

Environmental Justice Grows Stronger

by Ana Molina

The Environmental Justice Health Alliance (EJHA) recently released *"Life at the Fenceline,"* an online map of more than 12,500 hazardous chemical facilities that are federally regulated under the Risk Management Plan Rule. The map clearly illuminates the fact that minority communities, predominately African-American and Latinx people, reside in closer proximity to hazardous industrial emissions than do higher income people.

Beyond Toxics has recently embarked on a new project with two of our long-time partners, NAACP Eugene/Springfield and NOWIA UNETE Center for Farmworker and Immigrant Advocacy in Medford to continue to build an environmental justice movement that is led by the communities who are bearing the brunt of environmental pollution. This collaborative project will work with and engage Oregon communities to advocate for policies that help reduce the consequences of industrial development throughout Lane, Josephine, and Jackson counties.

Our initiative will develop alliances between groups impacted by environmental injustices: Latinx and African-American people. We will work to empower our communities to create a strong, unified voice across the valley to come together and advocate for clean air, water, soil, and other issues important to our communities. This alliance will bring Latinx and African-American voices into public engagement and community-based research, while building opportunities to advance the statewide environmental justice movement. It's important to incorporate the voices of Oregonians most impacted by pollution and food insecurity before making decisions that impact their health and access to nutritious, affordable food.

In order to bring justice to the communities most impacted by environmental racism, we need to elevate their voices and raise their visibility in places where policies are decided. Our collaborative project will include many different narratives and experiences in the Latinx and African-American communities in order to better understand our shared struggles and triumphs.

This partnership has allowed each of our organizations to hire an organizer to advance environmental and worker justice.

Bianca Ballara – Beyond Toxics

Environmental Justice Organizer, Phoenix, OR

Born in Miami, Florida to Cuban immigrant and working class parents, Bianca has been familiar with racism and classism from a young age. She believes that what we may lack in privilege, we make up for in a deep knowledge of the importance of family and the land's integrity.

Thus, she is prepared to empower highly marginalized Latinx and communities of color experiencing the brunt end of environmental injustice in Jackson and Josephine counties.



Pablo Alvarez – NAACP

and Beyond Toxics Environmental Justice Organizer, Eugene, OR

Pablo was born and raised in Guatemala City. He came to the U.S. at age 14 in pursuit of greater opportunities and an education, which he obtained at the University of Oregon, with a focus on human rights. As an organizer for both Beyond Toxics and NAACP,

Pablo builds the alliance between Latinx and African-American communities in Lane County. He brings an understanding that their fight is rooted in the same oppressive systems.

Nick Morales – UNETE

Environmental Justice Organizer, Medford, OR

Nick was born in southern Oregon to parents who have been long-standing advocates for their community. As UNETE's first Environmental Justice Organizer, Nick strengthens the coalition by bringing to the table UNETE's long history and understanding of farmworker and immigrant community needs in the Rogue Valley.

