

Partnering for Advocacy

A unique partnership in Seattle, WA, is uniting people of faith with community environmental leaders to decide advocacy priorities and win legislative battles. Earth Ministry, an ecumenical environmental justice group works with advocacy organization, Priorities for a Healthy Washington, to select four environmental priorities each year. Earth Ministry then mobilizes the faith community to legislative advocacy based on those priorities. Jessie Dye, Earth Ministry Program and Outreach Director, said that the voices of people of faith bring real value to the advocacy work: “We bring a faith and values voice to environmental policy questions and we bring policy information to faith communities. Then people of faith join our partners in their strong advocacy efforts.” The partnership also provides resources to the faith communities, according to Dye. “We trust our partners to help us identify good climate policy and translate it to faith communities.”

Priorities for a Healthy Washington includes representatives from two dozen environmental advocacy groups, including the Sierra Club, the Nature Conservancy, and others. The partnership developed when leaders recognized that when each group introduced its own legislation, they often came into conflict. By working together to develop clear legislative priorities, they can concentrate and focus their efforts.

The program is working. Recent successes have included the development of responsible limits on climate pollution, a program to retain and replant trees in urban areas to reduce storm water flooding, and a program to get more Washington-grown produce into local schools and food banks. The advocacy of people of faith clearly made a difference. “When the Governor signed the climate change bill she mentioned the support of the faith community,” according to Dye. “We’re pleased to weigh in on behalf of God’s earth.”