



Environmental Action Team report to Board for June 2021 meeting

A primary focus for EAT during this quarter was working in partnership with UU Ministry for Earth and UUs for a Just Economic Community on a Write Here! Write Now! letter-writing campaign to promote the Justice for Black Farmers Act (S.300) and the Climate Stewardship Act (S.1072), both sponsored by Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ). This WHWN campaign was featured in an Intergenerational Spring Seminar “All in for Climate Justice: Food Equity and Sustainability” hosted by the UU Office at the United Nations on April 9 – 11. On April 21, UUSJ held an issue briefing on these bills with Adam Zipkin, Counsel to Senator Booker and Ben Thomas, Senior Policy Director for Agriculture at the Environmental Defense Fund. The briefing was well attended and received favorable comments.

More than 200 UUs from 34 states sent nearly 500 letters and messages to 66 senators in support of these two bills. During the last week of April and first week of May, virtual meetings were held with staff members representing 11 senators (chiefly members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry) urging support for climate-friendly agricultural practices and justice for Black and BIPOC farmers.

Our work this Spring also included an Action Alert asking President Biden, key Administration officials, and representatives in Congress to commit to funding this country’s fair share of the Green Climate Fund. UUSJ joined other UU organizations, faith groups, and citizens in highlighting the United States’ moral responsibility to aid poorer countries suffering the effects of climate change. The United States is the most significant contributor to the climate crisis. The Fund helps poorer countries curb carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change. Messages have been sent via this alert to over 160 offices.

In further work with our partners, UUSJ signed on to a letter to Congress prepared by WISC-EE on behalf of many faith organizations expressing support for comprehensive jobs, infrastructure, and climate legislation that leaves no one behind. We also signed on to a letter prepared by Interfaith Power & Light calling on Congress to support climate and clean energy infrastructure.

We have helped publicize a series of weekly demonstrations on Capitol Hill in June and July that will bring together faith leaders and other stakeholders to demand that Congress pass big and bold recovery legislation that includes key climate and clean energy provisions, including 100% clean electricity by 2035. Many UUs (including UU ministers) participated in the first demonstration that took place on June 9.

Our current convener, David Shilton, will be leaving that position as of July 1 but will stay on as a member of the team. The team is looking for a new convener.