

Washington Interfaith Staff Community Energy and Environment Working Group (EEWG)

Faith-Based Environmental Priorities: 118th Congress

The Washington Interfaith Staff Community's Energy and Environment Working Group (EEWG) consists of more than 50 national religious organizations with grassroots networks in every state and internationally. As communities of faith, we are guided by values of stewardship and justice. We recognize that God's creation is sacred and thus we are called to responsibly steward the gifts of creation while protecting our most vulnerable neighbors and communities. Through our faith background and on-the-ground experience, we bring expertise on a wide variety of environmental issues.

We look forward to partnering with the 118th Congress on our policy priorities, which reflect the values that are grounded in our faith traditions.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

We urge Congress to implement sector-wide greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies that mitigate the effects of climate change and preserve our clean air. We support strong emissions reductions goals, including the strongest possible carbon pollution standards for power plants under the Clean Air Act. This also includes swiftly and dramatically reducing methane pollution from existing and future sources (including landfills, coal mines, agriculture, and oil and gas operations) and ensuring that transportation and infrastructure investments prioritize emissions reductions.

Energy

We urge Congress to promote policies and programs that lead our nation towards a clean energy economy. Specifically, we support prioritizing investments in renewable energy, including research and development, economic incentives, and grid modernization. This also includes advancing policies that promote energy efficiency in buildings, appliances, vehicles, and in industrial operations and providing incentives for innovation and the development of new technologies.

Just Transition and Job Creation

We urge Congress to ensure that affected communities, including low-income communities, communities of color, women, coal regions in transition, and communities on the front lines of climate impacts (both within the United States and around the world), are meaningfully involved in plans to transition to an energy efficient, climate resilient, and clean energy economy. Clean energy solutions rooted in local communities can be an engine of job creation. Investments in U.S. renewable energy, clean transportation, and sustainable water infrastructure that place a priority on fairness and economic opportunity for the most affected Americans are critical.

Adaptation and Mitigation Funding

We urge Congress to provide robust funding toward mitigation and adaptation for communities and countries facing the worst effects of climate change. The U.S. has a moral and strategic responsibility to work to ensure sustainable livelihoods for communities around the world that often do not have the tools to adapt. Congress should ensure that current federal funding commitments to climate finance mechanisms are fully met today and increased in the future. This includes prioritizing climate finance within U.S. government agencies and U.S. supported development banks. These funds must also promote transparency, monitoring, and accountability to ensure that the commitment to finance climate adaptation for the most vulnerable is achieved. Meaningful involvement of impacted nations and communities in project selection, design, and implementation is essential.

International Climate Commitments

We urge Congress to uphold and exceed our Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Paris Agreement and to live up to our promises on delivering international climate finance. We must also continue to seek bilateral agreements to strengthen the exchange of knowledge about clean technologies and climate resilience. We urge Congress to implement the U.S. mid-century emissions reduction strategy to galvanize the international community to keep global temperatures from rising more than 1.5 C°.

Public & Sacred Lands

We urge Congress to protect federal public lands by keeping them publicly owned, preserving biodiversity and helping ecosystems adapt to climate change. This means managing public lands and waters to meet our climate and conservation goals, particularly by rapidly phasing down federal fossil fuel extraction while accelerating the development of responsibly sited clean and renewable energy. Additionally, engaging the diverse peoples of our nation in our national parks and monuments by providing legal protection of Native American sacred sites on public lands is essential.

American Indian & Alaska Native Rights

We urge Congress to safeguard tribal sovereignty, ensuring that any decisions about the tribes concerning their lands, property, and citizens are made with their full participation. While preserving the rights of Alaska Natives, we want to ensure access to lands for subsistence and development opportunities to facilitate a just transition.

Endangered Species

We urge Congress to champion and protect efforts to safeguard God's creatures from extinction, including through the Endangered Species Act. This includes resisting efforts to rollback protections under the ESA and opposing species specific legislation that reduces protections for integral parts of God's creation.

U.S.-Mexico Border Policies

We urge Congress to ensure that border security strategies are humane and do not endanger fragile ecosystems, endangered species, clean water, and sacred sites of the borderlands. We encourage members to work together to find solutions that do not harm our public lands along the border.

Water

We urge Congress to implement measures to protect bodies of water from pollutants and environmental degradation. To ensure clean drinking water and healthy ecosystems, we must restore and maintain all the components of our watersheds. We ask that Congress manage water resources to prevent water shortages and crises that disproportionately affect people of color and low-income communities both in the U.S. and globally.

The Washington Interfaith Staff Community's Energy and Environment Working Group (EEWG) is a network of over 50 Washington offices of national religious bodies and faith-based organizations, encompassing Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and Humanist faiths. EEWG organizations collaborate on advocacy for U.S. government policies that advance a more just, peaceful, and ecologically sustainable world.

