



Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

Write Here! Write Now! **January 8, 2019**

ISSUE: Address Climate Change in Infrastructure Reform Bill - Focus: Senators

www.uusj.org click on Advocacy for Issue Action Information

advocacy@uusj.org 703-786-5206 or 202-600-9132

Send scanned and signed letters via PDF/or emails to advocacy@uusj.org by **Monday, January 7, 2019 by 12 noon ET**

Instructions for Writing and Delivering Your Letters

- **Focus on the topic** - Address climate change in a bipartisan infrastructure reform bill. **See sample letter page 2.**
- **Be original and speak from the heart.** If possible, describe a personal experience or story, or include 1-2 talking points (see page 2), **in your own words**, to support the main message.
- **Include a clear and specific action request.** "I urge you to..."
- **Include your name and complete mailing address** - to prove you are a constituent.
- **Unless an Advocacy Corps member is hand-delivering letters, send your letters to arrive by 12 noon ET Monday, January 7, 2019. PDF/scan and email letters to advocacy@uusj.org subject line: WHWN, (include the issue topic CC/Infrastructure), name and state of your congregation.**

Background and UU Grounding

Background: The UUSJ Advocacy Corps will go to Capitol Hill on January 8 to **ask senators to take action on climate change through infrastructure investment legislation.** Democratic Senators and House Republicans unveiled plans to **build and/or strengthen roads, bridges, tunnels, dams, water and energy supplies, airports and railways** in the previous Congress, but now must begin again. In December, Senate Democratic Leader Schumer stated that infrastructure legislation must address climate change. President Trump threatened to stop infrastructure reform unless there is funding for a border wall.

Infrastructure reform has broad bipartisan support and potential to move in the new 116th Congress. This legislation could not only help restore our aging infrastructure, but also protect vulnerable populations, create new jobs, and address the impact of climate change.

Americans want infrastructure reform. In a 2017 Harvard-Harris poll, 84 percent of those polled supported U.S. investment in infrastructure. 89 percent of the business owners and public surveyed believe such investments will improve the economy.

Last fall, the United Nations warned that we have 12 years to limit climate change catastrophes. Also, 13 U.S. federal agencies and a National Academy of Sciences panel stated we need more global mitigation and regional adaptation efforts to "avoid substantial damages to the U.S. economy, environment, and human health and well-being over the coming decades." Losses could reach hundreds of billions of dollars per year (Fourth National Climate Assessment (NCA4).

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), which advocates "funding of regional, national, and international programs to assist in mitigating the effects of global warming/climate change."

(See other side for Sample Letter, Facts and Talking Points)

Facts, Talking Points and Key Message

Facts and Talking Points: Several points below are from the Fourth National Climate Assessment (NCA4) Nov. 2018

- **More extreme weather is occurring and sea levels are rising. We must protect our environment and vulnerable frontline communities from** “higher temperatures, increasing air quality risks, more frequent and intense extreme weather and climate-related events, increases in coastal flooding...and other changes [that] increasingly threaten the health and well-being of the American people, particularly populations that are already vulnerable.” NCA4
- “Earth’s climate is now changing faster than at any point in the history of modern civilization, primarily as a result of human activities.” NCA4 **We must take immediate action and fund efforts to avert climate catastrophes** such as extreme storms, coastal flooding, and now year-long fire seasons.
- **We need to invest in our infrastructure and in programs to address climate change.** The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates that \$4.59 trillion is needed by 2025 just to bring our aging highways, bridges, and storm and drinking water systems into a state of “good” repair.
- **Water, energy, and transportation infrastructure reform is an opportunity to protect Americans’ health, the economy, and the environment.** The resources and services that people depend on for their livelihoods, sustenance, protection, and well-being are jeopardized by the impacts of climate change...” NCA4
- **Infrastructure reform will create new jobs and keep the U.S. economy vibrant.** The U.S. is missing an opportunity to be a global leader in the development of technology that produces energy from **renewable sources**. This will modernize our electrical grid and reduce harm to the environment.
- **We need the mandate and resources of the federal government to address the existential threat of climate change.** Many states and communities are already taking action, but the mandate and resources of the federal government are essential.

Key Message: Congress must take bold action and fund efforts to mitigate the impact of climate change in any infrastructure reform bill that is passed. Bipartisan support for climate-resilient infrastructure reform is an opportunity to address climate change and mitigate its effects, protect vulnerable populations and the interdependent web of life, and create new jobs.

Sample Letter to your Senators

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

[Today’s date]

Dear Senator _____, *[write to both of your Senators]*

I am a Unitarian Universalist from *[optional: name of congregation and location]*. As a person of faith, I believe in the inherent worth and dignity of all people and respect the interdependent web of all existence. I believe we have a responsibility to protect vulnerable communities, wildlife and our environment from the impact of climate change.

I urge you to support a bipartisan infrastructure reform bill that addresses the impacts of growing climate disruption.

[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? Consider the bridges you drive on, the safety of your water supply, and competitive “green” jobs for the future...]

[adapt a closing such as...] I look forward to hearing from you about your views on infrastructure legislation and how it can address the impact of climate disruption.

Sincerely, *[YOUR NAME and COMPLETE ADDRESS]*

(See other side for Instructions on Writing and Delivering Letters, Background and Key Message)