

For Immediate Release

May 13, 2010

Faith Leaders: Climate Bill Should Do More for Vulnerable Communities Worldwide

(Washington, DC)—On Wednesday, May 12, Senators Kerry and Lieberman introduced the America Power Act, which takes numerous important steps forward in combating climate change. However, faith leaders dedicated to fighting climate change and protecting the communities it is already affecting were disappointed that the bill's funding of adaptation programs for vulnerable communities around the world -- which has been among the top priorities of America's faith community -- is inadequate.

"To protect the poor we need to get started ASAP on reducing global warming pollution, and thanks to the leadership of Senators Kerry and Lieberman the American Power Act does that. But we also need to help the poor in poor countries adapt to the consequences they did not cause, and here the Act falls short, hindering our efforts to support it."

Rev. Jim Ball, Senior Director, Climate Campaign, Evangelical Environmental Network

"We appreciate that the proposed climate legislation in the Senate has recognized the US's responsibility to protect communities abroad from the worst impacts of climate change. However, the American Power Act fails to provide adaptation assistance in a timely and sufficient manner in order to meet the growing needs of those living in poverty around the world. We look forward to working with the Administration and Congress to fully meet our obligation."

Rev. Peg Chamberlin, President, National Council of Churches

"A fundamental moral measure of climate change legislation is how it affects the poor in our own country and around the world. Along with the U.S. Catholic bishops, we are deeply disappointed that the funding resources committed to international adaptation fall fundamentally short of what is needed. Immediate and generous increases would help meet the initial needs of people living in poverty in the most vulnerable developing nations. Expanded resources would also send a strong message of the U.S. commitment to securing a global treaty by providing a substantial down payment for international adaptation funding."

Jim Ennis, Executive Director, National Catholic Rural Life Conference

"I hope we can significantly increase the percentage funds designated in the Senate bill for the most vulnerable, who have added the least to the problem and whose lives are being devastated by the effects of climate change."

Dr. Joel C. Hunter, Senior Pastor, Northland - A Church Distributed.

"Wealthy, industrialized countries have contributed the most to climate change, but the droughts, floods, disease, and forced migration caused by it are felt most acutely by the world's poor. Jesus said we would be judged by what we did for the least of these among us. The new Senate climate bill makes great progress in a number of areas, but on the matter Christ will use to judge our actions, this bill still falls far short. For America's faithful to fully get behind this bill, it will need to reflect our priorities on climate change.

The world's poor cannot wait for us to act. America's strength is found in our moral example to the world, and on the issue of adaptation for poor people and countries we must lead."

Rev. Jim Wallis, President and Founder of Sojourners

"Our faith calls us to be both caretakers of creation and advocates for the poor. Although wealthier nations have contributed the most to climate change, it is the 'least of these' who suffer the worst consequences. Thus, the poor of this world need our help adapting to the changes in agriculture, water supply, and risks of diseases they are now facing as a result of climate change. We applaud our lawmakers for the hard work they are doing on the crucial issue of climate change and we encourage them, as part of this work, to keep in mind our responsibility to our poorer sisters and brothers around the world."

Sharon Watkins, Pres of Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and former member of President's Faith Climate Task Force

The draft introduced yesterday delays funding to help the world's poor adapt until 2019 and does not begin funding at significant levels until 2022. The World Health Organization estimates that climate change is already contributing to over 150,000 deaths each year world-wide, and 26 million people have been displaced in recent years due to conditions made worse by climate change. The droughts, floods, and severe storms intensified by climate change, and the increased disease burden are getting worse and most affect the poor who are least responsible for climate change and least able to adapt to its effects.

Contact: Eric Sapp/ 703-863-6403/ esapp@eleisongroup.com

####