



WSPA

A PROGRAM OF WSPA

LEVANTA
TU VOZ

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kevin Slagle

Western States Petroleum Association

(916) 498-9203

kslagle@wspa.org

New Program Elevates Latino Voices in Energy Conversation

Latino families and businesses share personal stories and concern about California's costly energy policies

May 15, 2023 (Sacramento) – Today, the Western States Petroleum Association ([WSPA](#)) unveiled a new program called [Levanta Tu Voz](#) (*Raise your Voice*) that will help policymakers see and hear what has gone missing in the state's drastic and costly energy debates. *Levanta Tu Voz* will lay bare what many of California's Latinos already know: while policymakers say they are speaking for the Latino community, they aren't really listening. The result has been more energy policies that move too fast and are too costly to help Latino families get ahead when they are still recovering from the pandemic's economic damage and dealing with California's exorbitantly high cost of living.

"This effort will elevate and give voice to Latinos who are often ignored in our state's public discourse on energy policy. Bans, mandates, and policies that further dictate when and how California's families can use energy are costly and restrictive," **said Argelia León, Director of Strategic Partnerships and Southwest Policy at WSPA.** "There is more than one point of view when it comes to energy policy in California, Latinos are a diverse community with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. I am proud to help lead this effort and provide a platform to uplift the stories of my community who continue to bear the burden of California's growing inequality."

New reports ([here](#) and [here](#)) show those buying electric cars in California reside in the wealthiest zip codes leaving behind too many low-income, hard-working families.

"When I was approached to speak and offer my point of view, I had been watching how state leaders spoke of energy issues facing California. I didn't like it. I know that WSPA is willing to engage in community relations and I'm happy that Latino families are being given a chance to speak up," said **Dr. Juan Cepeda-Rizo of Long Beach**, professor of engineering at Cal State Long Beach, a leader in business and civic life who has agreed to speak and share his views. "Of course, every Latino in California wants clean air, and we want to make progress on climate change, but the policies coming from California's leaders work only for the wealthy. We know this. We must do more for our community so that laws are equitable. It is insulting that leaders ask low-income families to take more public transit and ride bikes while wealthy families buy new electric vehicles."

The *Levanta Tu Voz* community program includes field organizing efforts, paid advertising, alongside regular appearances on-air and in-print with leading California news companies serving

the Latino community. The work will highlight key questions that are ignored by leaders in Sacramento.

“We’re committed to the efforts of *Levanta Tu Voz* and we will dedicate our resources and platforms to make *Levanta Tu Voz* a powerful clearinghouse of Latino business voices,” said **Julian Cañete, President and CEO of the California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce**. “I wrote last year and have said repeatedly that California continues to implement policies that negatively impact more than 70,000 Hispanic-owned businesses in the state. These policies hurt California’s minority and disadvantaged communities. We can’t afford them, and neither can our families. This must change.”

“This effort is a result of listening. From our team leader Argelia whose own life story is rooted in this industry and lessons learned about hard work and the importance of good jobs to families and communities, to small business owners and community volunteers—we heard a consistent message: too many politicians shout us down while voting for energy policies that create higher costs and diminish the quality of life for Latinos and other Californians,” said **Catherine Reheis-Boyd, President and CEO of WSPA**. “We are proud to support these voices.”

Community stories and program advertising can be found at levantatuvoz.org.

#

About WSPA & *Levanta Tu Voz*

[Levanta Tu Voz](http://levantatuvoz.org) (*Raise Your Voice*) is a program of the Western States Petroleum Association (WSPA) created to empower voices of the Latino community across California. Efforts to improve air quality and fight climate change are important but will only work if the solutions are affordable for everyone. Even though Latinos will be disproportionately impacted by a rushed energy transition, California politicians and media are failing to include Latino voices on energy and climate issues. Elected officials admit the transition will be hardest on middle-and low-income Californians, but their only answers are public transportation, more bus lanes and bike paths. WSPA has been working with—and listening to—the Latino community over the last several years to co-create a program where Latino voices and perspectives can be part of the energy and climate conversation.