

2,000 petitions turned in demanding a healthier, cleaner NM

Written by Staff Reports

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ALBUQUERQUE — Immigrant Latino community members and leaders came together with “Juntos: Our Air Our Water” to turn in over 2,400 signed petitions to Gov. Susana Martinez and the Environmental Department in Santa Fe, demanding *our* state transition to clean, renewable energy Nov. 21.

The petition gathering started early September of this year after Juntos had conducted a survey, from October 2015 through February 2016, which demonstrated that 89 percent of the surveyed families — mostly from the Latino immigrant community — expressed that their number one

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concern was the air quality and air pollution levels found in their communities.

The survey findings were then corroborated by the American Lung Association study which gave Bernalillo County a grade “F” for air quality.

The petitions turned in on Monday demand that the Martínez administration implements a strong plan to help our state transition to clean, renewable energy — specifically wind and solar energy — and creates more “green jobs.” Investments in renewable energy are investments in healthy families, and yet the Martinez administration continues to invest in dirty energy, despite its impact on New Mexicans’ air, land, water and health.

According to the Solar Jobs Census, nearly 40 percent of solar workers in the state of New Mexico are Hispanic/Latino. The same census shows that solar industry employment has grown by 123% in the past six years, resulting in nearly 115,000 domestic living-wage jobs.

The following are statements by leaders from Juntos: Our Air Our Water on the petition turn-in at the State Capitol Building:

Martha Favela, Leader of Juntos’ “Mother Promotoras” program said, “Our families are passionate about clean air and water for our children today and tomorrow. It is time for the governor to stop looking after the interest of big corporations that continue to pollute our environment at the expense of our families’ health. Susana Martinez has to listen to our needs and make sure to create a cleaner, healthier NM.”

Sergio Granados, Canvasser/South Valley Academy student expressed, “Our families deserve to be treated with dignity and that includes ensuring the clean air, clean water and clean energy we need. We have gathered thousands of signatures from our communities to ensure that New Mexican families are heard and we can build a better future for our families.”

Christopher Ramirez, Program Director of Juntos: Our Air Our Water also added, “Latino communities have historically been left out of decisions that will impact the health and well-being of our families and future generations.”

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“Martinez’s administration has presented many challenges for the Latinx community, and environmental justice is another one of them. We are ready to continue stand with and organize alongside other communities to ensure a safe and healthy future for our families and loved ones in the present and the future,”

During the petition turn-in, leaders demanded more spaces for public input from Latino communities. Community leaders also express their demands — by sharing their stories — for clean air, water and clean, renewable energy in our state and the city of Albuquerque, specifically in the Westgate, South Valley and International District.