

Poder Latinx (Merivet Lombera)

My name is Merivet Lombera and I am speaking on behalf of Poder Latinx, a non profit, non partisan organization dedicated to empowering Latinx communities to build sustained political power and actively participate in democracy. I'm also a resident of Yakima WA.

Poder Latinx mobilizes Latinx communities to take action in defense of "la madre tierra" (or Mother Earth) and environmental justice for our communities. This includes advocating for the development and adoption of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, as well as solutions that reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

I'm here to urge the Department of Ecology to eliminate incentives for factory farm gas—also known as biomethane—from Washington's Clean Fuel Standard.

This is a matter of public health and environmental justice issues, as concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) are already polluting the air and water in rural communities, including right here in Washington.

Manure pollution contributes to asthma, respiratory illnesses, and contaminates drinking water. These harms fall hardest on low-income residents and communities of color. The Clean Fuel Standard, as currently structured, worsens these impacts.

In Washington state, particularly in Yakima Valley and Whatcom County, communities are already experiencing the serious public health consequences of CAFO pollution.

These industrial operations produce massive amounts of waste and methane, contaminating groundwater with nitrates and filling the air with harmful emissions. Many of the families most affected are Latino and farmworker communities who are forced to live with toxic water, foul odors, and increased health risks like asthma and long-term illnesses.

These harms are not new—and they're not being addressed. For years, residents have raised concerns about water contamination and air quality, yet state agencies have failed to act. Permits continue to be issued without meaningful public input or an understanding of cumulative impacts. This is environmental injustice, plain and simple.

Now, under the current Clean Fuel Standard, factory farms could be rewarded for producing methane. That means the more pollution they generate, the more money they stand to make. This is a dangerous and perverse incentive that encourages more emissions and more harm to frontline communities.

Ultimately, allowing CAFOs to earn avoided methane credits under this program creates a dangerous and perverse incentive: the more methane a farm produces, the more profit it stands to gain, effectively rewarding pollution instead of preventing it.

Washington must stop greenwashing factory farm pollution as climate action. It's time to end subsidies for factory farm gas and invest in real, community-driven solutions that truly cut emissions and protect our health. Thank you.