

March 30, 2010

Dear Senator:

As state and regional ecumenical and faith-based organizations, we are writing to express our concern with the global climate crisis and the need for a timely and effective U.S. response to this moral challenge.

In every state and community around the country, families and individuals are facing different challenges from the effects of climate change. In the Southeast, communities are struggling with dwindling water reserves and states even find themselves pitted against one another for access to fresh water. In addition, sea level rise and the likely impact of increasingly intense hurricanes could have devastating impacts on Southeastern communities and ecosystems. Communities in the Northeast are facing endangered ecosystems accompanied by species loss, and invading disease-carrying insects, which threaten both humans (ticks carrying Lyme disease) and forests (maple and conifer species). Additionally, traditional pastimes such as winter skiing and maple syrup production are threatened as a result of warmer, shorter winters. In the Midwest, farmers are struggling to meet production levels of various crops that are sold around the country and the world. In the Southwest, communities are preparing for the perfect storm as historical water allocations are no longer enough for communities in California, Colorado and Utah; while in the Northwest, warmer water temperatures are threatening iconic salmon populations, which are important to the ecology, economy, and culture of the region. One common challenge that continues to emerge is increased respiratory problems. More and more children are suffering from asthma, particularly those living in poverty and communities of color who often live in areas with the worst air quality.

As people of faith, we are committed to developing a moral and sustainable response to climate change that recognizes the importance of God's great Creation and the interconnectedness of all of God's children. We believe that we must respond to climate change in a way that will ensure the future of God's Earth while protecting the most vulnerable among us from the impacts of climate change. We support climate legislation that includes strong emission reductions, protections for low-income consumers, and international adaptation assistance.

In particular, we believe that the United States must commit to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 and by 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. Many of our states have already committed to greenhouse gas reductions at a similar level and we are working in other states to develop regional and state standards that reflect the need for strong emissions reductions.

In addition, we believe that those living in poverty in communities around the country must be protected from potentially negative impacts of climate legislation or greenhouse gas regulations to ensure that we are not pushing families further into poverty. As many have noted, greenhouse gas regulations will result in higher prices for electricity, food, transportation needs, and many

other commonly used goods. This additional financial strain is easily avoided and it is vital that we do so to prevent further hardships for those who are already suffering.

We also recognize that the transition to a clean energy economy will provide a great opportunity for many in our communities. New, clean sources of energy will not only help to reduce carbon dioxide pollution, but will create well-paying, clean, and just jobs that support families and communities. For example, the solar sector currently employs 80,000 people nationwide, and the manufacture of wind turbines will create at least 13,000 jobs and provide \$2 billion in investments. In addition, a federal Energy Efficiency Resource Standard would save consumers \$168 billion. With the national unemployment rate looming at nearly ten percent, we must take steps to invest in our communities by offering sustainable employment in new clean-energy sectors, and improving energy efficiency to save consumers money.

Finally, we believe that any U.S. response to climate change must recognize and provide for those who are already suffering from the impacts of climate change in the world's most vulnerable developing countries. As people of faith, we are called to protect and serve those less fortunate than ourselves and to take responsibility for our actions. The inclusion of international adaptation assistance will ensure that we are helping our brothers and sisters cope with the droughts and floods that are a result of the United States' historical contribution to climate change.

Taking the right steps now will create jobs, improve air quality, and reduce pollution-related health threats in communities across the country, while at the same time responding to the global challenge of climate change and reducing our dependence on fossil fuels. Each of our states bring different challenges and needs to the table when addressing climate change, but we all agree that we must address climate change sooner rather than later in a way that protects both God's Earth and God's children, particularly those historically marginalized.

We look forward to working with you to address the moral challenge of climate change and urge you to take quick and effective action.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

LeeAnne Beres, Executive Director, Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power & Light

Regional Organizations

Patricia Gillis, Executive Director, Voices for Earth Justice

Dr. Scott Myers-Lipton, Co-Founder, Gulf Coast Civic Works Campaign

Rev. Dr. Emmett O. Floyd, Interim Conference Minister, Southern Conference, United Church of Christ

Rev. Fletcher Harper, Executive Director, GreenFaith

Rev. Peter Sawtell, Executive Director, Eco-Justice Ministries

Rev. Wade Schemmel, Conference Minister, Northern Plains Conference of the United Church of

Christ

State organizations

Doug Bland, Chair, Arizona Interfaith Power and Light

Rev. Stephen Copley, Chair, Arkansas Interfaith Alliance

Rev. Dr. Rick Schlosser, Executive Director, California Council of Churches

Mark Carlson, Director, Lutheran Office of Public Policy - California

Rev. Dr. Jim Ryan, Council Executive, Colorado Council of Churches

Rev. Nelson Bock, Director of Advocacy and Outreach, Colorado Interfaith Power & Light

Rabbi Andrea Cohen Kiener, Director, Connecticut Interreligious Eco-Justice Network and the Connecticut Interfaith Power & Light

Joelle Novey, Director, Greater Washington Interfaith Power & Light

Rev. Russell Meyer, Executive Director, Florida Council of Churches

Kent Siladi, Conference Minister, Florida Conference, United Church of Christ

Alexis Chase, Executive Director, Georgia Interfaith Power & Light

Rev. Dr. Clare Butterfield, Director, Faith in Place and the Illinois Interfaith Power & Light Campaign

Rev. Daniel Schwick, Director, Lutheran Advocacy - Illinois

Tim Fink, Executive Director, Iowa Interfaith Power & Light

Eileen Horn, Statewide Coordinator, Kansas Interfaith Power & Light

Rev. Marian McClure Taylor, Executive Director, Kentucky Council of Churches

Tim Darst, Executive Director, Kentucky Interfaith Power & Light

Fr. Dan Krutz, Executive Director, Louisiana Interchurch Conference

Rev. Jill Saxby, Executive Director, Maine Council of Churches

Rev. Lee Hudson, Director, Lutheran Office of Public Policy in Maryland

Rev. Jack Johnson, Executive Director, Massachusetts Council of Churches

Cathy MacDonald, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Boston

Rev. Peg Chamberlin, Executive Director, Minnesota Council of Churches

Rev. Mark Peters, Executive Director, Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota

Alice M. Graham, Executive Director, Mississippi Coast Interfaith Disaster Task Force

Pam Sheldon, Administrator, Montana Association of Churches

Joan Diefenbach esq., Director, New Jersey Council of Churches

The Rev. Bruce H. Davidson, Director, Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry in New Jersey

James K. Baird, Interim Executive Director, New Mexico Conference of Churches

Ruth Hoffman, Director, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry – New Mexico

Catharine Cline, Coordinator, Justice & Witness Ministries of the New York Conference, United Church of Christ

Rev. George Reed, Executive Director, North Carolina Council of Churches

Jill Drzewiecki Rios, Director, North Carolina Interfaith Power & Light

Rev. Rebecca Tollefson, Executive Director, Ohio Council of Churches

Jenny Holmes, Director of Environmental Ministries, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Joy Bergey, Project Director, Pennsylvania Interfaith Climate Campaign
The Rev. Amy E. Reumann, Director, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania
Rev. Dr. Marja L. Coons-Torn, Conference Minister, Penn Central Conference, United Church of Christ
Rev. Dr. Don Anderson, Executive Minister, Rhode Island Council of Churches
Rev. Brenda Lynn Kneece, Executive Minister, South Carolina Christian Action Council
Gene E. Miller, Executive Director, Association of Christian Churches of South Dakota
Rev. Douglas Hunt, Executive Director, Tennessee Interfaith Power & Light
Bee Moorehead, Executive Director, Texas Impact
The Reverend Canon Diana Johnson, Director, Utah Interfaith Power and Light
Betsy Hardy, Coordinator, Vermont Interfaith Power & Light
C. Douglas Smith, Executive Director, Virginia Interfaith Center
Joseph R. Stanley, III, Director, Virginia Interfaith Power & Light
Alice Woldt, Executive Director, Washington Association of Churches
Mr. Scott D. Anderson, Executive Director, Wisconsin Council of Churches
The Rev. Susan Gilbert Zencka, President, Wisconsin Interfaith Power and Light