

OUR CLIMATE, OUR WATER



Our lives and livelihoods depend on water. As climate change worsens, higher temperatures and more extreme and erratic weather patterns are causing water scarcity, more severe and frequent droughts that threaten water access and agricultural yields. Increased flooding due to sea level rise and powerful storms are threatening water quality and communities around the world. California has the largest population of any U.S. state and has long struggled to balance competing demands for water among agricultural, residential, and industrial users. A changing climate will increase this tension. Latinos here and abroad will bear the brunt of these changes because millions in our community live in areas that will be most severely affected by droughts, floods, and hurricanes.

DROUGHT

Scientists predict that climate change will shift weather patterns, leading to more erratic weather, a decrease in average rainfall, and long periods of drought that will cause the gradual desertification of the western half of the United States (including California), and large parts of the world.



In California, warmer temperatures and decreased rainfall will **lower the snowpack in the Sierra Nevada mountains**, the source of much of California's water.



California relies heavily on groundwater to irrigate agricultural lands. Many Latino communities have **polluted groundwater from fertilizers and pesticides**, forcing populations to buy bottled water.



Globally, water scarcity already affects 1 out of 10 people. Within 10 years, 1.8 billion people will be living in areas with absolute water scarcity.



The UNCCD predicts that longer periods of drought and water scarcity will result in the **displacement of 145 million people by 2045.**

STORMS AND FLOODING

Just as droughts are worsening, climate change is driving more destructive storms and floods.



The 2017 season was the costliest in US history, with about **\$200 billion in damages caused by hurricanes Harvey, Maria and Irma.**



Heavy rain and flooding present many dangers to human health, including injury, drowning, exposure to toxic materials, and lung and skin infections.



Many Latino families uninsured for flooding may not be well-equipped to absorb costs, **risking displacement and serious economic losses.**

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Climate policies are required to stem the pace at which climate is threatening our communities. While it is our responsibility to save water and protect water quality, cities and rural areas must also take action.

PERSONAL ACTIONS:



Support clean energy. Limiting the impacts of climate change will be key in protecting our water. As long as the weather continues to warm, our water will remain at risk.

Saving water in our homes will help us save water and money - now.



Taking shorter showers, using low water use toilets and ensuring that your faucets and toilets are free of leaks are an important and easy step to take.



Using water efficient dishwashers and washing machines will save you money and help preserve our precious resource.



For agricultural water users, **changing irrigation practices** could save about 5-6 million acre-feet/year.

Limit your consumption of meat and animal products, whose production requires large amounts of water and contributes to water contamination and climate change.

ACTIONS FOR CITIES AND REGIONS:



Adopt suitable practices that encourage water reuse, such as using recycled water for irrigation and installing graywater systems.

Fixing leakages and inefficiencies in water infrastructure.



Stormwater capture, rainwater barrels and recharging groundwater with stormwater runoff can also help communities address this growing crisis.

Emergency response plans need to be strengthened in all coastal cities and special protections need to be added for the most vulnerable.



In areas at risk of sea level rise, flooding and hurricanes, **cities must begin to adapt and plan to address the threat to homes and businesses in a just and equitable manner.** Whether through loans or infrastructure improvements, cities can address sea level rise while improving the lives of their residents.

SPOTLIGHT ON A LATINO WATER LEADER

Susana de Anda,
Co-Founder and
Co-Executive Director,
Community Water Center



organization. Susana has received numerous awards and recognitions, including: James Irvine Foundation Leadership Award (2018); White House Champion of Change for Climate Equity (2016); "150 Fearless Women in the World" by Newsweek Magazine (2012)

Susana De Anda grew up in Salinas, CA, an agricultural area known for fruits, vegetables, and dairies, as well as high rates of poverty. After seeing firsthand how agricultural chemicals affected the health of her friends and family, who suffered from polluted air and water, de Anda was determined to work for change, and co-founded the Community Water Center, a nonprofit environmental justice

 More information: www.latinocf.org/climate



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