



The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life
110 Maryland Avenue, NE, Suite 203
Washington, D.C. 20002

COEJL NEEDS YOU!

Dear supporters of COEJL,

First of all, a big thank you in advance, for you are one of the main reasons I agreed to take on the directorship of the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life. Over its nearly 25-year history, through its many accomplishments and occasional rocky periods, COEJL has been able to count on your support. Not just your financial support, though, of course, your donations are critically important. But what's also clear is that COEJL's advocacy and programmatic efforts would not be nearly as effective as they have been without you. Whether you were contacting your elected officials or greening Jewish institutions, you have raised voices enriched by the wisdom of Jewish traditions on behalf of our planet and future generations.

With your help, COEJL can soar to greater heights. When Rabbis Steve Gutow and Fred Dobb asked me to become COEJL's new executive director, I enthusiastically agreed—in part because so much that we care about, as human beings and as Jews, is being threatened or even destroyed. But also because I truly believe that COEJL is poised to make a significant difference, both in short-term policy struggles and in the longer-term work of creating a vision of sustainability within the Jewish community and in our world at large.

In COEJL's early days, when I would mention that I was working to connect two of my great passions—Judaism and the environment—the most common reaction I got was, “there's a connection?” Now, in part because of all that COEJL has accomplished through the years, there's so much energy, so much great work being done in our field, that we need to move from being a sometimes too-exclusive club to becoming a welcoming hub, a place where thinkers, activists, articles, programs and campaigns from across the Jewish world come together.

We've got great partners in this work. The dedicated staff of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, which brings together so many diverse elements of the Jewish community. The combination of political savvy and devotion to Jewish values that the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism brings to environmental work, coalition building, and the struggle for justice. Interfaith efforts to protect the poor and the planet, such as the National Religious Partnership for the Environment and Interfaith Power and Light. The many rabbis and other leaders who have labored in this field for years. And you.

Given the images seared into our minds from the past year—proliferating pipelines and starving polar bears, climate disasters ranging from fires to floods, climate deniers put into power and the rights of indigenous peoples trampled on—it's hard not to fear for the future of our planet. But as my ancestor, Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav, taught, the whole world is a very narrow bridge—but the key is not to be afraid. You'll be hearing more from me—a lot more!—about what COEJL is planning and how you can get involved. But for now, help us to cross that bridge and build a better future--donate to COEJL today.

Your partner in protecting creation,

Rabbi Daniel Swartz
Executive Director, COEJL