



## *West Virginia Interfaith Power and Light*

P.O. Box 5507  
Charleston, WV 25301

Attn: Phil A. Hancock, Legislative Assistant  
The Honorable Joe Manchin, III  
United States Senate  
306 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Phil,

I am writing on behalf of West Virginia Interfaith Power and Light (WVIPL), a state affiliate of a national organization representing over 20,000 congregations in 40 states including congregations in your district. We are a group of concerned West Virginians from various faith traditions—leaders and lay persons alike—who believe that care for Creation is a call to be heeded and acted upon.

Since we had difficulty scheduling our zoom lobby meeting, those of us who planned to meet with you decided to send a letter instead about our goals for the meeting. Below is a brief introduction by those of us who would have attended the meeting by title, faith represented, and a brief statement related to each of our faith positions on climate.

Robin Blakeman, Project Coordinator, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, WV IPL Steering Committee, ordained minister, PCUSA: "...God's work in creation is too wonderful, too ancient, too beautiful, too good to be desecrated...Restoring creation is God's own work in our time, in which God comes both to judge and to restore..." (-PC USA Environmental Policy)

Rev. Jeffrey Allen, Executive Director, WV Council of Churches, WV IPL Steering Committee: "Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood. Let us then go to him outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come." (Hebrews 13:12-14 (NRSV))

Gary Zuckett, Exec. Director, WV Citizen Action, WV IPL Steering Committee, Member, Unitarian Universalist Church: "Earth is our home. We are part of this world and its destiny is our own. Life on this planet will be gravely affected unless we embrace new practices, ethics, and values to guide our lives on a warming planet. We as Unitarian Universalists are called to join with others to halt practices that fuel global warming/climate change, to instigate sustainable alternatives, and to mitigate the impending effects of global warming/climate change with just and ethical responses. As a people of faith, we commit to a renewed reverence for life and respect for the interdependent web of all existence." (2006 Statement of Conscience, Unitarian Universalist Association)

Sue DeVall, WV IPL Steering Committee, Member of the Buddhist faith: "His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet states: "It is often difficult to judge how our actions and their impact on the environment are likely to affect others. What is clear is that we are the only species with the power to destroy the earth. Birds

and insects have no such power, nor does any other mammal. And yet if we have the capacity to destroy the earth, we also have the capacity to protect it. I believe we have an urgent responsibility to do so.”

Ibtesam Barazi, VP, Islamic Association, WV: “And the servants of Allah , most gracious, are those who walk on earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say peace.” (Allah’s words in the book of Quran) Here, Allah is telling us to walk gently on the earth due to its fragility and to not disturb small animals such as ants etc....Islam forbids wasting resources and destroying the environment. The prophet Mohamed ordered the Muslims not to cut trees during wars and to preserve them. He emphasized the conservation of the environment and the prevention of its destruction. Therefore, conserving & protecting the environment is a religious duty of every Muslim.

Rabbi Victor Urecki, B’nai Jacob Synagogue, Charleston, WV: “Jewish tradition teaches us to care for our planet in order to preserve that which God has created. Psalm 24 notes, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof,” a dramatic assertion of God’s ownership of the land. It follows, then, that any act that damages our earth is an offense against the property of God. The Torah also commands, “Justice, justice shall you pursue” (Deuteronomy 16:20), and thus, our energy policy must also be equitable and just – and the countries most responsible for climate change should be those most responsible for finding a solution to the problem. Judaism underscores the moral imperative of protecting the poor and vulnerable: “When one loves righteousness and justice, the earth is full of the loving-kindness of the Eternal” (Psalms 33:5). As heirs to a tradition of stewardship that goes back to Genesis and teaches us to be partners in the ongoing work of creation, we cannot accept the escalating destruction of our environment and its effect on human health and livelihood. It is our sacred duty to alleviate environmental degradation and the human suffering it causes.”

We would like to thank Senator Manchin for introducing the American Jobs in Energy Manufacturing Act of 2021. Our organization strongly supports this legislation to make smart changes to the 48C Advanced Energy Manufacturing Tax Credit to promote a just transition to a cleaner energy future in rural communities that have suffered a decline in manufacturing and traditional energy sector jobs.

WVIPL believes that this bill coincides well with our group’s support of the RECLAIM Act designed to distribute \$1 billion from the existing federal Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Fund to clean up abandoned coal mines and the lands and waters polluted by them. This will promote economic diversification, targeting our neighbors in the most economically distressed coal communities in West Virginia and across the nation.

Our group also supports the THRIVE Act, which would invest \$10 trillion over the next decade to facilitate a top-to-bottom clean energy economy while ensuring that half of the investment goes to the communities hurt the most by our current fossil fuel economy. It would establish a national renewable energy standard, setting into law President Biden’s campaign promise of 100% clean electricity by 2035.

Finally, as faith leaders and faith-based advocates in the state of West Virginia, we write to you today about the urgent need to pass the For the People Act (S.1). The For the People Act (S.1) includes reforms to protect voting rights, address the outsized influence of money in politics, curb unethical practices by elected leaders, and to ensure fair representation in Congressional redistricting.

We would like to ask the Senator the following questions and receive his input:

- 1) Would he be willing to support adding the RECLAIM Act to President Biden's American Jobs Plan?
- 2) Does the Senator support the national renewable energy standard proposed by the President of providing 100% clean electricity by 2035? If not, what would the Senator's alternative to this be?
- 3) Will the Senator support the For the People Act (S.1)?

Thank you very much for your attention to these matters. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

WVIPL Steering Committee members and colleagues:

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Rev. Jeffrey Allen  
Gary Zuckett  
Ibtessam Barazi  
Rabbi Victor Urecki  
Sue DeVall

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