



## Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • FAX 202-541-3339 • WWW.USCCB.ORG/JPHD

February 3, 2016

United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

I am writing on behalf of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). As you consider the *Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2015* (S. 2012), I urge you to support Section 1004 (based on S. 600, the Nonprofit Energy Efficiency Act) and to oppose amendments that seek to undermine or reverse efforts to implement a national carbon standard for existing power plants.

In his encyclical on ecology, *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis reminds us that “[t]he climate is a common good” and that, “[w]hether believers or not, we are agreed today that the earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone.” (nos.23, 93). During his recent visit to the United States, he echoed this call: “Now is the time for courageous actions and strategies, aimed at implementing a ‘culture of care’ and ‘an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.’”

The U.S. bishops stand united with Pope Francis in his call to protect creation. In our statement, *Renewing the Earth*, we stressed that “[a]s individuals, as institutions, as a people, we need a change of heart to preserve and protect the planet for our children and for generations yet unborn.”

Section 1004 of S. 2012 would establish an energy-efficiency retrofit pilot program at the U.S. Department of Energy to provide financial grants to non-profit organizations to help make the buildings they own and operate more energy efficient. Non-profit entities of all kinds, including those that are faith-based, would benefit greatly from this important pilot program meant to assist institutions in becoming more environmentally responsible.

As well, the U.S. bishops have long spoken out on the importance of prudent action to address the growing impact of global climate change. In the past, we expressed support for a national carbon standard and offered moral principles to guide the EPA and states as they take steps to reduce carbon pollution. Among these principles are care for human life and all of creation, social and economic justice (including equitable distribution of costs and assistance to help mitigate impacts on affected workers), and a priority for the poor and vulnerable.

As I stated in a [June 24, 2015](#) letter to Congress, “As government leaders, we ask you to resist any effort to impair the development of a national carbon standard and instead to support our nation’s ability to address this urgent global challenge confronting the human family.”

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Thomas G. Wenski  
Archbishop of Miami  
Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice and Human  
Development