



The Regeneration Project

Interfaith Power & Light

February 20, 2013

Representative Henry Waxman
Senator Sheldon Whitehouse
Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Sen. Whitehouse and Rep. Waxman,

Thank you for forming the Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change and for including Interfaith Power & Light in your request for ideas for actions the federal government can take to address climate change.

As President Obama said in his inaugural speech, we are “commanded by God” to preserve the planet. In his State of the Union address he further said, “for the sake of our children and our future, we must do more to combat climate change”. We are encouraged that the president sees this as a moral issue. People of faith agree and support bold action. The president’s call for Congress to act opens an opportunity, and we thank you for your leadership to advance that action.

In response to your questions we have listed some ideas for your consideration, below.

1. What actions or policies could federal agencies adopt, using existing authorities, to reduce emissions of heat-trapping pollution?

We urge Congress to support proposed EPA standards on carbon pollution from new power plants and ensure timely action to limit carbon pollution from existing power plants and oil refineries.

2. What actions or policies could federal agencies adopt using existing authorities, to make our nation more resilient to the effects of climate change?

A coordinated strategy involving FEMA, Department of Agriculture, DOT, DOE, and EPA to help prepare communities for the impacts of climate change could be productive. Communities must become more resilient, more equipped for storms and high heat events, droughts and transportation challenges. Supporting local food infrastructure, cooling centers for urban areas, and shelters with their own power sources (preferably renewable) could help communities cope with extreme weather events that disrupt food, transportation and electricity infrastructure.

Superstorm Sandy offered lessons in this regard, and could be used as a case study to be better prepared for future events. However, each community is different, and local communities should be encouraged to come up with their own preparedness strategies.

A public campaign coming from the government that declares the climate issue is real, and response is urgent might move more Americans to understand that we need to act. This should be framed as a moral issue, not an environmental or scientific one.

3. **What legislation would you recommend Congress enact to strengthen the ability of federal agencies to prevent and respond to the effects of climate change?**

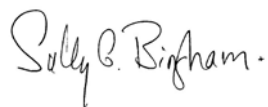
We suggest legislation to advance energy efficiency and renewables and to upgrade the electrical grid which would allow for more renewable energy to come to market. In order to level the playing field between renewable energy and traditional fossil fuels, we suggest legislation that would limit the amount of subsidies to oil, coal and gas and redirect these subsidies to renewables. Legislation could also remove barriers to investment in renewable energy, so that wind and solar and other clean energy development can benefit from Master Limited Partnerships and Production Tax Credits.

The Department of Energy could also be directed to help low-income communities and households, as well as nonprofits, take advantage of energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions by providing rebates rather than tax-credits. The upfront cost is currently a major barrier to low-income households, houses of worship, and other nonprofits that want to weatherize, retrofit their facilities or install solar or on-site wind.

4. Additionally we suggest legislation to secure and direct **robust funding for international climate adaptation and mitigation**. The U.S. must maintain and increase our investments in critical international actions to the impacts that are already being felt, particularly in developing countries and the most vulnerable communities. These investments are essential to promoting global solutions to climate change; protecting our national interests and economic competitiveness, shared security, and development goals; and enabling developing countries and vulnerable communities to plan and prepare for climate-related disasters and losses. In addition, the U.S. should ensure that all our international investments promote low-carbon development pathways and support climate resilience and preparedness, especially for the most vulnerable communities. This is not only our responsibility as a global leader, it is a moral imperative

I want to assure you that our 40 state affiliates and thousands of congregations view a swift and equitable transition to a clean energy economy as our moral responsibility, and are prepared to support your efforts every step of the way. Thank you for your important work to steward God's Creation and protect our children's future.

With faith,



The Rev. Canon Sally Bingham, President