

FAITH PRINCIPLES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Justice: Strive for justice and acknowledge that climate change’s societal impact already falls, and will continue to fall, most heavily on the people around the world who are least able to mitigate the impacts—poor and vulnerable populations in the U.S. and in developing countries. As a leading industrialized nation that has disproportionately contributed to greenhouse gas emissions, it is incumbent upon us to rectify this injustice. To reach our goal of justice, we require that legislation:

- Include mechanisms that mitigate the impacts of climate change particularly for vulnerable populations in the U.S. and abroad.
- Prevent further harm to human health and all of God’s Creation by utilizing clean energy sources when addressing global warming and carbon pollution.
- Focus on a fair and equitable distribution of total benefits and costs among people, communities, and nations, and in particular rectify the disproportionate impact that low-income communities have and will experience as the climate continues to change.
- Enable our brothers and sisters now living in poverty to have both economic independence and stability and to eliminate the devastating impacts that climate change has and will continue to have on those people in the U.S. and around the world living in poverty.
- Take action now to avoid placing the burden of carbon reduction unduly on our children’s children.
- Endorse policies that place a high priority on allowing all people to live in God’s abundance and with dignity by ensuring that basic human needs and worker justice are not adversely impacted by the effects of climate change or future efforts to address climate change.

Stewardship: Heed the call to be faithful stewards and caretakers of God’s creation by limiting the future impacts of climate change on God’s Earth. Already, climate change has damaged the precious balance of God’s creation, including increasing the number of threatened species, causing long-term drought, and melting Arctic ice. To reach our goal of stewardship, we require that legislation:

- Follow recognized scientific guidelines and recommendations in order to protect all of God’s creation and prevent catastrophic damage to God’s Earth and God’s people. Following their recommendations, legislation must include comprehensive, mandatory, and aggressive emission reductions that aim to limit the increase in Earth’s temperature to 2 degrees Celsius or less. Legislation should focus on the short term goal of reducing U.S. carbon emissions to reach a 25-40 percent reduction in carbon by 2020 with a long term vision to achieve carbon emissions that are 80 percent below 2000 levels by the year 2050.
- Avoid catastrophic climate change, which would devastate God’s creation, put more pressure on disaster and relief responses, and endanger the future of the planet. Although climate change impacts are already being felt, we must ensure that God’s people and planet are protected from the catastrophic effects that may occur if we fail to significantly curb our carbon emissions.
- Call on major emitters to take responsibility for their actions and work to significantly reduce their carbon emissions.

Sustainability: Ensure that efforts to curb climate change prevent further environmental and societal tragedies. As people of faith we are guided by the value of sustainability. Sustainability requires that we enable biological and social systems that nurture and support life not be depleted or poisoned. To reach our goal of sustainability, we require that legislation:

- Maintain God’s good creation by preventing policies that place the burden of our lifestyles on one aspect of creation and encouraging policies that sustain and restore vibrant eco-systems with economic justice so that communities of life can flourish for generations to come.
- Respond to global warming in a way that reflects the interdependence of all of God’s creation.
- Support energy sources that are renewable, clean, and avoid destruction of God’s creation.

Sufficiency: In a world of finite resources, for all to have enough requires that those among us who have more than enough will need to address our patterns of acquisition and consumption. We can not achieve significant reductions in climate change emissions unless we make changes in our lifestyles and particularly in our energy consumption. To support the goal of sufficiency, legislation must:

- Encourage energy conservation in our homes, our communities, and our places of worship.
- Encourage energy conservation in national transportation and distribution systems and commercial enterprises.
- Encourage the federal government to lead through research and example in the practice and implementation of energy conservation.

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