Energy Legislative Summit Report

Hispanics In Energy

2023 Energy Legislative Summit

Defining Energy Transition Equity for Hispanic Americans

February 15, 2023

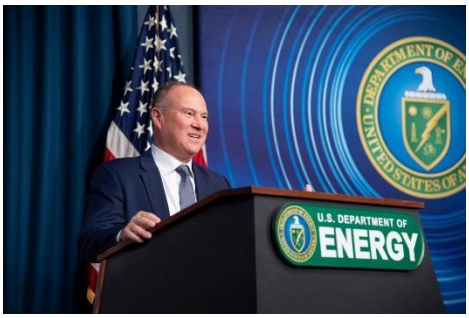
U.S. Department of Energy, Washington, D.C.

"We're going to remake America's energy landscape. And we're going to do it with and for Hispanic communities."

— The Honorable Jennifer Granholm, U.S. Secretary of Energy

"It is within our power not just to start but to advance this new chapter of diversity and equity on the biggest stage of our nation's energy transition."

— The Honorable Alex Padilla, U.S. Senator



"We have an opportunity of a lifetime to seize."

— Joseph Domínguez, Chairman, Hispanics in Energy and President and CEO, Constellation Energy

For a full video-recorded review and photographs, please visit

www.hispanicsinenergy.com

INTRODUCTION

On February 15, 2023, **Hispanics in Energy** (HIE) orchestrated the ***2023 Energy Legislative Summit: Defining Energy Transition Equity for Hispanic Americans***, hosted by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) in Washington, D.C.

The daylong event featured keynote presentations and panel discussions with Congressional members and top-level utility and energy executives and was intended to provide a factual backdrop for—and facilitate productive discourse regarding—the urgent need for more significant Hispanic equity in our nation's energy sector. The entire program agenda can be found here on the HIE website.

The event was live-streamed to over 11,000 viewers around the country, and the recording can be viewed here on the HIE website.

PARTICIPANTS

Over 40 leaders from the U.S. government, business, and academia participated in the daylong event.

Featured guest speakers included:

- **The Honorable Jennifer Granholm, Secretary of Energy, DOE**
- **The Honorable Alex Padilla, U.S. Senator**
- **Joseph Domínguez, Chairman, HIE and President and CEO, Constellation Energy**
- **José L. Pérez, President and CEO, Hispanics in Energy**

Guest speakers/panelists included:

- **Gabriel Aguilera**, Commissioner, New Mexico Public Regulation Commission
- **Marco Avila**, President and Chairman of the Board, Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- **Eduardo Balbis**, Commissioner Emeritus, Florida Public Service Commission
- **Julian Cañete**, President and CEO, California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce
- **Kwame Canty**, Senior Director, Edison Electric Institute
- **Chris Castro**, Chief of Staff, Office of State and Community Energy Programs, DOE
- **Claudia Chavez**, Special Assistant to the President for Candidate Recruitment, The White House
- **Dr. Beatriz Cuartas**, CALDOE President, Senior DEIA Engagement Officer, DOE
- **The Honorable Judge Nelson Diaz**, Former Judge, Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas
- **Dr. Antonio Flores**, President and CEO, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
- **Bill Flores**, Vice Chair of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) and former U.S. Representative
- **Janie Gonzalez**, Founder and CEO, Webhead, Chair, Board of Trustees, CPS Energy
- **Karen Harbert**, President and CEO, American Gas Association
- **Helena Hernandez**, Vice President, Smart Grid and Innovation, Florida Light & Power
- **Christy L. Jackiewicz**, Chief, Minority Educational Institution Division, Office of Economic Impact, DOE
- **Synthia Jaramillo**, Senior Vice President of Corporate Relations, U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- **Maria Korsnick**, President and CEO, Nuclear Energy Institute
- **Odogwu Obi Linton**, Commissioner, Maryland Public Service Commission
- **Veronica Maldonado-Torres**, President and CEO, Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- **David Mayorga**, Director of Public Affairs, DOE
- **Tamara Miles**, Deputy Director, Small Business Programs, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, DOE

- **William E. Mojica**, Senior Vice President, Technical Services and Asset and Risk Management, NiSource Corporate Services
- **Martín Montes**, Attorney, Barnes & Thornburg, LLC
- **Fabricio Montesdeoca**, Project Manager, Offshore Wind, Dominion Energy
- **José Niño**, Chairman, Biofriendly Energy, and HIE Board Member
- **Lea Márquez Peterson**, Commissioner, and Former Chairwoman, Arizona Corporation Commission
- **Frederick Pfaeffle**, Senior Counsel, Office of General Counsel, DOE
- **Ron Pierce**, Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, DOE
- **Alice Reynolds**, President, California Public Utilities Commission
- **Frank Reyes**, Trustee, San Bernadino Community College District
- **Edward Rios**, Commercialization Executive, DOE
- **Samantha Ruíz**, Chief of Staff, Office of Economic Impact and Diversity, DOE
- **Catherine J.K. Sandoval**, Member, U.S. Chemical Safety Board
- **Maria Pia Tamburri**, Vice President Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Employee Engagement, Dominion Energy
- **J. Michael Treviño**, Senior Executive Advisor, Treviño Consulting Group
- **Rebecca Valcq**, Chairperson, Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
- **Dr. Zack Valdez**, Ph.D., Chief of Staff, Office of Manufacturing and Energy Supply Chains and STEM Policy Strategist, DOE

THE CHALLENGE

In 2022, President Joe Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which aims to curb inflation by reducing the deficit, lowering prescription drug prices, and investing in domestic energy production while promoting clean energy. And the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act to rebuild America's infrastructure.

As **U.S. Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm** pointed out in her Summit keynote address, "The President has launched big goals—100% clean electricity by 2035, net zero by 2050. But if we reach these goals and communities are left out of the jobs and the economic opportunities, or if our clean energy future has the same inequities as our fossil energy present or past, we will have failed."

Secretary Granholm noted that Hispanics and Latinos had been especially hard hit economically from the energy perspective. "We know that many Latinos are grappling with today's energy system in a negative way," she said. "On average, Hispanic households spend more money to pay their energy bills than non-Hispanic white families. We know that 40% of Hispanic families struggle to pay those bills, and we know that Hispanic people live, are more likely to live in an area with polluted air or water. We know that they're 43% more likely to lose workdays as a result of extreme heat, which is getting even more extreme with climate change. So, we know these inequities."

In his Summit address**, HIE Chairman Joseph Dominguez**, President and CEO of Constellation Energy, remarked, "From a legislative perspective, we all know that the Inflation Reduction Act is this enormous push for America to transition to cleaner resources as we battle the climate crisis. But the other thing we saw in 2022 that is very apparent to us is that dealing with the climate crisis, we're just not going to get the support needed unless we ensure that we have reliable and affordable energy for all our customers."

CURRENT STATE

As published in the ***Hispanics in Energy, 2022 Annual Report,*** Hispanic and Latino Americans are the largest minority group in the U.S., representing about 20% of all Americans, and comprise an estimated 20% of the oil and gas industry workforce. Many energy and related services industries now have Hispanic employee resource groups. Federal, state, and utility commissions seek to increase Hispanic board participation. And energy trade associations are eager to engage the Hispanic community on energy policy, outreach, and inclusion issues.

Yet a significant disparity remains with regard to Hispanic representation in and support from the country's energy industry. Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) are underfunded. Hispanics are underprepared and underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) energy occupations. Far too few Hispanic-owned businesses are doing business in the energy sector. Very few Hispanics sit on utility commissions and federal regulatory bodies. And Hispanics and Latinos are missing on corporate energy boards and in the C-Suite, highlighting the need for greater diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Secretary Granholm commented that through the "suite" of energy laws—the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the CHIPS and Sciences Act, and the IRA, "we're going to remake America's energy landscape. And we're going to do it with and for Hispanic communities."

But more than passing legislation is required. "We want to make sure people understand how to access those opportunities," she said.

Senator Alex Padilla commended the Biden administration on its commitment to "building a federal government that reflects the diversity of the country it serves." He credited Hispanics in Energy for "holding the administration to those commitments, particularly regarding the energy sector—for holding the department and the whole of the federal government to address historical inequities."

But he noted there should be more significant Hispanic and Latino representation in government. "In the year 2023, there are not nearly as many Latinos as there could be, or as there should be, and it's hurting public policy," he remarked. "Too many decisions are being made daily without the sufficient inputs or the perspective of Latinos—decisions that have real consequences on communities of color and underserved communities around the country," he said.

Senator Padilla also indicated a need to invest in educating the Hispanic and Latino youth today to become energy leaders of tomorrow. "We have to do more to grow the talent pipeline by investing more in high schools and colleges and universities and particularly those with higher percentages of Latinos in their student population," he said.

He called for more funding for the country's Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). "As a proud co-founder and now co-chair of the Hispanic-Serving Institutions caucus, I've called on Congress to invest more in the hundreds of HSIs and emerging HSIs across the country that should serve as launching pads for young Latino leaders," he said. "And now the Department of Energy and the federal government will be partnering with HSIs across the country to develop that next generation of talent for the Department of Energy and the energy sector."

José Niño, Chairman of Biofriendly Energy and HIE Board Member, who hosted a panel discussion among U.S. Hispanic Chambers of Commerce during the event, remarked on the DOE's need to utilize Hispanic businesses. "We have about 20% population of Latinos in America. So, it's not unreasonable for us to ask for 20% of all contracts from the Department of Energy to go to Hispanic businesses. If you don't ask, you won't get it. So, we have to do that. We must work with the other minority communities to get our fair share of it."

Despite the obstacles to achieving energy equity and parity for the Hispanic and Latino communities, participants were optimistic and upbeat about the possibilities. "It is within our power not just to start but to advance this new chapter of diversity and equity on the biggest stage of our nation's energy transition," said Senator Padilla. "I'm committed to seeing it through. I'm thankful again to Secretary Granholm for hosting the Summit at DOE. Her participation speaks volumes about her commitment. And again, we all thank you for working together. Working together, we will rebuild our nation's energy infrastructure in a way that is both more sustainable and more inclusive."

THE 'ASK'

In a post-event letter to Secretary Granholm, HIE Chairman Joseph Dominguez and HIE President and CEO José Pérez, on behalf of the board of directors HIE, thanked Secretary Granholm for her partnership and enthusiastic engagement with the Hispanic community at the event.

Further, they asked Secretary Granholm to consider the immediate creation of a **Secretary of Energy Hispanic Advisory Ad hoc Advisory Council** to ensure continued alignment with the Hispanic community on vital opportunities and solutions. And they explained that they would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Secretary's team to formalize a partnership between DOE and HIE aimed at:

1. Promoting DOE's mission by helping Hispanic organizations and community leaders better understand the unique challenges and opportunities in the energy sector and providing technical assistance to enhance participation in funding opportunities.
2. Increasing the representation of Hispanics in the energy sector through STEM education, internship opportunities, and critical and technical trade school investment.
3. Smartly directing funding for energy programs specifically targeting Hispanic communities, especially those directly impacted negatively or disadvantaged, with energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, and electrification initiatives.
4. Supporting research on energy issues affecting Hispanic communities to inform better policies and more equitable and effective programs.
5. Providing language access and culturally appropriate resources.

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Special Thank You

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Office of **Ron Pierce**, Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, DOE
Claudia Chavez, Special Assistant to the President for Candidate Recruitment, The White House
Dr. Zack Valdez, Ph.D., Chief of Staff, Office of Manufacturing and Energy Supply Chains and STEM Policy Strategist, DOE
Dr. Antonio Flores, President and CEO, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and leaders from California, Maryland, Georgia, and New Mexico
Bill Flores, Vice Chairman, ERCOT
Janie Gonzalez, Chair, Board of Trustees, CPS Energy

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