

ACTION ALERT

May 30, 2008

Boxer-Lieberman-Warner Substitute to the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act (S. 3036)

ACTION NEEDED:

The Senate is expected to take up major climate change legislation today, Monday, June 2. We urge you to call, e-mail and fax your Senators immediately and ask them to act now to address the serious moral dimensions of climate change. Urge them especially to maintain and strengthen the anti-poverty provisions within “Boxer-Lieberman-Warner Substitute to the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act” (S. 3036).

To reach Senators, go to www.senate.gov.

The phone number for the Capitol switchboard is 202-224-3121

SUMMARY:

Beginning June 2, the Senate will begin debating groundbreaking climate change legislation. The USCCB and other religious partners have emphasized that a central moral measure of climate change legislation is how it touches the poor and vulnerable. We ask that you contact your Senators as soon as possible and urge them to support climate change legislation that reflects the demands of prudent action, promotes the common good and protects the poor. The introduction, improvement and consideration of this major legislation represents an important step in addressing climate change and its impacts on the poor. While the USCCB does not endorse the many specific provisions of the bill, we welcome and support provisions that address the disproportionate effects climate change and climate change legislation will have on poor and vulnerable people in our country and around the world.

OVERVIEW:

The “Boxer-Lieberman-Warner Substitute to the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act” (S. 3036) institutes a “cap and trade” program that provides market-based incentives to lower greenhouse gases and generate funds for public goods. The USCCB is primarily concerned with key provisions that provide much needed assistance, at home and abroad, to poor people and poor countries for adaptation and mitigation of climate change.

International Provisions:

The bishops support the significant funding in the bill that will help poor and vulnerable people in developing countries adapt to the impacts of climate change. This funding has doubled in this latest version of the legislation but we are concerned that there may not be enough assistance in the early years of the bill when it may be most needed.

Domestic Provisions:

Substantial resources are targeted for states, utilities and others to help offset the anticipated energy price rises for low-income people. However, the USCCB believes that more careful targeting and better mechanisms for aid delivery should be supported.

In summary, the USCCB welcomes these efforts and will continue to work with Senate leaders and others to build on and strengthen these essential commitments and to assure that those with the greatest needs receive the most help through effective, targeted and workable allocations and programs.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Position:

In their statement, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good*, the U.S. Catholic Bishops declared:

We especially want to focus on the needs of the poor, the weak, and the vulnerable in a debate often dominated by more powerful interests. Inaction and inadequate or misguided responses to climate change will likely place even greater burdens on already desperately poor peoples. Action to mitigate global climate change must be built upon a foundation of social and economic justice that does not put the poor at greater risk or place disproportionate and unfair burdens on developing nations.

As Bishop Wenski (Orlando), Chairman of the USCCB Committee on International Justice and Peace emphasized at a press conference: “The real “inconvenient truth” is that those who contribute least to climate change will be affected the most and have the least capacity to cope or escape.”

The USCCB and other partners in the faith community continue to support the current anti-poverty provisions and will support additional improvements as the bill is debated including 1) more and earlier funding for international adaptation measures in the early years and 2) better targeting and more effective vehicles for the domestic low-income energy assistance provisions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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