

Brethren Witness - Washington Office • Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) • The Episcopal Church, USA • Evangelical Lutheran Church in America • Fellowship of Reconciliation • Friends Committee on National Legislation • Mennonite Central Committee, US –Washington Office • National Council of Churches • Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office • Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations • United Church of Christ - Justice and Witness Ministries • United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society

November 18, 2003

The United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

Earlier this year, representatives of the faith community wrote to you and urged adoption of a national energy policy rooted in the core values of justice and sustainability. We continue to 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. Unfortunately, the final conference agreement on HR 6, the Energy Policy Act of 2003, fails to chart a bold new path for the future and instead perpetuates the unjust and unsustainable practices of the past. We therefore urge you to oppose this legislation.

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.

While we applaud the legislation's increased funding for renewable energy options, we remain alarmed at the unjust disparity between these provisions and the massive subsidies included for fossil fuel and nuclear energy industries. Likewise, we support the continued protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil and gas exploration, yet are concerned by provisions that could put at risk other sensitive ecosystems. Furthermore, the omission of higher fuel efficiency standards, a renewable portfolio standard, or any steps to curb US greenhouse gas emissions, represents a failure to address the present unsustainable patterns of energy usage.

While we are still sorting through many of the provisions buried in the 1000+ page bill, early reports have unearthed a number of industry-specific exemptions, liability shields and tax breaks. The sum total of these provisions, along with the delay in certain clean air act requirements, represents a perpetuation of a system that values exploration over conservation, industry protection over creation stewardship, and the present over future generations.

Now is a time for bold leadership. We therefore ask you to reject HR 6, the Energy Policy Act of 2003, and pursue instead new legislation fully incorporating our shared values of environmental justice, creation stewardship, and intergenerational responsibility.

Sincerely,

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