

## **Environmental Action Team Report to the UUSJ Board**

**Status of group and current membership** – On September 24, the group formerly known as “the Salon” decided to adopt the name UUSJ Environmental Action Team. Current active members are Kelly Perry, Beverly Bugos, David Shilton, Bob Denniston, Larry Underwood, Jack Lebewitz, Lavona Grow, Doris Marlin, Barbara Jacobs and Bill Alsmeyer Johnson. The Environmental Action Team is working on transitioning to the new reality of virtual advocacy and planning for a future less reliant on the leadership of Lavona, who is stepping back (but not out). We are beginning to see how our future will look, but still have work to do to get to where we want to be. While we have decided to continue as a Team, we do not at this point have a convenor or regular meeting time.

### **Advocacy Efforts**

We are currently engaged in preparing for October Write Here Write Now events. Kelly, David and Anna are taking the lead in this effort. At our September 24 meeting the Team decided to focus on telling our Senators to provide EPA with funding to address the disproportionate effects of multiple sources of pollution and climate change on frontline communities. This focus on EPA Appropriations will permit us to highlight environmental justice concerns on a matter (FY 2020-21 appropriations) that should be receiving attention because the Senate has not passed any appropriations bills and the deadline for avoiding a government shutdown is December 11. For a WHWN briefing on this topic scheduled for October 6, we have engaged David Coursen, a retired EPA official who focuses on environmental justice and appropriations issues at EPA and has written a number of articles on the subject.

On August 16, a number of congregants from the Accotink UU Church met with one of Senator Warner’s staffers to discuss the American Innovation and Manufacturing Act (phasing down the powerful climate pollutants called hydrofluorocarbons) which was the subject of an earlier Write Here Write Now letter writing campaign. The meeting was arranged by John Peterson, and David Shilton acted as subject matter expert. [A similar meeting occurred in mid-May with the Bedford Hills N.J. congregation on the same topic.] These virtual meetings went well and provided useful information for the effort to compile a guide for virtual meetings led by Ursula Scott. In early September we were pleased to hear that the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works had reached a compromise on some unsettled issues that will hopefully permit the AIM Act to move to the floor.

Kelly Perry set up a virtual meeting on September 11 with Mitch Lohr, Legislative Assistant to Representative Jan Schakowsky (IL-9) on a proposed Concurrent Resolution recognizing that the climate crisis is disproportionately affecting the health, economic opportunity, and fundamental rights of children, and recognizing the need to develop a national, comprehensive, and science-based climate recovery plan to phase out fossil fuel emissions. The target is atmospheric carbon dioxide to below 350 parts per million by the year 2100. The Resolution has been endorsed by multiple organizations, including faith groups. The Environmental Action Team unanimously voted to endorse the Resolution. On September 23, 2020, a congressional concurrent resolution - S.Con.Res.47 & H.Con.Res.119 - was introduced by members of Congress to support the above-mentioned principles, which flow from the “childrens’ trust” lawsuit entitled Juliana v. United States. The resolution currently has 60 sponsors and cosponsors and more than 50 endorsers. Kelly has also reached out to UU congregations in Alaska and Tennessee on this issue.

## **Work With Partners**

On September 18th, Lavona and Kelly contributed to WISCEE's Biden Climate Plan Evaluation with regards to Investment/Infrastructure. They also analyzed the plan with WISC's racial equity lense.

Lavona and Kelly also contributed Environmental Protection Agency recommendations released in August 2020 to the Climate Crisis Policy group. Kelly is also volunteering with the electricity team to analyze the House and Senate climate plans.