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# Care for God's Creation

*News from the Stockton Diocese Environmental Justice Project*

## Lung Association: Hispanics are fighting for air

*Agriculture work...must not be considered a secondary activity, but as the objective of every strategy of growth and integral development... This is still more important if we keep in mind that the availability of foods is increasingly conditioned by the volatility of prices and sudden climatic changes.*

**- Pope Benedict XVI on World Food Day**

**Washington, D.C., October 24, 2011.** The American Lung Association released a new report, *Luchando por el Aire: The Burden of Asthma on Hispanics*, which provides an overview of research on the biological, environmental, political and cultural factors that increase asthma's burden on the Hispanic/Latino population in this country.

The Spanish title is the best translation of "fighting for air," an experience that is all too common for Hispanics with asthma. Although Hispanics are only 16 percent of the U.S. population, they account for nearly one-third of people who do not have health insurance.

Hispanics are 165 percent more likely to live in counties with unhealthy levels of particulate matter pollution, and 51 percent more likely to live in counties with unhealthy levels of ozone compared to non-Hispanic whites. They are also more likely to work in low-paying agriculture, construction and service jobs that rarely provide health benefits and often expose workers to serious respiratory hazards.

Read the report at: <http://www.lungusa.org/lung-disease/disparities-reports/burden-of-asthma-on-hispanics>

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- "Faith, Food, and Farming" symposium
- Governor Brown signs safe drinking water legislation
- Get ready for more freakish weather

## Bishop Blaire and Agriculture Secretary will discuss Faith, Food, and Farming

An abundance of our nation's food comes from the San Joaquin Valley, yet this area also struggles with some of the greatest hunger issues in the country. Join San Joaquin Valley farmers, farm workers, Stockton Diocese Roman Catholic Bishop Stephen Blaire, California Secretary of Agriculture Karen Ross, National Catholic Rural Life Conference Director Jim Ennis, and other regional and national leaders to explore agricultural practices and hunger issues as they relate to basic human needs.

The full-day symposium on **Saturday, November 19** will culminate with a call to action based on the day's findings. The event will take place at the **Robert Cabral Ag Center in Stockton**, and is open to everyone. Cost is \$15 and includes lunch. To register by the Nov. 15 deadline, contact Betsy at 209-444-5925 or [betsy@ccstockton.org](mailto:betsy@ccstockton.org)



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## Governor signs safe drinking water bills

### By Bernice Yeung, California Watch, October 10, 2011

From arsenic to E. coli bacteria, contaminants flow from the water taps of hundreds of communities across the state. But seven bills signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown seek to improve access to clean drinking water in California, particularly for residents in rural and disadvantaged communities. "Clean drinking water is a basic human right," Brown said in a statement. "The bills I have signed today will help ensure that every Californian has access to clean and safe sources of water."

According to clean-water advocates, the legislation addresses a longstanding need. A study by the Pacific Institute found that between 2005 and 2008, 1.3 million residents in the San Joaquin Valley had nitrate-polluted water coming from their faucets. Nitrates can cause death in vulnerable populations such as babies, and they also have been associated with cancer. Surveys by California Rural Legal Assistance and the Community Water Center in Visalia also found that low-income Californians who have access only to polluted water spend between 4 and 10 percent of their household income on bottled water for cooking and drinking.

Read more at: <http://californiawatch.org/dailyreport/brown-signs-slate-clean-drinking-water-bills-13002>

[*The Stockton Diocese was part of the coalition that cosponsored and helped pass these bills into law.*]

## Climate experts: Expect more weather disasters

Freakish weather disasters — from the sudden October snowstorm in the Northeast U.S. to the record floods in Thailand — are striking more often. And global warming is likely to spawn more similar weather extremes at a huge cost, says a draft summary of an international climate report obtained by The Associated Press.

[http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-205\\_162-20128315/climate-experts-expect-more-weather-disasters/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-205_162-20128315/climate-experts-expect-more-weather-disasters/)

### *About the Stockton Diocese Environmental Justice Project...*

Since 2005, the Environmental Justice Project has worked "to educate and motivate Catholics to a deeper reverence and respect for God's creation, and to engage local parishes in activities aimed at dealing with environmental problems, particularly as they affect the poor." The Project brings a unique Catholic voice to the public policy debate in the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada.

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#### Useful websites:

**Catholic Charities, Stockton Diocese:** [www.ccstockton.org](http://www.ccstockton.org)

**National Catholic Rural Life Conference:** [www.ncrlc.com](http://www.ncrlc.com)

**CatholicClimateCovenant**  
[Catholicclimatecovenant.org](http://Catholicclimatecovenant.org)

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