

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 2, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Chairman Leahy,

Thank you for your leadership in the FY 23 House Appropriations budget process. As you finalize a final Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 funding bill that advances Democratic priorities, we urge you to support the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in their efforts to address the impact of climate change on the health of Americans. Specifically, we request you prioritize at least \$3 million in funding for the Office of Climate Change and Health Equity, consistent with the President's FY 23 budget request, and funding provided in Democrats' House and Senate FY23 appropriations bills. This investment is critical to address the impact of climate change on Latino communities and other communities of color.

The HHS Office of Climate Change and Health Equity (OCCHE) was established in August 2021 to address the impact of climate change on the health of the American people. OCCHE is responsible for leading HHS's efforts to protect vulnerable communities hit first and worst by pollution and climate-driven disasters. This work includes addressing health disparities exacerbated by climate impacts, helping to decarbonize the health care sector, and fostering innovation in climate adaptation and resilience for disadvantaged communities. Unfortunately, OCCHE's work has not received dedicated funding, forcing the Office to rely on temporary staff to carry out their mission to address the health impacts of climate change.

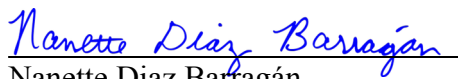
The climate crisis is disproportionately impacting the health of Latino communities. Latinos have borne the brunt of power outages due to heat waves. These extreme weather events have been compounded by the fact that Latinos are 21% more likely than whites to live in urban heat islands; areas that are surrounded by asphalt and concrete. Exposure to the harmful effects of extreme heat leads to respiratory difficulties, heat cramps, exhaustion, and heat-related mortality. This is especially challenging for Latino households, since 30% do not have air conditioning and over 40% are energy insecure. In addition, farmworkers are 20 times more likely than other outdoor workers to die from extreme heat, and Latinos make up 75% of farmworkers.

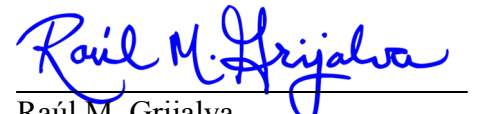
OCCHE is already spearheading efforts at HHS to tackle health disparities exacerbated by climate change and reduce emissions in the health care sector. The \$3 million in FY23 dedicated federal funding will allow OCCHE to coordinate an all-of-government approach to address the disproportionate health effects of climate change on communities of color. By funding OCCHE, we can improve the resilience and health of Latino communities, and accelerate a just transition away from fossil fuels that harm our communities.

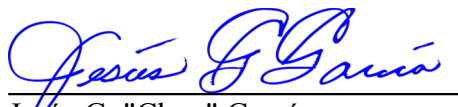
Thank you for your leadership on the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and for your continued support of efforts to address climate change. As you work to finalize the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Omnibus bill, we urge you to prioritize \$3 million for the HHS Office of Climate Change and Health Equity in any final appropriations agreement.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our request.


Sincerely,



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress


Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress

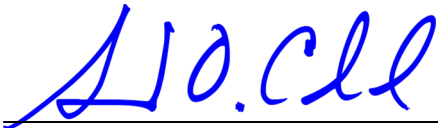

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Member of Congress

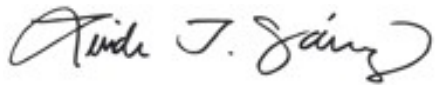

Tony Cardenas
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