**Write Here! Write Now!**

**Contact:** advocacy@uusj.org or 714-800-3383  
**Delivery of Letters - Organizers:** All Letters due by April 22, 8pmET  
- Write your individual letter online [HERE](#) or submit letters [Submission Form (upload)](#)  
- Alternatively, Email letters to advocacy@uusj.org.  
**Mail to:** UUSJ c/o Paulette DeMers, 3745 Tech Dr NW #315, Rochester MN 55901

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**Tell the Senate to Support a Just Transition to Climate-Friendly Agriculture**

**Why Are We Writing - Now?:** Our faith calls us to promote bold action in response to the worsening climate crisis and the racial and socioeconomic inequities revealed by the pandemic. Our food systems need to change and contribute to progress fighting climate change. If done right, these changes can also rectify injustices in our current agricultural systems. As UUs, we insist on a more climate-friendly agriculture that responds to social problems including land loss, racism, unemployment and hunger. We urge Senators to support legislation that would make progress on **both** climate change and social ills, such as the Justice for Black Farmers Act and the Climate Stewardship Act.

**Background:** Massive consolidation and mechanization in the agricultural sector have led to problems that include soil loss, water and air pollution, loss of biodiversity and economic distress among many farm owners and farm workers.

No group has suffered more than Black farmers, who have faced the additional burden of systemic racism that has reduced the number of Black farmers from one million in 1920 to fewer than 50,000 today.

There is bipartisan interest in using agriculture as a vehicle for fighting climate change by sequestering carbon in soil and trees and reducing emissions. We must make sure that Congress does not neglect the need for rectifying long-standing injustices, such as the loss of land by Black farmers. To that end, we are advocating for the **Justice for Black Farmers Act (JBFA), S. 300**, which would provide land grants to potentially hundreds of thousands of new Black farmers and ranchers and would help ensure their success by providing access to USDA operating loans and mortgages on favorable terms and technical assistance in sustainable farming techniques. We are also supporting the **Climate Stewardship Act, S.1072, HR.4269 in 117th Cong.)** that would support climate-friendly stewardship practices on more than 100 million acres of farmland, plant more than 15 billion trees to revive deforested landscapes and expand urban tree cover, re-establishe the Civilian Conservation Corps to reduce youth unemployment, restore over two million acres of coastal wetlands, and invest in renewable energy for farmers and rural small businesses.

**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. The 2019 UU General Assembly adopted an Action of Immediate Witness entitled “Build the Movement for a Green New Deal,” that recognized the intersectional nature of climate issues and justice issues and urged that UUs “Develop a new morality, rebuilding our political and economic structures to prioritize the well-being of future generations, grounded in sustainability * * *.” A recent draft Statement of Conscience entitled “Undoing Intersectional White Supremacy: A Call to Prophetic Action” says that “As Unitarian Universalists living in a time of racialized violence, environmental crisis, and a democracy on the precipice of disaster, we must urgently engage in relationship building, internal growth and transformation, and wider justice action to undo intersectional white supremacy and promote universalist equity and justice in our world.”

(See other side for Key Message, Talking Points, and Sample Letter)
Key Message & Our Ask: Congress must seize this opportunity to redress historic injustices like the loss of farmland by Black farmers at the same time as it promotes more resilient and climate-friendly agriculture. As people of faith, we recognize that the climate crisis cannot be separated from other urgent challenges facing our nation, particularly the impacts of racism and economic inequality, the plight of small farmers and the degradation of soil, water, and air quality in our farm communities. We therefore urge Congress to address these interrelated issues. The JBFA would reverse the stunning loss of farmlands by Black farmers and provide the assistance necessary to Black farmers to successfully farm in ways that reduce emissions, sequester carbon and promote soil health. The Climate Stewardship Act provides nature-based solutions to remove heat-trapping carbon dioxide from our atmosphere while creating living-wage jobs and reestablishing the Civilian Conservation Corps to provide youth from low-income communities, Indigenous communities and communities of color with skills and work experience in forestry and wetlands restoration.

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

As people of faith, we support climate legislation that rectifies injustices in our agricultural system and leads to a food system that is sustainable, climate-friendly and responsive to human needs. Two bills meet these criteria:

- **The Justice for Black Farmers Act (JBFA) (S. 300)** addresses the unconscionable losses of farmlands by Black farmers by providing land grants and technical assistance to those farmers. It establishes a Farm Conservation Corps to provide young adults from socially disadvantaged groups with skills necessary to pursue careers in farming, and supports farmers who adopt practices to reduce emissions and respond to climate change.

- **The Climate Stewardship Act (CSA) (S. 1072)** increases incentives for conservation practices that sequester carbon, preserve soil, protect biodiversity and save water. It also invests in programs that bolster local food systems and funds urban farms and community gardens in low-income communities. It would authorize planting over 16 billion trees by 2050, with many going to urban neighborhoods, and would restore or protect over 2 million acres of coastal wetlands by 2030 to sequester carbon emissions and reduce coastal flooding.

- Beyond these two good bills, **Congress must make sure that all agriculture-related legislation furthers** a just transition to a resilient, equitable and climate-friendly agricultural system.

Sample Letter to Your Senators
[Use your own words. Speak from your heart -- this is only a sample letter.]

[Today's date]

Dear Senator ______________, [write to both of your Senators and your Representative]

I’m a Unitarian Universalist from [optional: name of congregation and location]. Our faith calls us to promote justice, equity, and compassion in human relations and to respect the interdependent web of all existence. We have a deep concern for our environment and climate, and also for people impacted by systemic racism and unequal opportunities. I believe that legislation designed to encourage better agricultural practices can play a major role in fighting climate change and provide equitable solutions to injustices.

The Justice for Black Farmers Act (S.300) takes critical steps toward restoring land to Black farmers after a century and a half of losses. It will also promote climate-friendly farming practices that sequester carbon in the soil, reduce harmful emissions, and provide employment in the farm sector. Climate Stewardship Act (S.1072 ) contains provisions to promote sustainable, climate-friendly farming practices, plants billions of trees, and helps restore estuaries and coastal areas. [add your own words or personal experience, a story, or concern relating to the climate crisis. Or use a talking point]

Please support both of these bills. Act to assure a just and equitable transition to climate-friendly agriculture. [or adapt a closing in your own words]

Sincerely, [YOUR NAME and include your COMPLETE ADDRESS]

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