



**Honoree Remarks  
Nalleli Cobo**

**Rising Star Award**

**September 24, 2024  
Smithsonian American Art Museum  
Washington, DC**

Nalleli Cobo: Thank you so much to Mickey, to Ruben, and to the Latino Leaders Network for this award. It's truly an honor. I want to dedicate this award to my north star, my mentor, my biggest inspiration, my best friend, who happens to be my mom. *Mami gracias por todo.*

When I began my work at nine years old, I didn't even know what the word activist was. I didn't learn the word activist until I was eleven, and it was because a reporter had asked me, how do you feel being an activist?

And I told her to pause her recording and explain that fancy new word she had just thrown at me, but I learned my community was made up of activists. So many times, when growing up in a frontline community, in a sacrifice zone, we have no

control over tanker traffic, pollution, noise, emissions released in our community, but we have the power of our voice, we have the power to organize, we have the power of our stories. And as long as I'm here, I'm going to truthfully and unapologetically share my story to create change for our communities and those alike.

As we just learned, two years ago we had a historic change when the Los Angeles City Council and County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to ban all new oil exploration and phase out the existing sites over 20 years.

However, just recently, that ruling was overturned. Don't worry because what do we do when our community is under attack? We stand up and we fight back. So, I'm going to ask you again, what do we do when our community is under attack?

All: We stand up and we fight back.

Nalleli Cobo: There was no fight in that. I'm going to ask you guys again. What do you do when your community is under attack?

All: We stand up and we fight back.

Nalleli Cobo: I know you felt the power in that one. So, we are going to stand up and fight back. There is a bill currently sitting on California Governor Gavin Newsom's desk, AB 3233, and with your help, with social media, with word of mouth, we are going to apply pressure to him to sign that bill to reinforce

the rights of cities and communities to breathe clean air in their very own backyards.

Everyone has a right to breathe clean air regardless of their age, their gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, zip code, or religion. Clean air is a basic human right that's being denied to us. And we are going to stand up and fight back for that right. Thank you so much.