

USC Launches First-of-its-Kind Podcast Series and Research Focused on the Energy Transition:

Electric Futures

El Valle de Litio | Una Época de Cambio is Available Across Podcasting Platforms on

February 27, 2024

The USC Annenberg Center for Climate Journalism and Communication (CCJC) has created a special 7th episode for the podcast series *Electric Futures* in collaboration with Dimelo, the only Spanish media outlet in USC Annenberg Media. This episode is intended to improve access for the 86.1% of Imperial County that identifies as Hispanic or Latino and over 70% of the population claims Spanish as their first language.

El Valle de Litio | Una época de cambio is the 7th episode of *Electric Futures* hosted by Natalie Lopez, a resident born and raised in Imperial County and an undergraduate student at the University of Southern California. The episode also features voices from the community translated into Spanish by our collaborators with Dimelo.

With the potential lawsuit to be filed by the end of this month, the overwhelmingly Spanish-speaking community must be informed of the circumstances that surround the local lithium deposits. Imperial Valley, an agricultural area east of San Diego and bordering Mexico, is suddenly in the spotlight thanks to its vast deposits of lithium, a chemical element necessary for the production of batteries needed for electric vehicles, grid storage, and consumer products. The extraction and processing of this “white gold” is poised to bring a massive influx of capital to the Imperial Valley, which has the highest unemployment rate in California at 21.1% and a poverty level of 17.3%. *Electric Futures* explores the tradeoffs the community must make as it weighs economic opportunity, environmental impact, and a worldwide hunger for lithium.

Electric Futures brings to the podcast world a commitment to using research-based climate communications best practices, including a narrative storytelling approach. Additionally, an audience research study conducted by USC Norman Lear Center will be the first to measure trends in engagement for a climate podcast. The research will be published by the Center for Climate Journalism and Communication upon completion.

Una época de cambio was edited by Erick Trevino, and voiceovers of the interviews were done by Natalia Ozuna, Valeria Macias, and Jose Romo.

Electric Futures | El Futuro del Valle de Litio debuts on February 27, 2024, on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Amazon Music. For media inquiries contact the Center for Climate Journalism and Communication at redhot@usc.edu.