



Write Here! Write Now! September 17, 2019 Advocacy Day Hill Visits

Contact: advocacy@uusj.org or 703-786-5206; www.uusj.org click on Advocacy

Letter Delivery - Congregation Organizer: Mailed letters must be received by Thursday, Sept. 12, 5pm ET, UUSJ % Lavona Grow, 2308 N. Buchanan St., Arlington, VA 22207

Write Here! Write Now! Tell Your US Senators to Show Real Leadership to Help Avert the Climate Crisis

This month's Write Here! Write Now! is in collaboration with the UUs for a Just Economic Community; UU Ministry for Earth; the UUA; UUSC; Side With Love; All Souls Church, Unitarian D.C.

Why We Are Writing?

The climate "crisis" is a symptom of a deeper crisis: resource-intensive industrial production of the "dig, burn, dump economy."

Our faith calls us to promote bold action and hold our legislators accountable. In addressing climate change, we also address systemic injustices and support laws consistent with our ethical and moral UU values. **With funding and tax measures now before the Senate, this is a good time to press our legislators to find ways to transform our economy, reduce carbon emissions, and create a more just and livable world.** It's up to all of us to keep up the pressure to act.

Background

UUSJ Advocacy Corps Days: In January, we asked Senators to take action on climate change through infrastructure investment legislation. In May, we returned to Capitol Hill to stress the need for a comprehensive climate strategy to address the ecological, social, and economic issues caused by the climate crisis.

New Reports: More evidence has accumulated since May of the disastrous future that could await us, our children, and our grandchildren unless we act boldly now. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) just weeks ago issued a special report on climate change including desertification and land degradation, and highlighted the pressing need for sustainable land management practices. And we have all read news reports of massive fires in the Amazon Basin, exacerbated by climate change and misguided land development policy.

Why Now: We are building on the recent passage of a UU Action of Immediate Witness (details below in UU Grounding) to build a movement towards a Green New Deal. A UU conference will be held in Washington, D.C. from September 15-17 on advocating for **"Economic and Climate Justice as a Moral Issue: Mobilizing for a Green New Deal."** On the 17th, the UUSJ Advocacy Corps and conference participants will deliver your WHWN letters.

Legislative Status: Little is expected to pass the Senate this year but appropriations and extending renewable energy tax (incentives) are opportunities for legislative action. **Tax package credits** are the best opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Critical for the Senate to act since the House left it out of its package. **Bi-Partisan action is promising and needs our encouragement/support.** The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee recently released the America's Transportation Infrastructure Act 2019 (S.2302), a highway reauthorization bill with \$10 billion in spending to enhance the environmental sustainability and resilience of the country's transportation system. This includes funding for electric vehicle infrastructure. An entire section is dedicated to climate change. Significantly, the vote in favor was unanimous, indicating that positive bi-partisan action, particularly on infrastructure, is possible. There is also bi-partisan interest in providing incentives for sustainable farming and forestry practices. Six carbon-pricing bills have been introduced in the Senate. The RECLAIM Act (just transitions for coal communities) is still languishing in committee. HR9/SB1743 re: Paris Agreement purposefully is not being addressed as an issue for us in our advocacy work because if it fails in the Senate, it will be a serious long-term setback.

UU Grounding

Our UU 7th Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. At the General Assembly, UUs passed an Action of Immediate Witness, Build the Movement for a Green New Deal (2019), a Statement of Conscience, Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change (2006), and a Statement of Conscience, Escalating Economic Inequity (2017).

(See other side for Key Message, Talking Points, and Sample Letter)

Key Message

U.S. Senators must seize every opportunity to address the climate crisis. Momentum is building to address climate change, sparked by wide interest in a Green New Deal and bold actions of young climate activists around the world. We need Congress to respond by supporting programs and policies to build a green economy; protect our air, land and water; phase out fossil fuels; and help transform our economic system by creating market incentives for businesses and consumers to “go green.”

Suggested Talking Points

(use your own examples, tell your story, and/or draw on some of these suggested points)

Prioritize clean energy tax incentives and extend tax credits for solar and wind energy. This is a key step in building alternatives to fossil fuels by strengthening incentives for consumers and businesses to ‘go green.’ These incentives will allow all Americans to benefit from clean, renewable energy. These tax incentives will help create thousands of good jobs in new solar and wind industries. Key energy tax credits (or needed updates to existing credits) were left out of the House package. **Let Senators know that this is the most important opportunity this year to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**

Fully fund the climate change provisions in the reauthorization of the America’s Transportation Infrastructure Act (ATIA) 2019. We must deal with the consequences of our warming climate. The ATIA bill includes \$10 billion aimed to cut transportation-related carbon emissions and mitigate the impacts of sea-level rise and extreme weather events. This bi-partisan effort will create jobs, boost the economy, and help prepare our at-risk communities for the future. **Ask for Senate support of the vital climate change provisions in the ATIA bill.**

Ensure displaced workers and impacted communities are protected as we transition away from fossil fuels. The Senate should prioritize the interests of communities that will be hard-hit by the transition away from fossil fuels and that have less economic capacity to cope with the change. **The Senate should pass the RECLAIM Act to provide existing funds to coal communities to help with job training and adjustment assistance.**

Support policies that put a price on carbon and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. Pricing carbon is one essential mechanism, among many, needed to address climate change. Six bills have been introduced. **Ask Senators to support one or more of these important bills.**

Sample Letter to Your Senators

[Use your own words. Speak from your heart -- this is only a sample letter.]

[Today’s date]

Dear Senator _____, *[write two letters, one to each Senator]*

I’m a Unitarian Universalist from *[optional: name of congregation and location]*. We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of all people and respect for the interdependent web of all existence. My faith calls me to work to protect all people, especially the most vulnerable, all creation, and the environment, from the life-threatening impact of climate emergency.

As a nation we must provide a just and equitable transition to a clean energy future. I urge you to support programs to build a green economy, phase out fossil fuels, and transform our economic system by creating tax incentives for businesses and consumers to “go green.”

Recent reports are alarming. Our children are scared. The climate emergency is here - it’s real and I see it in the news every day. *[What do you see in your community or state? Rising sea levels, drought, floods, habitat, air quality, food and agriculture concerns, etc. Is there a way that climate change affects you, your family, your community? To support the message, include in your own words a personal experience, story, concern, or pick a talking point to include.]*

I urge you to provide real leadership - to speak up and work towards bold and bi-partisan innovative solutions. Inaction is unacceptable.

[adapt a closing such as...] I look forward to hearing about your plans that will address the ecological, social, and economic issues caused by the climate emergency

Sincerely, *[YOUR NAME and include your COMPLETE ADDRESS]*

(See other side for Why We Are Writing, Background, UU Grounding, and Instructions for Delivering Letters)