

December 23, 2020

Dear Members of Congress:

As people of faith, we believe humanity has a sacred duty to take care of God's creation. It is our moral responsibility to rightly share in the gifts of creation that God has provided, while also protecting the opportunity for future generations to experience an abundant life on Earth. Right now, human use of God's creation is far out of balance with creation's natural ability to regenerate. We therefore call on our elected leaders with urgency to support the Thirty by Thirty Resolution to Save Nature (H.Res. 835 & S.Res. 372).

While the title of the Resolution is "to save nature," we understand human flourishing is dependent on our relationship with creation. Humans depend on nature for the very air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. God's creation provides resilience to extreme weather events, invasive species attacks on our food systems, and illnesses such as the coronavirus.

The timeliness of our action matters, as we are losing species at an unprecedented rate. One in five species is threatened or endangered. Protecting nature provides a safe haven for all God's creatures - from the tiniest plants and insects to the blue whale (the largest animal to inhabit Earth). Protected areas provide sanctuary for life to recover, to be fruitful and multiply.

The Thirty by Thirty Resolution to Save Nature outlines policy recommendations that put the United States on a path toward achieving strong conservation protections for at least 30 percent of God's creation by 2030. Currently, only 12% of U.S. land and 24% of U.S. oceans are protected. Globally those statistics are even lower- approximately 15% of land and 7% of the ocean is protected worldwide.

This Resolution:

- Aligns with global goals drafted for consideration by the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Articulates the moral imperative that the U.S. actively lead as well as participate in this worldwide effort.
- Calls on the US federal government to protect sovereignty and self-determination of Tribal Nations in the stewardship of the cultural, natural and historic resources of the community.

Importantly, the Resolution calls for environmental justice in conservation planning to ensure the life-sustaining benefits of nature are accessible to all people, especially communities of color and economically disadvantaged communities.

The Resolution requires collaboration with local communities and private landowners. Religious or spiritual entities care for approximately 7% of the Earth's habitable land around the world, and we recognize religious organizations may play a significant role in these conservation efforts.

As we face our ecological and health crises together, we can act in hope, before we endure more loss. Now is the time for strong conservation protections for God's marine and terrestrial creation. We ask you to cosponsor this resolution as a step toward this goal.

In hope,

Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice

Creation Justice Ministries

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth