Southern Channel Islands) and that their displacement has enabled UCLA's flourishing. As a land grant institution, we pay our respects to the Honuukvetam (Ancestors), Ahiihirom (Elders), and Eyoohiinken (our relatives nations) past, present, and emerging.

Disclaimer

Although this policy toolkit centers Latino communities, these challenges are not unique to Latinos. Communities of color and low-income populations more broadly also face disproportionate environmental and health burdens. Our Latino focus reflects the scope of our research center rather than the exclusivity of the issue.

The views expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the University of California, Los Angeles as a whole. The authors alone are responsible for the content of this report.

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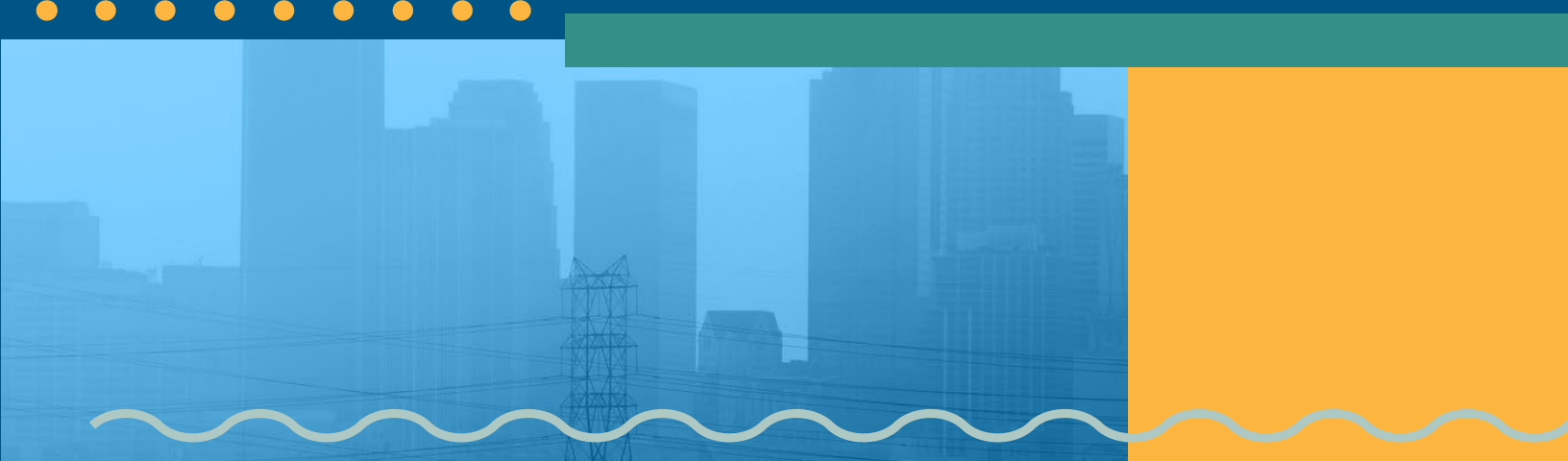


Executive Summary

Clean air is a fundamental human right. Yet, for too long, Latino neighborhoods in California have carried heavy environmental and health burdens. Latino communities across California face some of the state's most severe air pollution and associated health consequences. Sources of air pollution, including freeways, ports, warehouses, and hazardous sites, are often located in or near Latino neighborhoods, leading to higher rates of asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and other chronic illnesses.

Despite these risks, recent federal rollbacks in data transparency and research funding have made it harder for communities and policymakers to access the data tools needed to track, understand, and create policies to mitigate impacts of air pollution on community well-being, worker health, and the economy.

To address these air pollution challenges, the UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute (LPPI) convened the Latino Air Pollution and Health Policy Plática in July 2025, bringing together community advocates and legislative staff to co-develop potential solutions. This policy toolkit reflects the voices and lived experiences of those participants and presents complementary data from the Latino Climate and Health Dashboard, which highlights environmental and health disparities in California's Latino neighborhoods. This toolkit provides policymakers, advocates, and community leaders with actionable, evidence-based recommendations to reduce pollution and improve health outcomes.

Findings from the Latino Climate and Health Dashboard

1. Latino neighborhoods are overwhelmingly located in areas facing the state's highest environmental and socioeconomic burdens.
2. Latino neighborhoods are located much closer to hazardous and contaminated sites than non-Latino (NL) white neighborhoods.
3. Latino neighborhoods are exposed to nearly three times more diesel pollution than NL white neighborhoods.
4. Latino neighborhoods face higher traffic pollution burdens and have fewer clean vehicles than NL white neighborhoods.

Example Community Policy Priorities from the Policy Plática

1. **Hold polluters accountable –** Strengthen pollution enforcement, increase fees for violations, and ensure industries, not communities, cover cleanup costs.
2. **Invest in clean and equitable transportation –** Expand zero-emission commercial trucks and buses, improve public transit, and prioritize infrastructure upgrades in Latino neighborhoods.
3. **Support community monitoring and data collection –** Fund trusted community-based organizations to lead culturally relevant outreach, education, and citizen science efforts.
4. **Protect worker and public health –** Increase oversight of workplace exposures, expand home air filtration programs, and use the ***promotora*** model for community health education.
5. **Plan for just and sustainable transitions –** Ensure the transition from polluting industries includes investments in workers and communities through retraining, reinvestment, and green job creation.

Introduction

Background

California's Latino communities have long experienced disproportionate exposure to air pollution.[1] Long-term exposure is linked to higher risks of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, cancer, adverse birth outcomes, and neurological harm.[2] In California, much of the air pollution affecting communities comes from transportation and industrial operations. Cars, trucks, and ships release the majority of harmful pollutants that form smog and fine particles, while refineries, power plants, and factories add further emissions to nearby neighborhoods.[3]

Addressing air pollution and associated health burdens requires accurate data and evidence-based policy responses. Recent federal actions have made this work more challenging. Since January 2025, over 2,000 datasets have been removed from Data.gov, the country's largest public data repository.[4] In parallel, research institutions have lost critical federal funding used to track environmental and health trends, support community-led science, and evaluate policy impacts.[5] These losses make developing, defending, and strengthening environmental health policies harder. Without access to robust data and the capacity to interpret it, communities and policymakers are left without the tools to fully understand the impacts of air pollution on community well-being, worker health, and local economies.

By linking community data with government and institutional datasets, we can strengthen democracy, inform responsive public policy, and build trust between institutions and residents most affected by environmental harms. In the absence of federal transparency, community-focused research and policy work are more important than ever. Research shaped by lived experience helps ensure that findings reflect local concerns and lead to more relevant, practical solutions.

About the Latino Air Pollution and Health Policy Plática

UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute's (LPPI) commitment to uplifting community experiences guided UCLA LPPI's Latino Air Pollution and Health Policy Plática (discussion), held in July 2025. The convening brought together legislative staff, representatives from advocacy organizations, and local advocates invested in addressing air pollution and improving health outcomes. The purpose was to co-develop policy recommendations grounded in lived experience and professional expertise. The Policy Plática was intentionally timed to align with the launch of the Latino Climate and Health Dashboard, discussed in more detail below.

We invited participants to join one of three breakout groups based on their stated policy interests: 1) Transportation & Infrastructure, 2) Community Monitoring & Data Equity, or 3) Health & Public Services. To guide the discussions, we encouraged participants to approach each topic from three perspectives:

- Identify challenges and barriers
- Highlight strengths, successes, and best practices
- Brainstorm bold and innovative solutions

We informed participants that we would use their contributions to develop this toolkit. We assured them their identities would remain anonymous and encouraged them to share professional insights and personal experiences openly.

About the Latino Climate and Health Dashboard

The Latino Climate and Health Dashboard is a data tool that equips advocates and decision-makers with data on climate and health risks in California's Latino neighborhoods. The dashboard brings together data that reflects long-standing disparities, many of which mirror the lived experiences shared by Latino communities across the state.

About This Toolkit

Part 1 of this toolkit presents the key challenges and corresponding policy solutions discussed in each of the Policy Plática breakout groups: transportation and infrastructure, community monitoring and data equity, and health and public services. **Part 2** highlights findings from the Latino Climate and Health Dashboard that point to disproportionate environmental and health burdens in California Latino neighborhoods and provides data-driven policy recommendations that can help mitigate these burdens. Together, the recommendations from Parts 1 and 2 aim to strengthen evidence-based advocacy and support more equitable outcomes for Latino communities across the state.

PART ONE

Challenges and Co-Created Policy Recommendations

This section summarizes the challenges identified and the recommendations discussed by each Policy Plática breakout group, organized by topic area. Each area includes both priority recommendations that are feasible in the near term with existing tools or funding, and long-term or aspirational recommendations that require sustained investment, interagency collaboration, or major policy change.

A. Transportation & Infrastructure

Community-Identified Challenges

1. High rates of exposure to air pollution in Latino neighborhoods.

Participants noted that freeways, ports, and other polluting facilities are often near Latino communities, increasing their risk of asthma, cancer, and other illnesses associated with long-term pollution exposure.

2. Political influence of industry.

Participants shared that elected officials are often funded by the oil and gas industries, leading to weak political will to impose regulations on these major sources of air pollution.

3. Regulatory agency resource constraints.

Agencies tasked with overseeing air pollution regulation often fail to connect with or inform communities about health risks, creating barriers to input and accountability. Participants noted that regulations are often not enforced evenly across communities due to staffing limitations or other resource constraints.

4. Lack of culturally competent outreach.

Communities are often unaware of air pollution mitigation efforts and programs because government agencies and the private companies responsible for air pollution fail to communicate in accessible, culturally appropriate ways. As a result, residents may miss out on resources such as free or discounted home air filters, tree planting and green space grants, or enrollment in air quality monitoring and asthma prevention programs.

Community-Identified Challenges

5. Community mistrust of government.

Participants emphasized mistrust of the government, particularly among undocumented residents. This mistrust poses a direct challenge for addressing air pollution, as residents may be reluctant to participate in monitoring programs, report pollution incidents, or engage with government-led mitigation efforts.

6. Incomplete, siloed, and inaccessible data.

Pollution data are fragmented across different websites, often lack standardization, and are not readily available in usable formats or with actionable insights for communities.

7. Shortage of green space and mitigation planning.

Residents, especially children, lack access to green spaces, such as parks, due to inadequate city-level building and planning. Green spaces help reduce exposure to pollutants, so their absence leaves communities more vulnerable to air pollution.

8. Tensions between labor and environmental groups.

Air quality regulations are often perceived as a risk to local jobs, especially those in industries known for producing high levels of air pollution (e.g., manufacturing and construction). This perception contributes to tension between unions, labor advocates, and environmentalists who all aim to improve the livelihood of their communities.

9. Resistance from the trucking and freight industries.

Despite their significant influence in the region, participants noted difficulty in bringing the trucking industry to the table to discuss reducing air pollution.

Community-Identified Challenges

10. **High rates of exposure to air pollution in Latino neighborhoods.**

Participants noted that freeways, ports, and other polluting facilities are often near Latino communities, increasing their risk of asthma, cancer, and other illnesses associated with long-term pollution exposure.

Policy Recommendations

Community-Identified Priorities

1. **State regulators** should increase fees and/or bond requirements for air polluters. Participants emphasized raising financial responsibility for oil operators and polluters, not the public, to cover cleanup costs. Regulators should pair these fee increases with additional enforcement standards to ensure they are applied equitably.

2. **City and county health departments** should expand local education and outreach on the health impacts of air pollution. Residents have expressed a need for more culturally competent efforts, including workshops, the ***promotora*** (community health worker) model,[6] multilingual materials, and information shared on familiar platforms such as Facebook and TikTok. Increased funding for community-based organizations (CBOs) leading these outreach activities is also essential.

3. **Environmental agencies and academic partners** should support community science and real-time data sharing. Participants endorsed initiatives like citizen air monitoring with low-cost sensors (e.g., Air Gradient or PurpleAir)[7] and integrating resident-generated data into state-level air quality systems to help legitimize community data collection.

4. **The California Air Resources Board (CARB)** should leverage Assembly Bill (AB) 617[8] and other resources to expand smog-check-related car replacement programs and rebate incentives that help residents transition to cleaner vehicles.

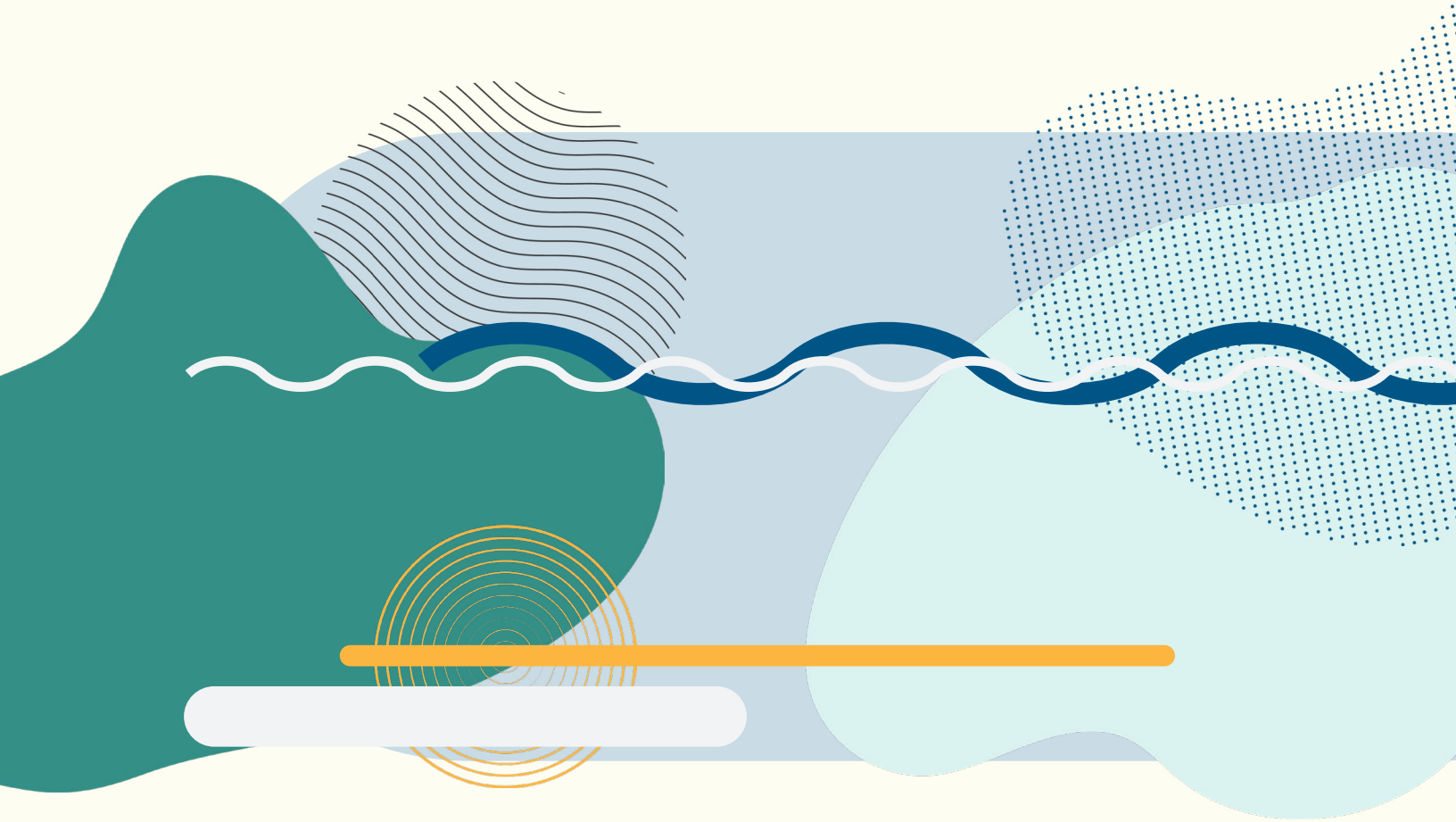
    - Note: Senate Bill (SB) 352 strengthens air quality monitoring and reporting under the AB 617 program, and AB 840 guarantees $250 million in annual funding for AB 617, establishing ongoing state investment.[9] The next step is for CARB and other state agencies to center community input to ensure these funds support the programs residents need most.

Policy Recommendations

Community-Identified Priorities

5. **Local and regional transportation agencies** should invest in clean, safe, and reliable public transit systems. Investments should include modernizing infrastructure (e.g., contactless pay systems) and prioritizing transit-oriented development to reduce reliance on personal vehicles.

6. **CBOs and technical partners** should offer regular air quality "boot camps" and trainings to build residents' capacity to understand how air pollution impacts their health, find and interpret air pollution data, engage in advocacy, and influence policy decisions. AB 617-designated communities[10] could benefit the most from participating in these "boot camps."



Policy Recommendations

Community Long-term/Aspirational

1. **Port authorities and state environmental agencies** should adopt stronger accountability measures to ensure that port operations are monitored, health and environmental impacts are mitigated, and progress toward emission-reduction goals is publicly reported.

2. **State and federal transportation agencies, in collaboration with utilities and private industry,** should pursue full electrification of public transportation and freight systems such as trucking fleets, rail freight, ports, and air cargo. This should include investing in charging infrastructure, investing in grid upgrades, and ensuring policy alignment across sectors. California's Prop 4 (2024) provides funding sources for port electrification.[11]

3. **The California Legislature** should create a standing state-level working group or task force that includes labor unions, environmental advocates, community groups, and regulatory agencies to collaborate on long-term air quality solutions.

B. Community Monitoring & Data Equity

Community-Identified Challenges

1. Fragmented and inaccessible data.

Participants emphasized that air pollution data are often not disaggregated, limiting community relevance and action. They described government data tools as too technical or inconsistent with lived realities. Many felt that this is intentional and that marginalized communities are kept in the dark by design.

2. Distrust in institutions and enforcement.

Participants explained that residents often distrust state data sources and monitoring agencies. These agencies are seen as ineffective at enforcing regulations and, at times, dismissive of grassroots efforts. Participants also noted a persistent “glass half-empty” narrative that frames Latino communities as the problem instead of focusing on the systemic causes.

3. Impact of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the overall political climate on outreach to community members.

Immigration enforcement has had a chilling effect on door-to-door engagement and community organizing. Participants shared that many residents, particularly undocumented people, are reluctant to engage with data collection efforts or answer the door, making traditional outreach strategies less effective.

Community-Identified Challenges

4. Lack of culturally competent and engaging outreach.

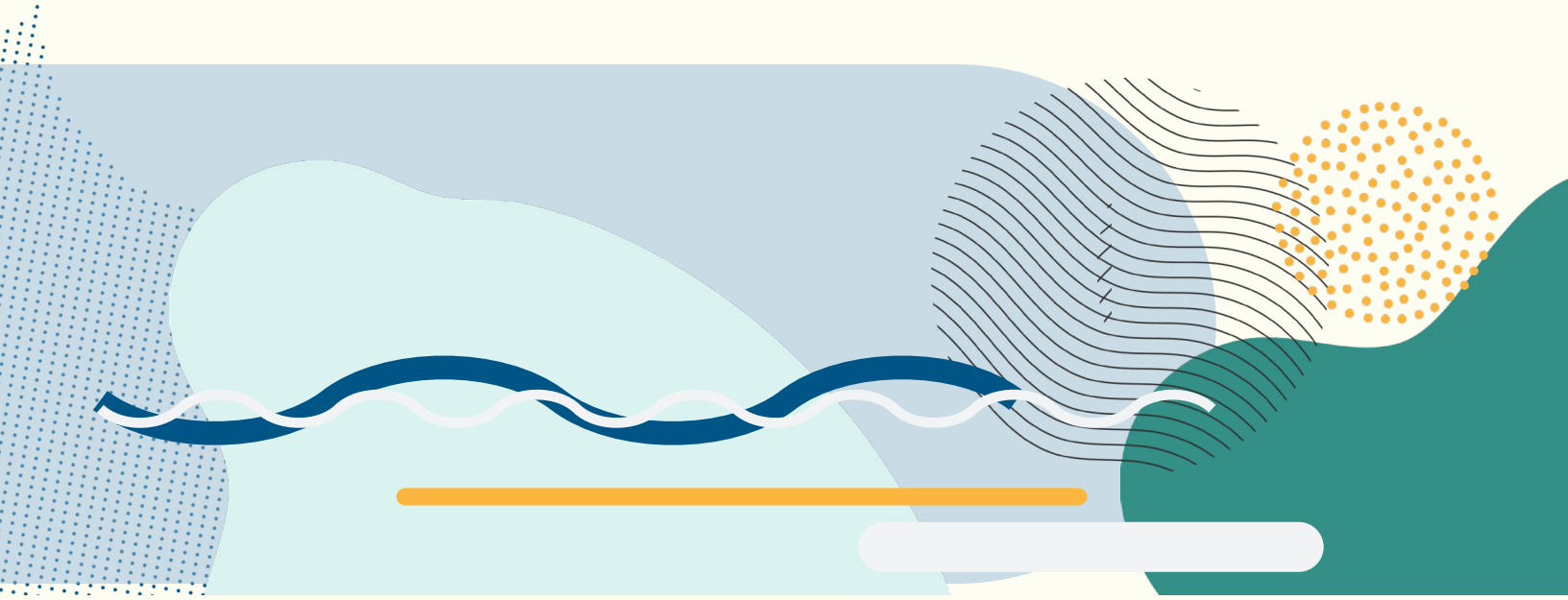
Participants noted the need for Spanish-language materials as well as culturally relevant visuals and campaigns. They also emphasized that information must be presented where people are, such as on TikTok or at local events, not just in formal meeting spaces.

5. Low awareness of environmental health risks.

Residents often do not realize the links between pollution and chronic health issues such as asthma or silicosis. Participants described a lack of foundational knowledge at the household level.

6. Underutilization of trusted CBOs.

CBOs are often left out of state and city policy discussions and programs such as air quality monitoring efforts, environmental health initiatives, and local outreach campaigns, even though they are well-positioned to build trust, gather local data, and educate residents.



Policy Recommendations

Community-Identified Priorities

1. **State and local agencies** should continue to fund and support trusted CBOs to lead data education and outreach through workshops, advisory boards, and public health campaigns. CBOs already hold relationships and know how to reach residents in a climate of fear and disconnection.

2. **Public health departments and school districts** should design culturally relevant, youth-centered educational materials about air pollution and health. Tools could include coloring books, TikToks, songs, and schoolyard science projects that empower youth to understand air pollution and share information with their families.

   » Example: Pacoima Beautiful's Clean Air Ambassadors Program.[12]

3. **Air quality management districts and environmental agencies** should ensure equitable access to low-cost community air sensors and provide support to interpret disaggregated, localized, and pollutant-specific data (e.g., NOx vs. PM2.5).

4. **City offices and research institutions** should co-develop incentive-based data collection apps that reward resident participation, such as point-based systems for reporting pollution data. This approach makes residents active partners in data-building efforts.

5. **All levels of government** should shift the public narrative around air pollution from individual responsibility to structural causes. Communications should name root causes like policy neglect, industrial zoning, and disinvestment, rather than framing communities as being at fault.

Policy Recommendations

Community Long-term/Aspirational

1. **State environmental and public health agencies** should develop multi-year, sustainable funding for community air monitoring, outreach, education, and evaluation rather than just pilot programs.

2. **Regulatory agencies and lawmakers** should advance clear "Zero Must Mean Zero"[13] emission targets, especially for diesel and industrial pollution. Emission targets should set uncompromising standards modeled after existing school bus electrification goals.

3. **State education agencies and school districts** should integrate environmental health and air quality into early childhood and K-12 curricula in partnership with academic institutions such as colleges or universities to build civic awareness and foster environmental stewardship from a young age.

4. **State agencies and local governments** should standardize community input through advisory boards, participatory governance, and enforceable frameworks that give frontline residents meaningful decision-making authority in environmental health policy.

C. Health & Public Services

Community-Identified Challenges

1. Lack of awareness of, and education about, pollution-related health risks.

Participants emphasized that many Latino residents do not recognize how air pollution contributes to chronic illnesses, especially when exposures are indirect (e.g., secondhand smoke in multi-unit housing). This disconnect makes it difficult to advocate for protection from or mitigation of pollution.

2. Widespread exposure in both residential and workplace settings.

Community members are exposed to air pollution from multiple sources, including logistics centers, dry cleaners, autobody shops, airports, gas plants, oil fields, and worksites with silica. Workers in these sectors are especially affected, bringing pollutants home through their clothes and increasing family exposure.

3. Scattered pollution enforcement.

Participants noted inconsistencies in how different counties or jurisdictions manage pollution enforcement and health protections (e.g., Ventura County has its own air pollution control district; others do not). This creates uneven protections and leaves residents confused about which agency is responsible, what rules apply in their area, and how to report violations or seek help.

4. Insufficient air filtration and pollution mitigation in homes.

While some AB 617 communities receive resources such as home air filters, the level of support varies because each region sets its own funding priorities and focuses on the pollution issues most urgent in that area.

Community-Identified Challenges

4. Disconnection between industry shutdowns and just transitions.

Workers and their families can be left behind when polluting industries shut down. Participants expressed concern that green transitions are not accompanied by fair labor planning or community-led redevelopment.

5. Weak enforcement of workplace health standards.

Agencies such as the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (CalOSHA) lack the resources to enforce safe working conditions for people exposed to toxic materials (e.g., silica). Workers in high-risk jobs, such as construction, face exposure without meaningful protections.

Policy Recommendations

Community-Identified Priorities

1. **County public health departments and CBOs** should expand environmental health education using the ***promotora*** model. ***Promotoras*** can deliver trusted, culturally grounded education on pollution, chronic illness, and prevention strategies in underserved Latino neighborhoods.

2. **Air quality agencies, local governments, and school districts** should use AB 617 funding and the model it provides to non-AB 617 communities, as well as similar funding streams, to distribute air filtration systems to pollution-burdened homes. Distribution should be equitable and consistent across geographies, not dependent on local agency discretion.

3. **State lawmakers and Cal/OSHA** should increase funding and staffing to improve oversight and enforcement of workplace safety standards, particularly in industries with known toxic exposure risks like silica and petrochemicals, and review whether fines are both sufficient to deter violations and applied consistently.

4. **Environmental justice organizations and local regulators** should provide regular workshops that train residents on how to recognize, document, and report environmental hazards. These trainings should demystify complaint systems and build community capacity to advocate for enforcement.

Policy Recommendations

Community Long-term/Aspirational

1. **City and county governments** should be required to develop community-informed just transition plans when polluting industries are phased out. These plans should include worker retraining, job placement in green sectors, and reinvestment in infrastructure. Local jurisdictions should collaborate alongside the state to develop those required just transition plans.

2. **State environmental agencies** should strengthen coordination and alignment across counties and regions to ensure consistent enforcement of pollution standards statewide, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.

3. **State policymakers** should consider bold pollution prevention policies, such as reviewing California's recently adopted cap-and-trade system to ensure it delivers tangible local health benefits.
    - For example, cap-and-trade funds could support local asthma prevention programs, neighborhood air-filtration systems, or the creation of green spaces.

PART TWO

Insights from the Latino Climate and Health Dashboard

This section highlights key findings from the Latino Climate and Health Dashboard's California Air Pollution Factsheet and provides potential policy solutions developed by LPPI staff to lessen disparities for Latino neighborhoods. Additionally, it highlights solutions and ideas that overlap with topics discussed during the Policy Plática. Please visit the dashboard website for more information on the data presented below.[14]

For the purposes of this analysis, we define a Latino neighborhood as any census tract[15] where more than 70% of the residents identify as Latino. Latino residents include those who identify as Hispanic or Latino of any race. To highlight disparities, we compare health and environmental outcomes across Latino and non-Latino (NL) white neighborhoods. We define an NL white neighborhood as any census tract where more than 70% of the residents identify as NL white. NL white excludes individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino.

Finding 1: Latino neighborhoods are overwhelmingly located in areas facing the state's highest environmental and socioeconomic burdens.

Data: 76% of Latino neighborhoods are designated as Disadvantaged Communities (DACs),[16] compared to just 1% of NL white neighborhoods.

Context: Residents of Latino neighborhoods are far more likely to live in areas the California government has designated as having the highest combined pollution burdens, including air pollution burdens and socioeconomic stressors. These conditions signal poor access to clean air and water, heightened risk of chronic health problems, and more vulnerability to climate-related threats.

Policy Recommendations

1. **The California State Legislature** should continue to direct cap-and-trade proceeds (SB 535/AB 1550) to DACs for air, clean transportation, and health projects. These funds can help CBOs take on leadership roles in local air quality efforts under the Community Air Protection Program (CAPP), as established by AB 617.

    » As discussed in Part 1, participants in the Policy Plática emphasized supporting local CBOs to lead outreach, education, and monitoring in pollution-burdened neighborhoods.

2. **The California State Legislature** should ensure that climate investment funding continues to prioritize DACs, maintaining the CAPP target of directing at least 70% of total funds to projects that benefit these communities.[17]

    » As discussed in Part 1, participants in the Policy Plática noted the need for sustained, equitable funding to support long-term education, monitoring, and mitigation initiatives in pollution-burdened neighborhoods.

Finding 2: Latino neighborhoods are located much closer to hazardous and contaminated sites than NL white neighborhoods.

Data: Compared to NL white neighborhoods, Latino neighborhoods have a nearly 10 times higher proximity score for Risk Management Plan (RMP) facilities (1.9 vs. 0.2), a 3 times higher exposure score for hazardous waste facilities (0.9 vs. 0.3), and a 2.4 times higher proximity score for cleanup sites (12 vs. 5).

Context: Living near toxic sites puts residents in Latino neighborhoods at significantly higher risk for chemical accidents and chronic exposure to hazardous substances. Many of these facilities release pollutants into the air, contributing to poor air quality and higher rates of respiratory and cardiovascular illness. These exposures are also linked to long-term health outcomes, including cancer and adverse birth outcomes, and can compound other environmental and social stressors these communities face.

Policy Recommendations

1. **The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)** should accelerate cleanup assessments and dust control measures and offer temporary relocation when contamination poses immediate risks—especially to residents living in DACs.[18]

2. **DTSC** should prioritize awarding grant funding from the Equitable Community Revitalization Grant (ECRG) program to sites in DACs, such as contaminated properties or former industrial sites in need of cleanup and safe redevelopment.[19]

3. **DTSC and the California Office of Emergency Services** should require RMP facilities to implement multilingual emergency communication plans, invest in neighborhood air quality monitoring, and support community preparedness drills in nearby DACs.[20]

    » As discussed in Part 1, participants in the Policy Plática noted the need for more transparent, culturally competent communication about environmental hazards.

4. **Local governments** should incorporate environmental justice policies into general plans (as outlined in SB 1000) to prevent the construction of new hazardous facilities in DACs and to support long-term land-use protections for vulnerable neighborhoods.

Finding 3: Latino neighborhoods are exposed to nearly three times more diesel pollution than NL white neighborhoods.

Data: Residents in Latino neighborhoods are exposed to 0.27 tons of diesel particulate matter (PM) per year, which is 2.7 times higher than the 0.10 tons per year that residents in NL white neighborhoods are exposed to.

Context: Diesel PM is classified as a Toxic Air Contaminant in California.[21] Higher exposure increases the risk of lung cancer and worsens respiratory conditions such as asthma and chronic bronchitis, especially among children, older adults, and people with preexisting health conditions.

Policy Recommendations

1. **CARB** should prioritize using its Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Program (HVIP) and CAPP incentives to help cover the cost of zero-emission commercial vehicle infrastructure and fleets in DACs.[22]
    - » As discussed in Part 1, participants in the Policy Plática recommended the use of state-supported incentives to help residents transition to cleaner vehicles and reduce diesel exposure.
2. **School districts** in Latino neighborhoods should apply for funding through the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean School Bus Program to replace diesel buses with zero-emission models.[23]
3. **Local governments** should enforce anti-idling laws near schools and clinics. They should also support truck rerouting, port electrification, and electric holding yards to reduce diesel emissions in high-traffic areas..
4. **State and local agencies** should actively pursue federal grants from programs such as the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act and EPA Clean Ports, directing funds to projects in DACs.

Finding 4: Latino neighborhoods face higher traffic pollution burdens and have fewer clean vehicles than NL white neighborhoods.

Data: Latino neighborhoods experience 1.4 times higher traffic density than NL white neighborhoods (1,167 km/hr vs. 830 km/hr). At the same time, low-emission vehicle (LEV) ownership is nearly four times lower in Latino neighborhoods, with only 3% of residents owning LEVs compared to 11% in NL white neighborhoods.

Context: These disparities mean Latino neighborhoods are exposed to more traffic-related air pollution, a major driver of asthma, cardiovascular disease, and other health risks, while having significantly fewer clean vehicles in their neighborhoods to help reduce emissions and improve air quality.

Policy Recommendations

1. **The California State Government** should prioritize the Clean Cars 4 All Program, which has provided millions of dollars to low-income consumers to purchase or lease a new or used clean vehicle in exchange for scrapping older, more polluting ones, targeting outreach in Latino neighborhoods.[24] Effective implementation of this recommendation would require the state to invest in an equitable distribution of charging infrastructure in DACs.

2. **CBOs** should promote the Driving Clean Assistance Program, which was administered by the Community Housing Development Corporation. The program offers upfront grants and provides access to low-interest loans capped at 8% annual percentage rate (APR). It can help low-income Californians in underserved communities purchase clean vehicles without requiring them to turn in or scrap their old, more polluting car.

3. **City transportation departments** should prioritize "Complete Streets" upgrades in high-pollution areas. The "Complete Streets" approach makes streets safer for all travelers by adding features such as bus lanes and protected bike lanes. It can also include timed delivery windows, which limit large commercial or freight deliveries (not everyday household deliveries) to specific hours to cut double-parking and peak-hour traffic. Transportation departments should also adopt congestion reduction strategies, such as expanding public transit service or introducing congestion pricing.

4. **CARB and local air districts** should prioritize CAPP funds for sidewalk, bike lane, and urban greening projects in high-traffic neighborhoods.

5. **Metropolitan Planning Organizations** should use Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds to support projects that reduce traffic and improve air quality in Latino neighborhoods. To maximize their impact, these efforts should be integrated into regional transportation plans.[25]

6. **CARB** should leverage the Air Pollution Control Fund, which collects revenue from fines, fees, and penalties imposed on polluters, to fund targeted emissions reduction projects in communities most impacted by pollution. These funds should be prioritized for projects that address cumulative environmental burdens in DACs, such as zero-emissions infrastructure, air filtration programs, and neighborhood-level mitigation (e.g., tree planting and clean mobility options).[26]

    » As discussed in Part 1, participants in the Policy Plática emphasized the importance of expanding urban greening, sidewalk improvements, and public transit to reduce traffic and protect community health.

Conclusion

Addressing environmental and health issues in Latino neighborhoods requires reliable data on pollutants and input from those directly impacted by environmental hazards. This toolkit brings the two together.

The challenge descriptions and policy ideas in Part 1 came directly from residents, advocates, and policy staff who participated in the UCLA LPPI Latino Air Pollution and Health Policy Plática. Participants spoke about the real-life impacts of pollution on their health, neighborhoods, and families, and shared practical ideas for policy change. Part 2 draws on the Latino Climate and Health Dashboard data and highlights policy interventions to help reduce disparities in Latino neighborhoods. While these inequities are not unique, and other marginalized populations in the state face comparable risks from proximity to hazardous sites and poor air quality, Latino neighborhoods face some of California's most significant pollution and health burdens. Compared to residents of NL white neighborhoods, they are more likely to live near hazardous sites, breathe higher levels of diesel exhaust, experience heavier levels of car exhaust, and face heavier traffic, while having fewer LEVs. These patterns reflect long-standing policy gaps and underinvestment.

As the policy recommendations outlined in this toolkit demonstrate, policymakers, CBOs, and funders all have a role to play in addressing air pollution and its disproportionate impacts on Latino communities. State and local policymakers should prioritize regulatory action, equitable funding and outreach, and long-term enforcement of air quality standards. CBOs should lead community engagement, education, and data collection efforts, ensuring residents' experiences shape local decision-making. Funders should support sustainable initiatives that reduce pollution, improve health outcomes, and strengthen community-led data collection and solutions.

Together, these insights highlight the areas where action is most needed. As California faces rising climate and health risks, we must recognize clean air as a fundamental human right and fight for policies that uphold and protect our most vulnerable communities.

Endnotes

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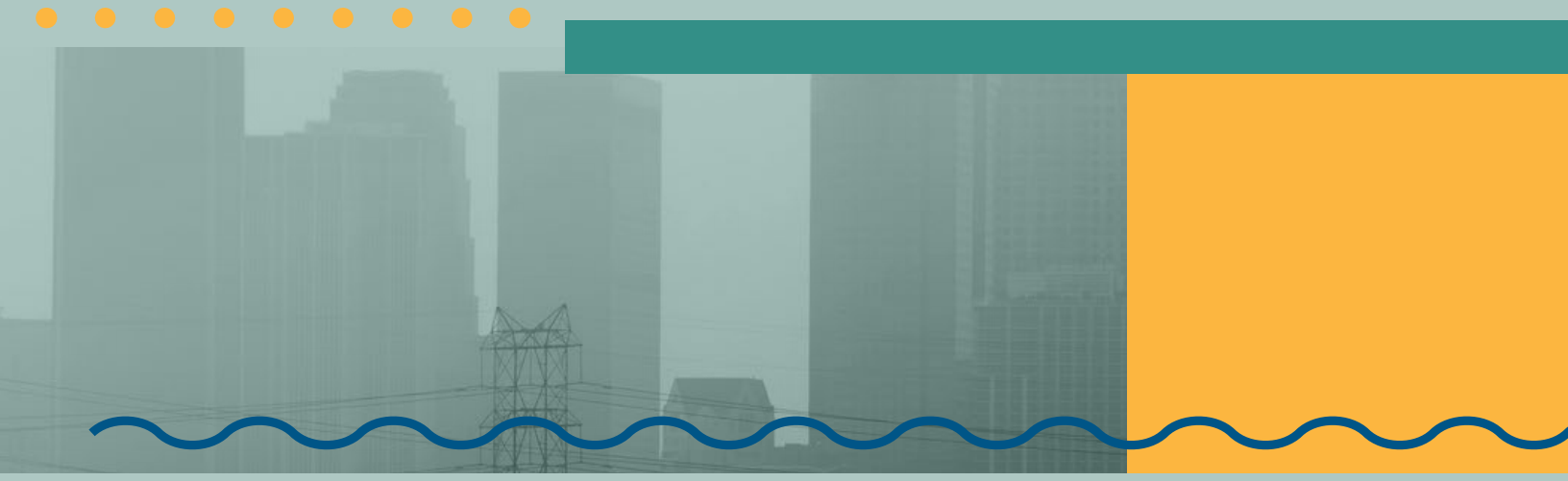

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