

May 20, 2025

Dear Members of Congress:

We come together as faith-based organizations from a variety of religious traditions to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the publication of Pope Francis's signature teaching, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*. As we mark this milestone, we are compelled to express alarm at the Administration's dismantling of environmental protections and efforts to address climate change.

Inspired by Pope Francis' message, we ask for restored funding and staffing of the Environmental Protection Agency, restoration of efforts within all of government to address climate change, environmental protections for communities over-burdened by pollution, and a transition to a renewable energy economy that leaves no one behind. We also seek meaningful environmental reviews and consultation with communities impacted by energy infrastructure and mining projects, a renewed focus on protecting God's oceans from extraction, and funding for climate mitigation and adaptation for vulnerable countries.

We invite members of Congress and the Administration, in the spirit of dialogue that underlies Pope Francis' teaching, to join us in heeding the call "to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor." As we reflect on Pope Francis' life and ministry we lift up his words regarding our common home.

"What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? We may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation and filth."

We are heartened that the White House Earth Day message recognized the importance of "maintaining the standards that have afforded Americans the cleanest air and water in the world for generations." But we remain concerned that massive cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency, including the elimination of the environmental justice office; abandoning congressionally mandated national climate assessments; and closing offices that focus on climate science and the harms of pollution will set us back and leave future generations worse off than we are today. We call for restored funding and staffing for this important work.

"We have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."

The U.S. has the technology and wealth to ensure clean air and clean water for everyone. We urge Congress and the Administration to uphold environmental protections for communities in the shadows of polluting industry and super highways. Assessing the impacts of new economic development must keep in mind the burdens that these communities already bear.

“We know that technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels – especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas – needs to be progressively replaced without delay.”

We lament efforts to increase already record-high oil and gas production and re-invigorate coal mining on public lands. A build-out of more liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals along the Gulf Coast is leaving residents of nearby communities fearful for their health and safety. Instead, we welcome actions that responsibly lean into a renewable energy economy that doesn't leave anyone behind.

“It is essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions. They are not merely one minority among others, but should be the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their land are proposed.”

Sought-after minerals for the energy transition are most often located on or near Native land—land considered sacred and with cultural and historical significance. We are troubled by policies and proposed legislation that cut short environmental reviews and public input for mining projects as well as for energy and transmission projects. We believe that it's possible to engage in thorough reviews and gather input from local communities in a timely manner to meet the urgency of building out renewable energy infrastructure. Staffing up review agencies is an obvious place to start.

“Caring for ecosystems demands far-sightedness, since no one looking for quick and easy profit is truly interested in their preservation. But the cost of the damage caused by such selfish lack of concern is much greater than the economic benefits to be obtained.”

We fear that treating the sea floor as a new frontier for mining minerals and metals, rather than as a precious ecosystem that is interconnected with the rest of life on this planet, is premature and extremely risky. Scientists warn that ocean ecosystems have developed over tens of millions of years, and mining could quickly wipe out entire habitats, with unknown consequences. What we do know is that the deep ocean is vital for absorbing and storing carbon dioxide, and disrupting this mechanism could have irreversible climate impacts and increase severe weather. We call for a pause on deep-sea mining until we have better scientific information on how to minimize risks.

“Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day.”

We pray for a change of heart about pulling the U.S. out of international climate negotiations and closing the State Department office that works with other nations on this pressing issue. We urge Congress to allocate funding for climate mitigation and adaptation in countries most vulnerable to the harms of a warming world. This is not the time for abandoning leadership on the global stage.

Finally, we share this message that Pope Francis directed toward government officials: “True statecraft is manifest when, in difficult times, we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good.” We know that you are up to this challenge, and we offer our prayers and support.

Sincerely,

Adorers of the Blood of Christ US Region JPIC Office
Anabaptist Climate Collaborative
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Bernardine Franciscan sisters
Catholic Climate Covenant
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Creation Justice Ministries
Daughters of Wisdom
Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action
Felician Sisters of North America
Franciscan Action Network
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
Jewish Earth Alliance – PA
Justice & Care for Creation Office, Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester
Kentucky Interfaith Power & Light
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Medical Mission Sisters, Unit North America
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
Mennonite Church USA
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Religious Partnership for the Environment
NETWORK for Catholic Social Justice
New Mexico & El Paso Region Interfaith Power and Light
Rabbinical Assembly
School Sisters of Notre Dame, Central Pacific Province
Sisters of Christian Charity
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Philadelphia
School Sisters of Notre Dame Collective Investment Fund
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Justice, Peace and Care for Creation Committee
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur USA
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, NY
Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Sisters of Saint Francis, Rochester, MN
Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden, PA
Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston

Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, U.S.-Ontario Province
Texas Impact
The Shalom Center
Union for Reform Judaism
United Church of Christ
United Methodist Church – General Board of church and Society
Wheaton Franciscan Sisters JPIC Office