

November 20, 2006

The Honorable Norm Coleman
United States Senate
320 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Coleman:

We are writing to you on the subject of global warming, from our faith perspectives. Global warming is a religious issue. We are called to care for all of God's children, especially the most vulnerable, and to protect and restore God's creation. Global warming is a threat to all people and all of creation. The undersigned parties call on you, as an elected representative of the citizens of Minnesota, to acknowledge this risk and uphold the values of our citizens by supporting a responsible, mandatory national program of market-based limits on emissions of greenhouse gases.

We are quickly approaching the one year anniversary of the Montreal meeting of signatories to the U.N. Framework on Climate Change where participants in the eleventh Conference of the Parties began to outline next steps on global efforts to reduce the threat of global warming. Despite the growing alarm bells and clear stakes for our own economic and social stability as well as that of other countries, the U.S. Administration once again declined to participate constructively in these negotiations.

We look to you, as a United States Senator, for the necessary leadership in crafting a federal response to credibly address this threat. While international negotiations are the prerogative of the executive branch, there is much that can be done domestically to reduce rising global warming emissions and send a message to the world that the U.S. is ready to act responsibly and take a leadership role in abating those emissions.

In June 2005 the Senate took an important step when it passed Energy Bill amendment 866, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate on global warming. We understand that while you were not present for this vote, you indicated that you would have voted in favor of the amendment. We want to thank you for this and urge you to continue supporting positive development in the Senate and take leadership wherever possible.

We need energy policies that guarantee global warming emissions will decrease, that promote renewable energy and energy efficiency, and that tighten fuel economy standards. We ask you to support these measures as part of a national approach that will reduce emissions fast enough to prevent irreversible harm to public health, the economy and the environment.

Our faith informs our responses to the risks that science clearly demonstrates. From the New Testament of the Bible, we learn that "in Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to God's self all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross."¹ Similarly, in the Jewish tradition, we are reminded, "the earth is the LORD's, and all that is in it, the world, and all those who live in it."² In the Quran, we read that to the Lord, "belongs everything that is in the heavens and on earth. All are devoutly obedient to Him."³

We know that the greenhouse effect is a natural process that is, in fact, necessary for life to exist on earth. We also know that due to extensive burning of fossil fuels, humans have dramatically amplified this process, so much so that we are upsetting the balance of all life on earth. We face an intensifying crisis of stewardship, of interdependence and of commitment by all people of faith.⁴ Thus, we believe we must, with God's blessing, effectively address and work to resolve this crisis.

It is with this understanding that we write to you. We call on your support and leadership in pursuing a responsible, mandatory national program of market-based limits on emissions of greenhouse gases.

We look forward to a response from you.

Sincerely,

Catholic

Archbishop Harry J. Flynn, Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
Bishop Richard E. Pates, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis
Bishop Victor H. Balke, Diocese of Crookston
Bishop Bernard Harrington, Diocese of Winona
Bishop John F. Kinney, Diocese of St. Cloud
Bishop Dennis M. Schnurr, Diocese of Duluth

Episcopal

The Right Reverend James Louis Jelinek, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota

Jewish

Rabbi Marcia A. Zimmerman, Temple Israel, Minneapolis
Rabbi Alexander Davis, Beth El Synagogue, St. Louis Park
Rabbi Morris J. Allen, Beth Jacob Congregation, Mendota Heights, MN

Lutheran

Bishop Jon Anderson, Southwestern Minnesota Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Bishop Craig Johnson, Minneapolis Area Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Bishop Peter Rogness, Saint Paul Area Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Bishop Peter Strommen, Northeastern Minnesota Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Bishop Harold Usgaard, Southeastern Minnesota Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Bishop Rolf Wangberg, Northwestern Minnesota Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Muslim

Hesham Hussein, President, Muslim Association of Minnesota
Anwar Abdel Karim, Vice President, Islamic Center of Minnesota
Nazneen Khatoun, Treasurer, Islamic Center of Minnesota

Presbyterian

Reverend Tim Hart-Anderson, Moderator Presbytery of the Twin Cities, Presbyterian Church USA,
and Senior Minister, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Minneapolis

Unitarian Universalist

Rev. Laurie Bushbaum, Michael Servetus Unitarian Society (Fridley, MN)
Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons, First Unitarian Society (Minneapolis, MN)

Rev. Rod Thompson, Unitarian Universalist Church of Minnetonka (Wayzata, MN)
Rev. Frank Rivas, Senior Minister, First Universalist Church (Minneapolis, MN)
Rev. Mary Samuels, Minnesota Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (Bloomington, MN)
Rev. Victoria Safford, White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church (Mahtomedi, MN)
Rev. Kate Tucker, First Universalist Church (Minneapolis, MN)

United Church of Christ

Rev. Dr. Karen Smith Sellers, Conference Minister, Minnesota Conference, United Church of Christ

United Methodist

Bishop Sally Dyck, Minnesota Annual Conference, United Methodist Church

¹ Colossians 1:19-20 NRSV (emended)

² Psalm 24:1 NRSV (emended).

³ Quran 30:26

⁴ American Baptist Policy Statement on Energy, p. 4; for a fuller discussion of “stewardship,” see “American Baptist Policy Statement on Ecology: An Ecological Situational Analysis”, section: Creation and the Covenant of Caring, June, 1989, p 3.