



Action: Urge your senator to support America's Climate Security Act.

Background

It is clear that global warming is occurring, and people are causing it by burning fossil fuels (like coal, oil and natural gas) and cutting down forests. The U.S. National Academy of Sciences recently issued a statement saying “the scientific understanding of climate change is now sufficiently clear to justify nations taking prompt action.” Our tradition also demands action. Indeed, the Torah declares, “Justice, justice, you shall pursue.” (Deuteronomy 16:20). Yet, to date, the American response to climate change has been fundamentally unjust. Americans constitute only 5% of the world's population, yet generate 25% of all greenhouse gases. At the same time, developing countries face enormous burdens to adapt to the harm caused by our emissions, despite being the least historically responsible for climate change. Americans must take a stand to reduce this impact. Fortunately, the United States has finally begun to make strides in the right direction. Last December, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee passed America's Climate Security Act (S 2191) out of Committee. The Substitute Amendment (S 3036) will be considered by the full Senate next Monday, June 2 and its passage is far from guaranteed.

The Climate Security Act, introduced by Senators Joseph Lieberman (I-CT) and John Warner (R-VA), is projected to lower greenhouse gas emissions by about 20 percent below 2005 levels by 2020 and approximately 65 percent by mid-century via a cap-and-trade system. This bipartisan Bill provides an essential starting point for the US response to climate change.

Some of the provisions of the Climate Security Act include:

- Establishing a clear cap on global warming pollution;
- Creating a market for each allowable ton of global warming pollution;
- Directing a portion of the revenue from permit auctions to help develop climate-friendly technology, help “sensitive” populations adapt to the impacts of climate change, subsidize energy use for low-income households in the U.S., and protect wildlife and habitat from climate change;
- Allocating free pollution allowances to states that adopt reduction requirements that are more protective than the federal policy;
- Creating incentives for states to develop energy efficiency measures;
- Mandating periodic reviews by the National Academy of Sciences to make sure the program is working; and
- Developing monitoring programs to ensure that promised reductions are carried out.

COEJL has worked closely with the National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE) to ensure the bill includes protections to help vulnerable populations in both the United States and abroad adapt to climate change. NRPE is a broad-based coalition, which represents COEJL, the US Catholic Conference of Bishops, the National Conference of Churches, and the Evangelical Environmental Network.

Action Needed

The Senate will be considering America's Climate Security Act next week. We urge you to contact your senator and voice your support **FOR** the legislation. Senator Warner, the bill's co-sponsor, was the sole Republican supporter in committee and strong bipartisan support is needed for the U.S. to finally respond to climate change. Call (202) 224-3121 and ask to be transferred to your senator.

Questions? Contact Jennifer Kefer, Climate and Energy Program Coordinator for the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) -- jennifer@coejl.org or 202-212-6034