



# What You Can Do

## Catholic Climate Change Justice and Health Initiative

**A** particularly helpful source of information and action steps is the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, which has been established to follow up on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) statement *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good*. The coalition offers assistance, especially for work at the state and diocesan level. For contact information, please visit USCCB's Environmental Justice Program Web site, [www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/climate](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/climate)

### TAKING ACTION IN MY STATE

1. Encourage lawmakers to improve and update public transportation. When effective and far-reaching public transportation systems are in place, fewer cars clog the roads to emit greenhouse gases and air-polluting contaminants.
2. Join local efforts of groups working with the mayor or other city officials to explore ways your city or municipality can do business and reduce harmful emissions.
3. Organize or participate in city and state Earth Day celebrations to raise awareness of the challenges of global climate change.
4. Pay attention to bills going before the state legislature that concern climate, emissions, or energy policies. Urge legislators to remember that poor people in your state may suffer the most from climate change and that legislative measures should include provisions that address disproportionate economic impacts, e.g., in heating and transportation costs.

### TAKING ACTION NATIONALLY

1. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is urging that any legislative action on climate change include provisions that (a) ease the burden on poor people; (b) offer some relief for workers who may be displaced because of climate change policies; and (c) promote the development and use of alternate renewable and clean-energy resources, including the transfer of such technologies and also technical assistance that may be appropriate and helpful to developing countries in meeting the challenges of global climate change.

Write to your senators and representatives in Congress. Let them know that you care about climate change and support action on a national level that includes the three key priorities above. For background information on the issue, go to [www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/climate](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/climate).

2. Keep up with new science and technology relating to climate change by checking the Web sites of the National Academy of Sciences ([www.nationalacademies.org](http://www.nationalacademies.org)) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) ([www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch)).

### TAKING ACTION GLOBALLY

1. Keep up with developments on how various nations are addressing climate change and especially how their responses impact the poor and vulnerable. You can follow the discussion by looking at how international bodies such as the G-8, the World Trade Organization, or the IPCC address the issue of climate change. The public policy challenge before the nations

of the world is how to address global climate change in a cooperative way that acknowledges the different capacities and responsibilities of developed and developing nations.

2. Mitigation and adaptation are two different approaches to addressing the potential impacts of climate change. *Adaptation* means shifting behavior now to adjust to the near-term impacts of climate change. It will require efforts to help protect people, their environment, and local and national economies from the negative effects of climate change. *Mitigation* means cutting back on the emissions of harmful global warming pollutants and taking action to prevent further harm to the atmosphere. Although at some point in the future most

countries will need to adopt both mitigating and adaptive strategies to address climate change, the capacity of developed and developing countries to do so differs, as do their needs for such measures.

3. To learn more about the debate, check the IPCC Web site ([www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch)). The IPCC was established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

#### USCCB'S ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE NEWS

To learn about USCCB's recent and past policy activities, go to Environmental Justice Program (EJP) News ([www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/news/index.html](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/news/index.html)).

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**O**ur mistreatment of the natural world diminishes our own dignity and sacredness, not only because we are destroying resources that future generations of humans need, but because we are engaging in actions that contradict what it means to be human. Our tradition calls us to protect the life and dignity of the human person, and it is increasingly clear that this task cannot be separated from the care and defense of all of creation.

*Renewing the Earth: An Invitation to Reflection and Action on Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching, 1991, 2*

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