



Wisconsin Council of Churches

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Scott D. Anderson,
Executive Director

Members of the Global Warming Task Force

The undersigned religious leaders respectfully submit these comments to the members of the Governor's Global Warming Task Force.

As representatives of the faith community we believe that it is our responsibility to care for God's creation and act as stewards of the world we have been blessed with. The threat of global warming is a matter of increasing concern for Christians and other persons of faith and good will. In addition to the unnatural changes occurring to the Earth itself, the well-being of the poor and vulnerable throughout the world, as well as the children and grandchildren of the present generation will be unjustly jeopardized by the changes resulting from global warming. The decisions we make today to address global warming and the use of our finite resources will shape the planet we make for future generations.

There are several key policy recommendations that you are considering that we feel are important to emphasize:

1. Targets:

It is important that any plan to address global warming is designed to reflect the reduction needs outlined by the scientific community. The consensus agreement of more than 2,000 leading climatologists and scientists in the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report calls for an 80% reduction in global warming emissions from current levels. Several recent reports including one from noted climate researcher James Hansen have indicated that even more aggressive cuts may be necessary to stabilize our climate. In the interest of being good stewards of the earth we must heed these recommendations and establish goals that require at least an 80% reduction in Wisconsin's global warming emissions.

2. A Strong Renewable Energy Standard:

We strongly support the recommendation to get 25% of our electricity from renewable sources by 2025. We would like to see as much renewable power developed in Wisconsin as possible so that Wisconsin receives the economic benefits of these investments. We are opposed to the importation of electricity generated from Manitoba Hydroelectric projects. While these may be relatively cheap renewable sources, the past and future impacts on the indigenous people go far beyond what is morally and ethically acceptable. Requiring more than half of the renewable energy fulfilling the renewable energy standard to be produced within Wisconsin will help produce good paying jobs that can help build our communities and ensure Wisconsin transitions to a more sustainable economy.

3. Clean Cars:

Reducing global warming emissions is not only the responsibility of the electric generation sector. Emission reductions must come from all sectors of the economy including transportation. Implementing a Clean Cars standard similar to the one passed in California would help reduce our emissions from the automobile sector and help achieve our overall global warming reduction goals. Applying new standards to our automobiles would not only cut global warming pollution, but would clean our air by reducing smog and other toxic emissions while helping to shield drivers from exorbitant prices at the gas pump. Furthermore we support efforts to recruit auto manufacturers to Wisconsin that will focus on building the most fuel efficient and cleanest cars available. This will help create new jobs and ensure that Wisconsin's economy remains strong for generations to come.

of the church and the healing and reconciliation of the world

4. Early Reductions:

The scientific community has identified the importance of reducing global warming emissions as soon as possible. It is likely that it will take time to put a cap and trade program, whether state, regional or federal, into place and we cannot afford to wait to start making major reductions. It is critical that the largest sources of global warming emissions in the state – which are also the ones with the greatest means to reduce their overall contributions to global warming – be required to take immediate action to reduce those emissions. Millions of tons of global warming reductions could be achieved simply by relying on the cleanest sources of energy available to energy providers. The programs can be designed to give energy providers flexibility in how they actually achieve reductions, but it is important that the program mandates reductions that are actually achieved beginning in 2009.

5. A Strong Cap & Trade Program:

This is the most important policy recommendation since it will deliver the greatest amount of global warming emission reductions. This must be a strong program with science-based reduction targets that are not compromised by the use of offsets or other potential loopholes. It is important that emitters are not rewarded for previous pollution by simply giving away allowances or creating an artificial price cap. It is important that 100% of the pollution credits are auctioned in order to generate revenues that can be used to support energy efficiency projects in low income communities and other investments that reduce rate impacts on low income families. Making those investments as soon as possible will help to reduce energy bills, ensure that the rising costs of energy does not fall disproportionately on low income communities and simultaneously achieve major reductions in global warming emissions.

Respectfully,

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