



Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

UU advocacy in the nation's capital

4/1/2019



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
MINISTRY FOR EARTH
Respect Life. Restore Earth. Renew Spirit.

Write Here! Write Now! May 14, 2019 Advocacy Day Hill Visits

Contact: advocacy@uusj.org or 703-786-5206; www.uusj.org click on Advocacy

Letter Delivery - Congregation Organizer: Mailed letters must be received by Thursday, May 9 to UUSJ, 7750 16th St. NW, Washington, DC 20012.

Write Here! Write Now! Tell Your US Senators to Take Urgent Action to Address the Climate Crisis

This Write Here! Write Now! is a collaboration between UUSJ and UUMFE during the April 2019 *"Spring for Change: A Season of Sacred Activism."*

Why We Are Writing?

Our ethical, moral UU values call us to promote bold action and hold our legislators accountable. Especially during Earth Month, we are called to act and we must seize the opportunity that has been generated by youth and the introduction of carbon pricing legislation and "audacious" solutions like those called for in the Green New Deal. We must tell our elected officials to act - pass transformative legislation that addresses pressing climate change issues to create a new, more just and livable world for our communities, our planet and all creation. It's up to us to keep up the pressure to act.

Key Message

US Senators must take urgent action to address the climate crisis. Hold hearings and pass legislation that will build a sustainable infrastructure, that protects the health and welfare of people and communities, creates new green jobs, and transforms our economy to reduce carbon emissions. The effects of climate change are growing and the window for action is narrowing. Senate must act now.

Background

Climate disruption and its effects are real and more people are feeling the impact, according to a recent Yale/GMU report that public sentiment and a growing number of people are either "alarmed" or "concerned" about global warming. Collectively, as a nation, we must respond to the impact of climate change on the environment, society and the economy with bold action.

Legislative Status: Some members of Congress are speaking forcefully and introducing legislation, such as the Green New Deal (H.RES.109 & S.RES.59) and the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (H.R.763). Others denigrate these proposals and those who initiate them. Although the Senate defeated the GND resolution and there is little chance meaningful climate change legislation can get through the Senate this year, we can ask for Senate committee hearings and field hearings. Bipartisan support for climate-resilient infrastructure reform is a possible opportunity to address climate change, mitigate its effects, and create new jobs.

Climate change legislation will most likely pass the House while the Senate remains deadlocked. Without substantive action people, communities, the environment and economy will continue to suffer.

UU Grounding

Our UU 7th Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. UUs passed an Action of Immediate Witness, *Support a Strong, Compassionate Global Climate Agreement: Act for a Livable Climate* (2015), and a Statement of Conscience, *Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change* (2006), calling for "funding of regional, national, and international programs to assist in mitigating the effects of global warming/climate change."

(See other side for Talking Points, Questions to Ask, and Sample Letter)

Suggested Talking Points On Key Impacts of Climate Change

- **ESSENTIAL ACTION:** We need a comprehensive climate strategy to address the ecological, social, and economic issues caused by the climate crisis.
- **IMPACTED LOCAL ECONOMIES:** We must ensure a “Just Transition” for workers and communities most impacted by climate change in the transition towards a climate-resilient and low-carbon economy. Create opportunities for displaced workers and communities to participate in the new economy with transition funds for education or new business starts that allow individuals and families to create a new future for themselves.
- **PRICING CARBON AND GROWING JOBS:** We must reduce carbon emissions to achieve significant reductions in greenhouse gases. Pass legislation that puts a price on carbon emissions - one of the most economically efficient market-driven solutions to drive the use of renewable energy, support ecological conservation, and grow the renewable energy industry. Carbon pricing is expected to reduce carbon emissions by 40% in 12 years. **A transition to clean energy will create green new jobs.**
- **HEALTH:** We must protect vulnerable frontline communities. Fund programs that protect people from health effects such as respiratory problems, water-borne diseases, and mental health impact, especially in areas already at risk because they have less economic capacity to prepare for and cope with extreme weather and climate-related events.

Suggested Questions to Ask Your Senators

- *Will you call for public hearings to elevate the discussion and debate in search of solutions and support a Select Committee to address the issues of the climate crisis?*
- *What is your plan to address the economic challenges posed by climate disruption to ensure a “Just Transition” for communities at risk, including coal-mining communities, those affected by sea-level rise, and other harms?*
- *Do you support legislation to put a significant price on carbon emissions?*
- *What will you do to build communities that are resilient to a changing environment and to help them minimize the most extreme effects of climate change?*

Sample Letter to Your Senators

[Use your own words -- this is only a sample letter.]

[Today's date]

Dear Senator _____, *[write two letters, one to each Senator]*

I am a Unitarian Universalist from *[optional: name of congregation and location]* and I believe in the inherent worth and dignity of all people and respect for the interdependent web of all existence. My faith calls me to work to protect all people, especially the most vulnerable, all creation, and the environment, from the impact of climate disruption.

The climate is changing - it's real. I see it in the news every day *[in your community or state?]*. Ecological changes driven by rising greenhouse gases are causing extreme weather patterns, droughts, year-round wildfires, hurricanes and floods that affect the safety and well-being of communities. These changes are hurting our nation's food supply, with short- and long-term effects on air and water quality, and the health of our rivers, oceans and bays. They also pose serious risks for public health. We need bold and innovative policy responses to help solve the climate crisis.

[To support the message, include in your own words a personal experience, story, concern, or pick a talking point to include. Is there a way that climate change affects you, your family, your community?]

[Ask a question that speaks to you such as one of the questions in the above section on Suggested Questions.]

[adapt a closing such as...] I look forward to hearing about your plans that will address the impact of climate disruption.

Sincerely, *[YOUR NAME and include your COMPLETE ADDRESS]*

(See other side for Background, UU Grounding, Message and Instructions for Delivering Letters)