



The Pennsylvania Interfaith Climate Change Campaign

Honoring God's creation through congregational education and action.

Rev. Sandra Strauss, Dir. of Public Advocacy
Pa. Council of Churches
900 South Arlington Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17109
717-745-4761

Joy Bergey, Project Director
1632 Chattin Road
Laverock, PA 19038-7120
215-836-5978
joybergey@earthlink.net



Testimony on the Pennsylvania Clean Vehicles Program and Proposed Amendments

Submitted by Joy Bergey, March 28, 2006

The Pennsylvania Interfaith Climate Change Campaign has been in existence since 1999. Our mission is to educate the faith community, policy makers, and the broader public about the threats posed by global warming, and effective responses we can take collectively and individually to the problem.

The tailpipe emissions from passenger vehicles are a major component of all the global warming pollution created in Pennsylvania, and thus of great concern to the Interfaith Climate Change Campaign.

The faith community cares deeply about global warming. Every major religious tradition calls on its followers to respect God's creation and the earth's finite resources. We live in a world of precious balance, which our actions can inadvertently upset. Global warming is driving this lesson home. We are compelled to act by our love and concern for future generations. For it is they who will be hurt first and foremost by global warming.

This concern comes from every corner of the faith community: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Council of Churches, the Greek Orthodox Church, and Conservative, Orthodox, and Reform Jews. Most recently, the Evangelical Climate Initiative issued a treatise signed by almost one hundred of the nation's senior Evangelical leaders representing millions of Americans. Their call is for prompt, mandatory action to prevent further damage to God's children, especially the poor around the world, from global warming. The evangelical's statement is powerful: "Whether we will enter the public square and offer our witness there [on global warming] is no longer an open question. We are in that square, and we will not withdraw."

It is morally incumbent upon us to implement fully the Pennsylvania Clean Vehicles Program with the proposed amendments. Why? Because we're such a significant global contributor to global warming. Pennsylvania alone produces more greenhouse gas emissions than 105 developing countries combined. We rank third worst among the states in global warming pollution, trailing only California and Texas*. Pennsylvania produces one percent of the world's total global warming pollution – just us!

* "First in Emissions, Behind in Solutions: Global Warming Pollution from U.S. States Compared to 149 Developing Countries," National Environmental Trust, Washington DC, 2003, www.net.org/reports/globalwarming/emissionsreport.pdf

The Biblical prophet Micah says that God requires nothing of us but “to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly.” (Micah 6:8). Our dirty cars disproportionately hurt those least able to defend themselves. God’s call for justice requires us to act.

Ultimately, don’t we all want the same future, where our children and grandchildren will live healthy lives? The Pennsylvania Clean Vehicles Program takes a big step to that future. Some argue that the cost of cars will be a bit higher if we implement the program. I’m not at all sure that’s true. But what are the costs of not implementing the program? We will be turning our back on our responsibility to leave a healthy world for today’s little ones. The true price will be the unbearable cost of injustice.

If we fail to implement the Pennsylvania Clean Vehicles Program as proposed, we leave a failed legacy. Killing this program would mean that we care more about our own short-term interest than in following our hearts along the path of justice and equity for future generations.



In the book of Genesis, after each magnificent day of creation, God said, “It is good.” The earth, our world, our Pennsylvania home is good. It is in fact the sacred and irreplaceable gift of the Creator. Our love of God and deep concern compel us to implement fully the Pennsylvania Clean Vehicles Program. Thank you.

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