

ECUMENICAL ADVOCACY DAYS LOBBY DAY
TALKING POINTS
Imagine! God's Earth and People Restored

As you prepare for your Congressional meeting, everyone in your group should simply pick out the point(s) they feel comfortable with emphasizing. There is no need to cover everything or to be an expert. Speak respectfully in your own words from your faith values, your heart, and your experience. Telling stories about the impacts of climate change that you've seen in your communities or in the countries you've visited can be especially powerful. Remember: you're there as a constituent and voter!

Domestic Ask

We are in the midst of a global climate crisis compounded by the pandemic. As Christians, we are concerned about people and communities on the front lines of climate change in our country. Both sudden natural disasters and slow-onset impacts caused by climate change disproportionately affect some groups, including women, children, elders, rural residents, people living with disabilities, and people who are economically marginalized. Climate change compounds the impacts of other inequities. This is particularly true for Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Color, because structural racism creates a unique intersection of climate and economic inequities.

Legislation in areas such as infrastructure and energy should have a climate justice framework and an explicit emphasis on equity. This will enable the U.S. government to more adequately respond to the various unique injustices confronted by marginalized communities.

We urge Congress to enact infrastructure and energy legislation that will promote climate, economic, gender, and racial justice to accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy, as well as to commit to reaching net-zero climate pollution in the electricity sector by 2035 and economy-wide by 2050.

Why Transition to a Clean Energy Economy?

- Fossil fuel emissions are the main source of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in the United States and worldwide. Globally, air pollution from fossil fuels kills nearly one in five people. Fossil fuel pollution particularly impacts communities of color. In 46 states, communities of color are exposed to higher levels of air pollution than white communities, with African Americans, regardless of wealth, exposed to 54 percent more air pollution than the population as a whole.
- Fossil fuels currently supply 80 percent of the energy needs of the United States—for example, for heat, transportation, and refrigeration—and 62 percent of the electricity. Transitioning to renewable resources such as wind and solar power will reduce and ultimately end our reliance on fossil fuel.
- Climate science tells us that it is absolutely essential to limit the planet's increase in temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Reaching the ambitious goals of net-zero greenhouse gas

production by 2035 and 2050 will help ensure that this happens. Exceeding the 1.5 degree limit will cause irreversible, catastrophic damage to the climate, including surges in the frequency and severity of dangerous heatwaves, droughts, and floods, that will in turn plunge hundreds of millions of additional people into extreme poverty.

First Domestic Ask: We need legislation that equitably addresses impacts of the climate crisis in the United States:

- Communities around the U.S. are experiencing the impacts of climate change.
- Share stories from your communities and regions, if you have them. For example:
 - West Coast and Southwest: Impacts of wildfires and drought. Previous droughts in CA had a disproportionate impact on Indigenous and Latino/a farm workers.
 - Midwest, South and Mid-Atlantic regions: Floods and droughts affect farmers; extreme heat during the summer makes urban spaces less livable. Black and Latino/a people are more likely to suffer heat stroke or death due to extreme heat.
 - Coastal regions: Loss of homes due to chronic flooding, disproportionately impacts Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and low-income communities.

Second Domestic Ask: We need legislation that modernizes crumbling infrastructure and increases transportation efficiency and decarbonization, while prioritizing racial, economic, and gender justice.

- Tribal and Indigenous communities, Black communities, communities of color, low-wealth communities, rural communities, and particularly women within these communities, face disproportionate impacts from climate change. Black, Indigenous, and Latino/a communities are often more susceptible to climate shocks due to crumbling infrastructure —challenging BIPOC communities’ ability to adapt and recover from climate-induced natural disasters.
- Good infrastructure legislation will offset the disproportionate economic impact of climate change on directly impacted communities. Black, Indigenous and People of Color leadership must be centered in the development, implementation, and evaluation of infrastructure efforts impacting their communities. Old infrastructure should be properly disposed of or recycled so as to not pose a burden on frontline communities.

Third Domestic Ask: We need legislation that not only embraces renewable energy, but also supports a just transition for disproportionately impacted workers and communities.

- The cost of renewable energy has drastically decreased over the years, making it comparable or cheaper than conventional energy, such as coal or nuclear. Prices for solar power fell from \$144 per megawatt hour in 2008 to \$25 in 2019. These cost savings could benefit low-income households.
- Job creation is essential to ensuring that all communities are able to thrive as energy transitions occur. Deep investments, comprehensive job training and support must be provided for fossil fuel energy workers and impacted communities so that they receive the health and economic benefits of the clean energy transition. These jobs should provide livable wages, counteract job segregation by race and gender, and establish training/skills development programs necessary for these new career paths.

International Ask

As the world's largest historic emitter, and the country that currently has the highest emissions per capita, the United States has a responsibility to fund programs that help marginalized communities around the world to adapt to a climate crisis that they did not cause. The international ask includes requests for bilateral and multilateral funding. Funding like this has historically received bipartisan support. Multilateral funding is funding provided by multiple countries, going toward developing countries. Bilateral funding comes solely from the United States to assist developing countries. These funds help the United States address climate change justly and equitably.

We urge Congress to Provide funding for multilateral and bilateral environmental accounts for FY2022, including \$2 billion for the Green Climate Fund, focusing on funding for the most impacted countries and communities, in many cases burdened by historic colonization and ongoing inequities.

Why fund these accounts?

- These initiatives build climate resilience and preserve critical ecosystems while engaging communities most affected by climate change.
- Provide stories from your experience or from recent events. Some examples: last year's Atlantic hurricane season was the worst on record and devastated communities in Central America. A record fire season in the Amazon destroyed some of the most biodiverse ecosystems on the planet and a critical carbon sink. Locusts and floods in East Africa drove Kenyan farmers deeper into poverty and left many people hungry. Economic and social impacts of COVID-19 have exacerbated climate change impacts (such as poverty, hunger, displacement). Likewise, the hurricanes and typhoons in Latin America and Asia may have spread the novel coronavirus as people sought shelter in crowded spaces.
- As people of faith, we believe the U.S. must stand alongside countries that will be most burdened by climate change, and especially the communities most impacted in those countries. To do otherwise will only exacerbate existing inequities that stem from historic colonization and ongoing discrimination. For this reason, we ask that the US support this funding as an opportunity to meaningfully address the climate crisis and contribute to the global commitments of the Paris Agreement.
- As the highest emitters and wealthiest countries, countries like the US have a responsibility to mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis in partnership with peoples and countries most impacted by supporting their leadership in adapting to changing conditions.
- Regarding China: Although China leads the world in overall greenhouse gas emissions, the U.S. has the highest per capita emissions and is the largest historic emitter. China and the U.S. both have a responsibility for climate action.

First International Ask: Contribute \$2 billion toward the Green Climate Fund

- The Green Climate Fund is the largest multilateral fund dedicated to funding prevention and response to climate-driven disasters in developing countries. It's dedicated to catalyzing other sources of climate finance, including the global finance goal under the Paris Agreement.
- Half of the funds go to emissions reduction and half goes to adaptation. Of the adaptation funding, half of *that* is directed to Africa, small island developing countries (SIDS) and the least developed countries (LDCs) - places most impacted and potentially impacted by catastrophic climate change. The projects prioritize women, girls, men, and boys from socially excluded and vulnerable communities- with special focus on women and girls as they are disproportionately impacted by climate change.
- In 2014, the United States pledged \$3 billion over five years to the GCF. Yet so far, the United States has only contributed \$1 billion. We ask you to fulfill the U.S. commitment to the Green Climate Fund as a sign of partnership with peoples and countries who are most impacted by appropriating the remaining \$2 billion through the State and Foreign Operations budget.

Second International Ask: Support additional multilateral and bilateral funds that repair global relationships and engage in diplomatic partnerships, while working to address our disproportionate contributions to climate change and addressing other environmental challenges.

Multilateral Funds

- *Global Environment Facility: \$158.92 million*
Consistently bipartisan supported, the Global Environment Facility serves as the financial mechanism for a number of multilateral environmental initiatives to support small scale renewable energy projects, human health, and biodiversity conservation.
- *Adaptation Fund: \$100 million*
The Adaptation Fund directs funds towards small-scale, country-led projects such as promoting agricultural resilience, addressing food insecurity and helping coastal communities respond to threats of climate change. This would be the United States' first time contributing to the fund

Bilateral Funds

Bilateral funds are an important mechanism for the United States to strengthen strategic country partnerships and demonstrate goodwill to low and middle income countries and peoples. The Renewable Energy program provides much needed energy access for the most economically impoverished communities in the world. The Sustainable Landscapes program addresses rural poverty and sustainable land management while incentivizing efforts to curb deforestation.

- *Renewable Energy under Bilateral Economic Assistance: \$268.5 million*
- *Sustainable Landscapes under Bilateral Economic Assistance: \$202.5 million*