Yana Garcia, Secretary for Environmental Protection

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Yana Garcia, Secretary for Environmental Protection



Yana Garcia was appointed California Secretary for Environmental Protection by Governor Gavin Newsom in August 2022. She is the first-ever Latina to lead the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA). To implement CalEPAâ??s mission to restore, protect and enhance the environment, she guides the agencyâ??s more than 8,000 employees and oversees a budget of over $5.6 billion. Garcia also advises the governor on environmental policy, including reducing emissions to achieve the stateâ??s air quality and climate goals, restoring ecosystems and watersheds, delivering safe drinking water, and catalyzing a circular economy.

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Garcia is a nationally recognized environmental leader who has long worked to uplift voices from historically marginalized communities. Prior to her appointment, Garcia served as special assistant attorney general to California Attorney General Rob Bonta, advising him on legal and policy matters pertaining to the environment, housing, energy, and natural resources. She also has served in various CalEPA leadership roles focused on environmental justice, tribal affairs, and international partnerships.

Before entering state service, Garcia litigated environmental cases on behalf of several high-profile national non-profit organizations, as well as smaller community-based organizations in California and the states of Washington, Oregon, Alaska, and Florida. Her legal practice areas have focused on environmental justice issues, civil rights, land use, toxics, chemical disclosure, and energy. Garcia also has worked for national funders and their grantee organizations to support various environmental and civil rights projects aimed at achieving equitable access to clean air, clean water, and sustainable food and energy systems in the states of Texas, New Mexico, and Massachusetts.

Garcia holds a bachelorâ??s degree in politics from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and a law degree from Northeastern University School of Law.

Executive Management Biographies

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â??Yanaâ??s deep connection to communities, her strong track record as an environmental attorney in holding polluters accountable, and her commitment to bringing diverse interests together make her

uniquely matched to the challenges facing California.

â??She is a strategic and compassionate leader who played a central role in helping communities gain access to safe and affordable drinking water. Yana is known nationally as a groundbreaking environmentalist who has lifted up the voices of tribal nations, U.S.-Mexico border communities, and those struggling on the frontlines of the battle for environmental justice. I look forward to working with Yana to implement our ambitious environmental agenda with the knowledge that she is resolute in her commitment to ensuring a California for all.â?•

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