

Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life • Church of the Brethren Washington Office • Episcopal Church, USA • Evangelical Lutheran Church in America • Friends Committee on National Legislation • Mennonite Central Committee • National Council of Churches of Christ, USA • Presbyterian Church, (USA) Washington Office • Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism • Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations • United Church of Christ – Justice and Witness Ministries • United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society

July 25, 2003

The United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

As representatives of the faith community, we urge you to adopt a national energy policy based upon the values of justice and sustainability. We believe the United States can and must meet the energy needs of the present without sacrificing environmental protection, despoiling pristine lands, and putting at risk the needs of future generations. Rather than charting a bold new path for the future, however, S.14, the Energy Policy Act of 2003, remains rooted in the unjust and unsustainable practices of the past.

People of faith have long recognized our responsibility as stewards of God's creation. As individuals, congregations, and communities we are committed to pursuing God's vision of a restored creation. To do so requires a change in current patterns of behavior and a reordering of our priorities.

Fulfilling this vision also requires bold leadership to enact policies that would meet global energy needs while combating global warming, conserving natural resources, reducing toxic waste and emissions and distributing fairly the burdens and benefits of a global energy system. Such policies would be grounded in our shared principles of environmental justice, stewardship, and intergenerational responsibility.

Unfortunately, S.14 does not reflect these principles. As currently written, the Energy Policy Act of 2003 emphasizes exploration over conservation, permits the exploitation of pristine ecosystems, and ignores our responsibility to address the real and growing threat of global warming. While we applaud efforts to increase funding for research and development of renewable energy alternatives, there remains an unjust disparity between these provisions and subsidies to the fossil fuel and nuclear energy industries.

During floor consideration of S.14, we urge you to adopt amendments aimed at reshaping the legislation to reflect our principles of justice, stewardship, and intergenerational responsibility. Specifically, we call on the Senate to:

Increase conservation measures including but not limited to higher fuel efficiency standards, greater industrial energy efficiency, and improved weatherization of buildings;

Invest in renewable energy technologies and adopt targets to increase the percentage of renewable energy used in the United States;

Protect pristine ecosystems – both on-shore and off-shore – from exploration and development;

Acknowledge the real and growing threat of global warming and take bold steps to curb US greenhouse gas emissions;

Adoption of amendments such as these would represent positive first steps towards a more just and sustainable national energy policy. Ultimately, if the legislation fails to incorporate fully our principles of environmental justice, stewardship and intergenerational responsibility, we urge you to oppose S.14.

Sincerely,

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