

Baptist Center for Ethics

Baptist Letter to United States Senate on Climate Change Legislation

April 28, 2008

We are Baptist leaders who recognize the moral imperative to love our neighbors—neighbors today and those across time. We love our neighbors through acts of justice, stewardship of God's creation and advocacy for legislation related to climate change.

We understand that this summer the Senate will take up the bi-partisan legislation of Senator John Warner and Senator Joseph Lieberman (America's Climate Security Act, S. 2191). We applaud these Senators and the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works for beginning to address this important moral issue.

We urge the Senate to pass climate change legislation that (1) shields vulnerable populations from the disproportionate dangers resulting from planet warming, (2) spreads the economic costs of changing our energy habits fairly and sustainably, and (3) limits the financial burdens that will be placed on low-income and working families.

We have a moral duty to speak up for the vulnerable in our society. Those who have contributed least to the problem of climate change stand to suffer the most. Those who are poor will likely bear the greatest burden economically from any large-scale program to reduce global warming pollution, if the legislation is not constructed correctly.

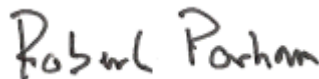
We also have a moral duty to speak up for the global poor. Global warming's impact already falls and will continue to fall most heavily on the marginalized in developing countries. To rectify this injustice, legislation must include mechanisms that provide adaptation assistance to vulnerable communities.

Legislation needs to follow scientific recommendations and focus on the short-term goal of reducing U.S. carbon emissions by 15-20 percent by 2020 and the long-term vision of reducing carbon emissions by 80 percent by 2050.

We recognize that significant reductions in global warming emissions require that we change our lifestyles and our energy consumption. Legislation must encourage energy conservation throughout our economy.

We urge the Senate to pass the strongest possible climate legislation that recognizes the needs and burdens of low-income and working families in the United States and around the world.

Sincerely,



Robert Parham

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