



Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
UU advocacy in the nation's capital



Write Here! Write Now! April 2020

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Delivery of Letter - Organizers: Scan & email or mail due Thurs., April 16, 6pmET

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Tell Your Representative to Take Action Now Against Dangerous Super Climate Pollutant HFCs--While Creating New Jobs
American Innovation and Manufacturing Leadership (AIM) Act, H.R.5544

Why Are We Writing - Now?

Our faith calls us to promote bold action and hold our legislators accountable. We strongly believe that the climate crisis demands a dramatic and rapid reduction of emissions of the greenhouse gases that are causing the earth to warm dangerously. Among the most potent groups of climate-changing super pollutant chemicals are hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), used in air conditioning, refrigeration, and many other applications.

Why now? We have a rare opportunity to advance bipartisan legislation that is good for the environment, will create jobs and grow the economy.

Background:

Hydrofluorocarbons or HFCs are potent climate pollutants that have significant harmful effects on human health, agricultural productivity and the environment. Because dangerous super pollutants that contain HFCs are shorter-lived and remain in the atmosphere for a shorter time (about 15 years) than carbon dioxide (50% continues up to 100 years, and 20% remain for thousands of years), **reducing HFCs is an effective near-term strategy for reducing the rate of global warming.** Effective alternatives to HFCs are available. Actions to quickly reduce warming are essential to avoid disastrous self-reinforcing climate change feedbacks and tipping points.

To that end, Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY-20) the sponsor and chair of the Environment and Climate Change subcommittee, and three colleagues, Reps. Scott Peters (D-CA), Pete Olson (R-TX), and Elise Stefanik (R-NY), introduced on January 7, 2020 the **American Innovation and Manufacturing Leadership (AIM) Act, [H.R.5544](https://www.congress.gov/bills/116/5544).** There are 14 Democratic and 14 Republican [co-sponsors](#).

In March the bill was forwarded out of the Subcommittee on a 13-9 vote to the Full Energy and Commerce Committee. No action has been taken by the full committee. There is a companion bill in the Senate ([S.2754](#)). AIM has received support from both the environmental and the business communities. The bill will phase down the use of HFCs by 85% over 15 years. **This may be our best opportunity in this 116th Congress to enact measures to address global warming.**

While attention is now understandably focused on the **COVID-19 pandemic**, we must not neglect the longer-term but equally serious crisis posed by global warming. H.R.5544 offers a welcome opportunity to show that Congress can act on a bipartisan basis, just as it did with the Corona Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, to address the serious dangers to health and the economy posed by powerful heat-trapping chemicals like HFCs.

UU Grounding:

Avoiding a climate crisis falls squarely within our UU 7th Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. At the General Assembly, UUs passed an Action of Immediate Witness, Build the Movement for a Green New Deal (2019) and Act for a Livable Climate (2015), and a Statement of Conscience, Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change (2006).

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

Key Message & Our Ask

This is the most important opportunity this 116th Congress to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The House must bring the AIM Act H.R.5544 to the floor for a vote. **Ask:** Tell your Representative to co-sponsor H.R.5544 and talk to leadership to urge a full committee vote in the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Suggested Talking Points

(use your own examples, tell your story, and/or draw on some of these suggested points)

We cannot afford to add another .5 degree Celsius of new warming to the planet with catastrophic implications for human health. If no action is taken, HFCs will add .5 degree Celsius (nearly one degree Fahrenheit) to global average temperatures by 2100. This would be catastrophic.

We need to protect human health, the environment, and agricultural productivity by substituting safer alternatives to HFCs. Addressing HFCs can improve health impacts caused by extreme heat conditions; improve global annual crop yields; and buy some time on passing the 2 degree Celsius threshold.

Reducing HFCs is an effective near-term strategy for reducing the rate of global warming. Unfortunately, pound for pound, HFCs have more heat-trapping capacity than carbon dioxide. But phasing down HFCs by 85% over 15 years is achievable because we already have alternatives that are more effective and less heat-trapping.

Phasing down HFCs will create jobs and grow the economy through innovation of climate-friendly technology. The bill will create \$12.5B per year in trade balance improvements, \$5B in increased exports, and 33,000 manufacturing jobs. Studies forecast gains of 2.5 million jobs and \$621B in economic output by 2027.

American industries need the certainty and encouragement that this bill will provide. The business and environmental communities strongly support this bipartisan bill.

Sample Letter to Your Representative

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

[Today's date]

Dear Representative _____,

I'm a Unitarian Universalist from *[optional: name of congregation and location]*. A fundamental principle of my faith is respect for the interdependent web of all existence. We have a deep concern for the environment and for people who suffer most from the ill effects of a warming planet.

I urge you to take action to address the dangerous heat-trapping HFCs and simultaneously create jobs by co-sponsoring the American Innovation and Manufacturing Leadership (AIM) Act, H.R.5544.

[What do you see in your community or state? Rising sea levels, drought, floods, habitat, air quality, food and agriculture concerns, etc. Is there a way that climate change affects you, your family, your community? To support the message, include in your own words a personal experience, story, concern, or pick a talking point from above to adapt and include.] Please speak up and take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by [cosponsoring](#) H.R. 5544 and urging leadership to support this common sense bi-partisan legislation now pending a vote in the Energy and Commerce Committee.

[adapt a closing such as... I look forward to hearing about your plans to ensure a livable planet and reduce greenhouse gases.]

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

(See other side for Why We Are Writing, Background, UU Grounding, and Instructions for Delivering Letters)