

# **Investing in a Green Future: A Vision for a Renewed Creation**

**DRAFT**

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This material is being circulated for the purpose of soliciting information and comment to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) and for no other purpose. The material is preliminary and is not to be understood or reported as a position taken by either ACSWP or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a whole. The Advisory Committee is the body elected by the church's General Assembly to provide guidance on matters of Christian conscience and was specifically asked to update its policies on energy and sustainability.

Thus we seek comments and suggestions from persons deeply committed to helping our society accelerate the green transition so urgently needed. Your responses on matters of technology, tone, and even title would be particularly welcome in written form. Thank you for taking time, if you can, to read and share your reflections with us as we test the document.

Please send comments to Rev. Sue Smith: [suzesmith98@gmail.com](mailto:suzesmith98@gmail.com).

(Examples of prior policy statements can be found at the ACSWP website:  
<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/acswp/topics/>)

## **Investing in a Green Future: a Vision for a Renewed Creation**

*“We have lived our lives by the assumption that what was good for us would be good for the world. We have been wrong. We must change our lives so that it will be possible to live by the contrary assumption, that what is good for the world will be good for us. And that requires that we make the effort to know the world and learn what is good for it.” - Wendell Berry*

### **Recommendations**

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approve the study and recommendations entitled “Investing in a Green Future: a Vision for a Renewed Creation,” which commemorates the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*, approved by the 202nd General Assembly (1990) and provides a discussion on the intersections of environmental justice, environmental racism and economic justice.

**1. Approve the study and recommendations entitled “Investing in a Green Future: a Vision for a Renewed Creation,” including the list of resources on environmental justice, environmental racism, and eco-stewardship, to fulfill the direction of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), which requested a comprehensive updating of energy policy.**

**2. Give thanks to God for the historic witness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 30 years ago when the 202nd General Assembly approved *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*, in which the church was called to make the 1990s a “turnaround decade” for ecological restoration [by providing vision and guidance for Presbyterians and all people to participate in God’s redemption of the creation.]**

**3. Confess that we have not sufficiently “responded to the cry of creation” and hereby recommit to a “turnaround decade” for restoring creation. We have failed to place the intrinsic value of God’s creation above the idols of the world, such as wealth, power, acquisition, and status. [We have failed to embrace fully the principles of stewardship and sustainability, of God’s concern for the poor and their participation in processes and policies, of accepting for our own lives that which is sufficient (rather than the constant accumulation of more), and of solidarity with all creation.] We recommit our energy, our treasure, and our vision to a future in which God’s creation is restored, the human family lives together in balance and justice with each other, and the social and ecological destruction that our society inflicts on the world is reversed and repaired.**

**[4. Work towards a goal of 100% renewable energy in the PC(USA) by 2030 by practicing energy efficiency, purchasing our power from renewable energy sources, and investing in the development of renewable energy.]**

**5. Affirm that the work of restoring creation not only includes establishing a right relationship between humans and nature, but also promoting economic justice for the human family and**

racial justice for our society. In our culture, this means dismantling the white supremacy that permeates our lives and institutions, and making reparations for centuries of harm. That harm has often combined environmental, racial, and economic injustice.

6. Urge individuals, congregations, mid-councils, and other governing bodies of the PC(USA) to make use of the extensive resources about eco-justice available from the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Creation Justice Ministries, and other partners. A list with links can be found in an Appendix to this paper. In particular, the 224th Assembly commends for use *The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming*, approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008), which provides a more comprehensive treatment of global climate change and the steps that must be taken to address this looming human-caused catastrophe, which must necessarily be part of the response to the issues raised here.

7. Affirm the Presbyterian Mission Agency commitment to make restoring creation, including environmental justice, racial justice, and economic justice, a key priority in its programming and in its advocacy.

8. Concerning the church's public witness with respect to policies that will affect these goals:
- A. Affirm our belief in the human right to clean water and air.
  - B. Support policies and regulations that rigorously reduce air pollution, not only carbon pollution, but also particulate matter and other carcinogenic air pollutants that disproportionately affect low-income, vulnerable communities of color living near power plants.
  - C. Express our conviction that a just solution needs to address environmental racism.
    - a. Ensure that communities affected by environmental racism are included at the table and have the opportunity to provide leadership in the movement to find solutions to the current ecological crisis.
    - b. Acknowledge seriousness of local pollution in specific communities as a systemic problem.
    - c. Affirm that those who suffer most have the strongest moral claim in shaping restorative policy and practice.
  - D. Support policies that improve water quality and that stop the ongoing pollution of U.S. waterways, ground water, etc.
    - a. Preemptively stop or suspend fracking and other fossil fuel extraction that endangers local communities with dangerous, toxic waste water that is frequently dumped in streams or other water supply sources.
    - b. Halt the construction of fossil fuel pipelines. Not only must we transition our energy infrastructure away from fossil fuels, but these pipelines are also hazardous to the communities in which they are built.
    - c. Protect and increase investment in public lands that not only preserve pristine wilderness for posterity, but also provide natural filters, carbon sinks, and ecosystems that clean and restore water systems and soils.

- d. Ensure that toxic waste sites are not located near people’s homes, in particular, the low-income communities of color that are regularly targeted for these sites because they lack the wealth and political power to oppose them effectively.
  - e. Ensure that existing toxic waste sites, wherever they are, receive proper maintenance and lining to prevent seepage and protect against the contamination of the water supply.
  - f. Support comprehensive infrastructure replacement programs that replace lead pipes, retrofit sewer systems, and repair or replace other sources of toxicity in water. The water crisis in Flint, Michigan, is dire and must be addressed comprehensively, but it is not the only community afflicted with poisonous water contamination from aging and outdated infrastructure.
- E. Affirm the “polluter pays” principle. Ensure that the economic burden of conversion to a new economy rests on those who have the ability to pay, including corporations, private investors, and the government. Further, ensure that local, state, and federal governments raise new revenue to address these challenges from wealthy taxpayers using progressive taxation, rather than through flat, regressive taxes that will disproportionately burden lower-income taxpayers.
  - a. Require polluters to pay for their own mitigation and cleanup without passing costs on to consumers.
  - b. Support capping executive compensation, stock buybacks, and shareholder profits in order to ensure that polluters bear the social and environmental costs of their own businesses.
  - c. “Green taxes” must serve to internalize the social and environmental costs of doing business, so that the true costs, including safety and environmental regulatory compliance, industry and building retrofitting, research and development, mitigation of past pollution, are incorporated into the price for all items, from energy to food, transportation, building/housing, and health care.
  - d. “Green taxes” should be used to raise revenue to invest in a variety of priorities, including aforementioned investments in a new economy, pollution mitigation and cleanup, adaptation efforts, protection of land and species from degradation and extinction, and cost offsets for those who are unable to bear the increased prices for goods and energy.
- F. Reiterate that the goal of a “green economy” cannot be limited strictly to ecological concerns or environmental policy, but rather must address concerns of racial and economic justice in the marketplace, including a living wage; access to safe, affordable housing, health care, and food; rigorous regulation of high-polluting sectors and industries; programs to replace and retrofit aging buildings and infrastructure; access to jobs and job training in sustainable industries; and workforce development programs for workers who will transition from the fossil fuel industry to sectors with renewable and sustainable practices.

- G. Affirm the economic principle of “sufficiency” as a guiding factor in our economic decisions, as opposed to “excess,” which currently guides the U.S. economy. We believe that people are more important than profits and that God has provided abundance in creation. Whatever the mixture of market and government protection or provision, no person should live in abject poverty while others enjoy heedless excess. God has provided resources sufficient for all people and creatures to have what we need.**
- H. Urge the U.S. and state governments to:**
- a. Prioritize investment in low- and zero-emissions industries and products.**
  - b. Provide incentives (tax, subsidy and regulatory) for all sectors of the economy, including private citizens, to switch to low- and zero-emission products, transportation, buildings, food, etc.**
  - c. Invest in appropriate-scale renewable energy production, ramping up large-scale renewable technologies that are already available, such as solar, wind and biomass, while avoiding displacement by large-scale hydroelectric projects.**
  - d. Avoid commitments to energy production and technologies that continue to produce toxic waste, such as nuclear energy, or that provide only short-term or provisional solutions to long-term problems.**
  - e. Support programs that will provide training for workers in all sectors, and in particular those who will necessarily leave the fossil fuel industry. Provide or support economic development for the regions and communities that depend on fossil fuel for jobs and livelihoods.**
  - f. Invest in housing and building retrofitting, especially in communities affected by environmental racism, in order to reduce and clean up unhealthy environments, improve efficiency, reduce emissions, and conform to the best practices available.**
  - g. [Incentivize a shift away from fossil-fuel and chemical intensive industrial agriculture and invest in regenerative and agroecological farming, which have the added benefit of sequestering from the atmosphere large amounts of carbon into the soil.]**
  - h. Invest in food system conversion to help communities form thriving local food systems, which make healthy food more accessible and reduce the use of fossil fuels in the fields and in the transportation of food from farm to table.**
  - i. Partner with states, providing adequate funding for the conversion of the transportation sector to renewable energy sources, including expanding current and building new mass transit and investing in the infrastructure necessary to make low-carbon vehicles practical, such as electric charging stations.**
- I. Recognize that those who are most affected by climate change, both in the U.S. and around the globe, are the least equipped to handle its effects. The U.S. must allocate**

significant resources to mitigate cost increases for historically underserved communities in the U.S. and for international adaptation for the most vulnerable communities in the world.

- J. **[Support Indigenous Peoples as essential caretakers of the majority of the planet's biodiversity, including the protection and sustainable use of forests worldwide, and join in advocacy to honor broken and unenforced treaties.]**
- K. **Affirm the need for well-funded research agencies and regulatory agencies.**
  - a. **While most of the climate research was first sponsored by private companies, those companies were not obligated to share findings with governmental agencies or the public. [Corporations that give their investors information on the climate effects of their operations that differs from the conclusions of their internal research should be fined or otherwise punished.] We need to invest in the work of independent scientists who will guide the development of regulation, regardless of profit.**
  - b. **It is not sufficient to expect the market to correct itself without government regulation. In order to protect vulnerable communities, in particular communities of color who have consistently been on the receiving end of environmental pollution, toxic waste disposal, and failing infrastructure, any method of assessing the cost of carbon, through a tax or market-based approach, must be coupled with rigorous regulation in order to protect these communities specifically.**
  - c. **It is clear that the market alone will not regulate itself. Regulatory agencies need to be well-funded and staffed, so as to have the capacity to enforce needed, rigorous regulation independent of political appointee and industry conflicts of interest.**
  - d. **Further, neither the White House nor Congress should be permitted to meddle in the work on science-based regulation based on partisan politics or ideologies. The system of checks and balances must ensure that no elected leader is allowed to subvert science to serve a political end.**
- L. **Affirm our conviction that global climate change is real, is human-caused, and has already caused significant harm to humans, wildlife, and natural ecosystems. The U.S. must take immediate, swift, and effective action to reduce carbon emissions in order to prevent catastrophic climate change, mass species extinction, mounting risks to human health, and increasingly erratic and dangerous weather patterns. All U.S. policy remedies must set climate goals and emissions reductions targets based on the best available climate science and commensurate with international agreements and goals.**
- M. **Denounce the failure of the United States to engage in good faith with the international community as it seeks to craft a global response to climate change. Urge the U.S. to return to the community of nations that is working together to restore a sustainable future. In particular, the U.S. must engage in international negotiations pursuant to the Paris Agreement and the Silesia Declaration, making and meeting commitments to our global partners.**

**[9. Recognize that transitioning to a more just, restored, and sustainable world will be difficult, but possible. While it is hard for us to imagine a low-carbon / zero-carbon economy without fossil fuels, where environmental care comes before profit, in which racism and poverty are functionally eliminated, we must do all of these things. Instead of focusing on the difficulties or expense, we must lift up our vision and actions to create a revived environment, better health outcomes, living wage jobs, clean air and water, wilderness preserved for its own sake, universal access to healthy food, and the reparation of broken relationships.]**

**[10. As the church celebrates that earlier theological and ethical work, the Assembly encourages every pastor, every congregation, and all the teachers and professors in the church to contribute to the work of environmental theology, to understand God's presence and purposes in nature and the cosmos of which we are part, and to defend the tree of life in all its forms, from the cross of Jesus Christ to the tree of nation-healing leaves that will be planted in the new Jerusalem.]**

#### *Rationale*

In 1990, the 202nd General Assembly approved *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*, which included a "Call to Restore Creation:"

Therefore, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to

- Respond to the cry of creation, human and nonhuman;
- Engage in the effort to make the 1990s the "turnaround decade," not only for reasons of prudence or survival, but because the endangered planet is God's creation; and
- Draw upon all the resources of biblical faith and the reformed tradition for empowerment and guidance in this adventure.

Giving thanks to God for the historic witness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 30 years ago, we confess that we have not "responded to the cry of creation." We have failed to place the intrinsic value of God's creation above the idols of the world, such as wealth, power, acquisition, and status. We realize that, despite the church's comprehensive report on ecological crisis 30 years ago, we have not done enough to heed the call and avert catastrophe. The 1990s were not a "turnaround decade" for God's creation, so the 224th General Assembly joins with previous Assemblies (1971, 1981, 1990, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, and 2018) in recommitting our energy, our treasure, and our vision to a future in which God's creation is restored, the human family lives together in balance and justice with each other and the rest of the creation, and the social and ecological destruction that our society inflicts on the world is reversed and repaired.

This sin that we confess is not limited to environmental degradation, but rather encompasses the full spectrum of environmental injustice, racial injustice, and economic injustice. The forces

of greed, indifference, and white supremacy have combined to paint a picture of our environmental, economic, and communal future that is more dire than we could have predicted 30 years ago. As a church composed of 89 percent white people,<sup>1</sup> we must begin by confessing that white supremacy and our tenacious hold on the nation's power and economic structures have led to environmental racism that places in jeopardy the lives and health of people of color across this country and the world. In renewing our call to restore creation and justice, we acknowledge the trifold barriers that we must address: environmental injustice, racial injustice, and economic injustice. This call to renewal and investment in our future must be centered on eco-justice, including anti-racism and an ethic of economic sufficiency.

We affirm that this work not only includes restoring creation and a right relationship between humans and nature, but also economic justice for the human family and racial justice that dismantles white supremacy in our institutions and makes reparations for centuries of harm.

### **Environmental Racism - starting where the need is greatest**

In today's political and social climate, environmental advocacy is varied and diverse, but specific to the church's witness is a special concern for the intersection of ecological degradation and racism – environmental justice (EJ). Church statements since the 1970's have recognized the need for participation of vulnerable and poor communities, but the ongoing intractability of the current situation in the U.S. requires extra intentionality.

In its *Toxic Wastes and Race at 20* report commemorating the 20th anniversary of the original *Toxic Wastes and Race* report, in which the term “environmental racism” was coined, the United Church of Christ defined the EJ movement— “[T]he environmental justice movement has been trying to address inequalities that are the result of human settlement, industrial contamination and unsustainable development.”<sup>2</sup>

The same report comments on the history of a developing movement—

Prior to 1987, environmental issues and racial justice issues were commonplace in public debate, but not addressed as an inter-related problem. It was not until Benjamin F. Chavis, Executive Director of the CRJ [UCC Commission for Racial Justice], provoked the nation's consciousness by referring to toxic waste landfill siting in people of color communities as “environmental racism.”<sup>3</sup>

Just three years later, the 202nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*, where it “support[s] just solutions to the selection of hazardous waste disposal sites.” It further urges decision makers to “incorporate

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<sup>1</sup> 2018 Comparative Summaries of Statistics, published by the Office of the General Assembly, <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/2018-comparative-summaries-statistics/>.

<sup>2</sup> Correa Bernier, C.J., *Preface to Toxic Wastes and Race at 20 1987-2007: a Report prepared for the United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries*, March 2007, p. viii. <https://www.ejnet.org/ej/twart-light.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Jaramillo, Linda J., *Forward to Toxic Wastes and Race at 20 1987-2007: a Report prepared for the United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries*, March 2007, p. vii. <https://www.ejnet.org/ej/twart-light.pdf>.



social justice considerations into the criteria for siting waste-producing or handling facilities, recognizing the grievous impact hazardous wastes have had on poor and racial ethnic communities.”<sup>4</sup>

Any reflection on the last 30 years of Presbyterian public witness on environmental issues must necessarily include the depth and breadth of the church’s ecological work, ranging from environmental renewal, to global climate change, clean water, endangered species, sustainable development, renewable energy, mining and other fossil fuel extraction, and a just food system. This witness has been varied and deep. This paper seeks to bring together the multiple strains of ecological concern, to fill in gaps in social witness policy, and to view these issues through the lens of environmental injustice, as called for by the previous General Assembly.

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), urged the church to “take action and respond to environmental racism and environmental injustice in all its forms.”<sup>5</sup>

Charles Lee, who wrote the original *Toxic Wastes and Race* in 1987 explains the term—

“Environmental racism refers to the disproportionate impact of environmental contamination on communities of color. It refers to racial discrimination in formulating and carrying out environmental policy. It refers to the decisions to put hazardous waste facilities and other unwanted land uses in predominantly poor and people-of-color communities. It refers to the adverse health effects that result from the unkind treatment of the environment in these communities. And it refers to the lack of persons of color in the leadership of the environmental movement and in the environmental workplace.”<sup>6</sup>

Today’s environmental activism can be characterized by two separate groups. The first is a largely white activist community whose concern is the “big picture,” and whose strategies will embrace any and all public policy solutions that begin to address the very real ecological disaster that humans have created on earth. The other is the Environmental Justice (EJ) community, which is largely disadvantaged communities – black, latinx, and Native American communities whose priorities are more local, though no less urgent. The church has attempted to straddle this divide, engaging with both and lifting up very real concerns from both approaches. The biggest challenge perhaps is that, while these communities share similar goals of renewed creation and ecological sustainability, their vision for achieving these goals is completely different. Further, the larger and better funded activist community tends not even

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<sup>4</sup> *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*, approved by the 202nd General Assembly (1990) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), p.53.

<sup>5</sup> “Item 08-05- *On Responding to Environmental Racism and to Promote Environmental Justice—From the Presbytery of Monmouth.*” Approved by the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *Minutes*, p. 710. [https://oga.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/minutes2018.pdf](https://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/minutes2018.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Charles Lee, *God’s Earth, Our Home*, session 7 “Environmental Racism,” quoted in “Environmental Racism: an Ecumenical Study Guide,” by Rebecca Barnes, published by the National Council of Churches USA. [https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/racialjustice/enviromentalracismecumenicalstudyguide.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/racialjustice/enviromentalracismecumenicalstudyguide.pdf).

to realize that its particular brand of advocacy, rooted in a white supremacy that subsumes EJ concerns, fails the very communities that most need protection and restoration.<sup>7</sup>

To take just one example, power plants, toxic waste disposal sites, and other emitters of toxic pollution are routinely sited and built near low-income communities of color where the residents do not possess enough wealth or political power to oppose these decisions. As a consequence, these communities suffer higher rates of asthma, cancer, and birth defects than the general population.<sup>8</sup> However, many of the proposed policy remedies for global climate change, where most activist energy is, are largely market-based solutions that will not address the problem of toxic runoff and particulate matter air pollution in communities near power plants.<sup>9</sup>

EJ communities feel that “big picture” climate advocacy fails to address their concerns. The New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance, one EJ voice, argues that regulation is better than market mechanisms for reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) because regulating polluting facilities “would ensure that climate change mitigation policy would not only combat climate change but also help to reduce the disproportionate amount of pollution that is frequently present in EJ communities, i.e. communities of color and low-income communities, including those located in New Jersey.”<sup>10</sup>

In contrast, one recently proposed piece of federal legislation would place a price on carbon, freeze the EPA’s authority to enforce Clean Air Act (CAA) regulations for ten years, and provide a financial dividend in order to offset the increased cost of energy.<sup>11</sup> Freezing the EPA’s regulatory authority would be a non-starter for EJ communities, which are already disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of climate change due to “the disproportionate amount of pollution experienced by many EJ communities, the heat island effect, heightened vulnerability to the health impacts of heat stress, racial disparities in disease incidence and access to health care, poor infrastructure, fewer resources, and several types of racial discrimination.”<sup>12</sup> For a community that is being poisoned and dying of cancer, aggressive CAA regulations are needed. The dividend in the bill is intended to offset the increased cost of fuel, but it will not pay the doctors’ bills. The failure of the environmental activist community to acknowledge the seriousness of local pollution in specific communities as a systemic problem continues to foster distrust between communities experiencing environmental racism and (white) activist organizations.

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<sup>7</sup> Rogers-Wright, Anthony, “White Supremacy and Climate Change: a Sinister Symbiosis,” Published by *Medium*, August 17, 2018. <https://medium.com/@ARdubbs108/white-supremacy-and-climate-change-a-sinister-symbiosis-d4358da1241c>.

<sup>8</sup> Barnes, Rebecca. “Environmental Racism: an Ecumenical Study Guide,” published by the National Council of Churches USA. [https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/racialjustice/enviromentalracismecumenicalstudyguide.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/racialjustice/enviromentalracismecumenicalstudyguide.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> “New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance Climate Change and Energy Policy Platform,” July 2017. [Sue’s PDF](#)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. [Sue’s PDF](#)

<sup>11</sup> “H.R. 763 - Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019.” <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/763?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22hr763%22%5D%7D&s=2&r=1>

<sup>12</sup> “New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance Climate Change and Energy Policy Platform,” July 2017. [Sue’s PDF](#)

Similar situations are playing out in low-income communities of color across the nation. In Flint, Michigan, where untreated water corroded the aging plumbing infrastructure, the entire city, which is about 60 percent black and latinx,<sup>13</sup> is exposed to ongoing lead poisoning.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, in Lowndes County, Alabama, located in the state's "black belt," inadequate sewer system development and maintenance is exposing a predominately black community to chronic diseases related to regular exposure to raw sewage.<sup>15</sup> These examples show the breadth and depth of environmental racism, where white supremacy has led to neglect and outright abuse by powerful decision-makers.

At the root of environmental racism is systemic racism founded on white supremacy, transmitted and encoded by imperialism. White supremacy pervades not only the government institutions making such decisions, but also the special interests that influence them disproportionately, including environmental organizations.<sup>16</sup> Reliance on scientific and technological communities that are primarily white and Asian can also distort perspectives and leave many invisible. Churches, too, have been guilty of promoting white voices and white concerns, dominating a conversation whose negative effects are borne by those whose voices are silenced and ignored.

As we recommit to God's call to restore creation, we must ensure that EJ and low-income communities' needs are included in the discussion and that members of these disadvantaged groups not only benefit from new policies, but also help to lead the movement to find solutions that are comprehensive, effective, and just. It is important that we, as the church, stand in solidarity with and behind those communities that have been systemically and historically subjected to pollution and poison in their very homes, schools, workplaces, and recreation spaces. There cannot be a just solution to the monumental challenge of global climate change without also addressing the issues of environmental racism that trap people in environments that are, quite literally, killing them.

### **Society bears the burdens, rather than the polluters**

In today's market economy, the true environmental and social costs of goods and services are not included in the price that consumers pay. Just as the federal government subsidizes large, wealthy retailers by allowing them to pay their employees poverty wages, making full-time workers eligible for public services, such as SNAP and Medicaid,<sup>17</sup> multinational energy

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<sup>13</sup> Martinez, Michael. "Flint, Michigan: Did race and poverty factor into water crisis?" Published by CNN. January 28, 2016. <https://www.cnn.com/2016/01/26/us/flint-michigan-water-crisis-race-poverty/index.html>

<sup>14</sup> Denchak, Melissa. "Flint Water Crisis: Everything You Need to Know." Published by National Resources Defense Council (NRDC). November, 8, 2018. <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/flint-water-crisis-everything-you-need-know>

<sup>15</sup> "EJI's Catherine Flowers Testifies Before Congress About Environmental Racism." Published by Equal Justice Initiative. May 26, 2019. <https://eji.org/news/ejis-catherine-flowers-testifies-congress-about-environmental-racism>

<sup>16</sup> Rogers-Wright, "White Supremacy and Climate Change."

<sup>17</sup> O'Connor, Claire, "Report: Walmart Workers Cost Taxpayers \$6.2 Billion In Public Assistance," published by *Forbes*, April 15, 2014. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/clareoconnor/2014/04/15/report-walmart-workers-cost-taxpayers-6-2-billion-in-public-assistance/#6336ae7c720b>.

corporations are permitted to pollute air and water, emitting greenhouse gases and other pollutants with impunity, while society bears the burden of the impacts and the cleanup.

In contrast, ethical regulations should require corporations to bear the cost of their business and its cleanup. It is unacceptable that our society permits unfettered profit at the expense of workers in poverty-wage jobs, communities whose water and air are poisoned, and the bare minimum of pollution mitigation and prevention. These costs – living wages, pollution mitigation and cleanup, retrofitting, clean technology development, etc. – must be borne by corporations as a cost of doing business. Soaring shareholder profits and exploding executive compensation must give way to investments in workers, infrastructure improvements, mitigation and cleanup efforts, research and development into cleaner, low-carbon methods of doing business, and transition of jobs to sustainable sectors.

In keeping with the principal of sufficiency, confident in the belief that God has provided enough for everyone, company executives and shareholders must accept a more reasonable profit so that some of the market-based earnings can pay the true cost of doing business. Taxpayers should not be required to bear the burden of corporate cleanup when corporation profits are more than ample to provide the necessary funds.

To illustrate the availability of resources – even as the economy has recovered from the Great Recession and corporate profits have gone up, workers' share of corporate income (wages) has stayed unexpectedly low.<sup>18</sup> "Since the recession ended in 2009, corporate profits have grown at an annualized rate of 6.5 percent... yet yearly wage growth has yet to hit 3 percent."<sup>19</sup> Policies that ensure stagnant wages for workers and that provide low-tax options for already-wealthy people to acquire more wealth have driven this alarming divergence between economic productivity and growth. This stagnation of the labor share of corporate-sector income, even as the economy grows, shows that there are ample resources for these corporations to invest more in the common good and less in profit for shareholders and compensation for executives.

### **Green Economy Reform**

In order for the above principals to be met – investing in and restoring low-income communities and communities of color, and ensuring that costs are borne by those who bear responsibility, rather than by those who are too economically poor and marginalized to be heard – a radical shift in both the U.S. and global economies will be required. Quite simply, these goals cannot be achieved in the economy as it exists today. Rather, we must shift economic expectations from the current model of excess for a few and insufficiency for many, to a model where we both trust and believe that there is enough for everyone.

Sufficiency must guide an economic revolution that does not preclude economic diversity, but does require a minimum standard of living wages, access to safe, affordable housing and health

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<sup>18</sup> Nominal Wage Tracker, Economic Policy Institute, <https://www.epi.org/nominal-wage-tracker/#chart3>.

<sup>19</sup> Cohen, Patricia, "Paychecks Lag As Profits Soar," published by *The New York Times*. July 13, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/13/business/economy/wages-workers-profits.html>.

care, clean water and air, access to affordable, healthy food, and other necessities of life. And while this paper is focused on environmental restoration, it is not possible to achieve environmental justice without also addressing the failure of these other systems. Indeed, without racial justice and economic justice, environmental justice is not possible.

The United States must immediately begin converting its economy to sustainable, low carbon/zero emissions energy sources, jobs, housing/building, agriculture, and transportation. In particular, we must convert our transportation sector, which, about equal with the energy sector, emits the largest portion of greenhouse gases emissions,<sup>20</sup> to renewable energy sources. Personal passenger vehicles, mass transit, commercial travel, and trucking/shipping methods all must be converted to low carbon/zero emissions technology. This will necessarily require an investment in infrastructure and federal incentives for consumers.

Converting the car and truck fleet to electric vehicles will be the most important component of bringing our transportation sector's emissions down.<sup>21</sup> While we have the technology to convert the passenger vehicle industry away from fossil fuel and to sustainable electricity, the federal government must tighten, not relax, efficiency standards and other regulations that drive the industry towards renewables and efficiency.<sup>22</sup> Further, federal investment in the necessary infrastructure will be required. Such investments must include, but not limited to charging stations as ubiquitous as gas stations,<sup>23</sup> drastically increased investment in energy generated by renewable wind and solar energy, and incentives to assist the public in transitioning to low-carbon vehicles. These priorities are crucial to ensuring that this transition is practically possible and economically viable.

Further, we must invest in a robust system of mass transit for the United States, which should use the latest technology to build a low carbon/zero emission transportation system that will reduce the need for personal passenger vehicles and provide more affordable, accessible transportation. Bus Rapid Transit systems and High-Speed Rail are two examples of mass transit that, when done correctly, can significantly reduce emissions as well as the need for personal vehicles. In addition, developing smart grids can both improve the efficiency of the electrical infrastructure generally, and also provide important links for electric vehicles and high-speed rail.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> "Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions," published by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), data for 2017. <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>.

<sup>21</sup> Kann, Drew, Will Houpp, Judson Jones, and Sean O'Key. "The most effective ways to curb climate change might surprise you." Published by CNN. April 19, 2019. <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2019/04/specials/climate-change-solutions-quiz>.

<sup>22</sup> Cho, Renee. "Will Electric Vehicles Take Over the World?" published by *State of the Planet*, Earth Institute, Columbia University. Updated May 2, 2018. <https://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/2018/04/23/will-electric-vehicles-take-world-just-green-really/>

<sup>23</sup> Bogost, Ian. "Electric Cars Still Face a Major Roadblock." Published in *The Atlantic*. June 27, 2019. <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2019/06/why-electric-vehicles-make-drivers-anxious/592585/>

<sup>24</sup> Cohen, Boyd. "The Top Five Transit Technologies For The Low-Carbon Economy." Published in *Fast Company*. September, 20, 2011. <https://www.fastcompany.com/1781307/top-five-transit-technologies-low-carbon-economy>

After transportation, electricity, and industry, commercial and residential buildings are the next big emitter of greenhouse gas emissions, responsible for 12 percent of U.S. carbon emissions.<sup>25</sup> Most of these emissions are created by heating buildings and water, so there is a tremendous opportunity to increase efficiency standards, both in new buildings by requiring more efficient building codes, and in old buildings by retrofitting heating systems, windows, insulation, and other energy efficiency factors. The iconic Empire State Building in New York City underwent a \$20 million retrofit that “included everything from cleaning and re-insulating more than 6,000 windows to caulking leaks in the building’s façade.” This retrofit is estimated to have improved the NYC landmark’s energy use by 40 percent.<sup>26</sup> Such standards should be employed more widely in new buildings and old.

In addition, jobs to retrofit old buildings will not only improve the efficiency of the buildings themselves, but also provide sustainable, “green” jobs for workers. These retrofits must be made available, especially in EJ communities where the ailing building infrastructure contributes to ongoing challenges for these communities. Further, hiring workers from these communities should be prioritized for these jobs, even when that requires special training or workforce development programs.

### **Green Taxes**

The 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted an extensive report, *Tax Justice: a Christian Response to a New Gilded Age*. In addressing the question of green taxes, the Assembly approved the following public policy recommendation: “Work to adopt taxes and tax expenditures that encourage responsible stewardship and protection of God’s creation. ‘Green’ taxes, generally speaking, incorporate a product’s social and environmental costs (often called ‘externalities’) into the costs of consumption, paying for remediation or innovation in some cases and reducing consumption or use that carries undesirable consequences.” It is notable that green taxes can serve three purposes. The first is to provide necessary revenue needed to invest in the economic conversion to a sustainable economy. The second is to incentivize certain behaviors, whether at the personal or corporate level, and the third is to disincentivize other behaviors.

As noted above, the conversion of a fossil fuel economy to a low carbon, sustainable economy will require significant investments at all levels of government. Such a process will require significant investment at the outset, for which governments will need new revenue streams. Should the federal government pursue the mechanism of placing a price on carbon, which might entail a carbon tax, a cap-and-trade system, or some other market mechanism to price carbon, it must be designed in such a way that ensures the carbon price is high enough to be effective at lowering carbon emissions, while also generating the revenue that will be required

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<sup>25</sup> “Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions.” EPA.

<sup>26</sup> Biello, David. “Building Retrofits: Tapping The Energy-Saving Potential.” *YALE Environment 360* published at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. November 7, 2011.  
[https://e360.yale.edu/features/green\\_architecture\\_building\\_retrofits\\_tap\\_energy\\_saving\\_potential](https://e360.yale.edu/features/green_architecture_building_retrofits_tap_energy_saving_potential).

to invest in jobs, infrastructure, industry conversion, building retrofit, and most importantly to mitigate the increased costs to those who are economically vulnerable.

In particular, low-income communities must be held harmless from the increased costs. Communities that are affected by systemic, environmental racism are rightly skeptical of any price on carbon that relies on the market to correct polluting behavior. These communities know from experience that the market fails them with shocking regularity. Without significant government intervention and oversight, any market-based “solution” will lead to the exacerbation of already harsh economic situations.<sup>27</sup> Any price on carbon must be paired with rigorous regulations that curb the pollution that affects these communities most severely and be crafted so as to cause the least economic hardship. For example, a price on carbon will not reduce the toxic waste and particulate matter pollution that poisons the poor communities in the vicinity of power plants. Proposals that put a hold on regulations in order to wait for the market mechanism to work will gravely endanger the health of disadvantaged communities that are already the victims of environmental racism.

Even so, the true cost of fossil fuel consumption, and other types of pollution, should be internalized into the price of goods and services, so that members of society will not only understand the true cost of fossil fuel, but also be motivated to reduce consumption, invest in pollution cleanup and, work to prevent ongoing pollution and its effects. With that said, we must ensure that those vulnerable communities who are both the most likely to be affected by such price increases and also the least capable of handling them, are held harmless. Any mechanism to internalize the true cost of fossil energy must include price mitigation for economically poor and disadvantaged people in the U.S. and around the world.

### **Affirming the need for regulation and research**

It is clear that the market alone will not regulate itself. It is further evident that for-profit corporations will not regulate themselves at the expense of their profit margins. For example, a peer-reviewed Harvard study found that what Exxon Mobil knew about climate change early on and what it disclosed to the public were vastly different.<sup>28</sup> According to the authors of the study, “ExxonMobil contributed quietly to the science and loudly to raising doubts about it.”<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, the first studies to identify global climate change were performed decades ago by Exxon Mobil,<sup>30</sup> which then invested hundreds of millions of dollars in a propaganda machine to convince the world that their own studies were incorrect. They were remarkably successful in

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<sup>27</sup> Sheats, Nicki. “Achieving Emissions Reductions for Environmental Justice Communities Through Climate Change Mitigation Policy.” Published in *William & Mary Environmental Law and Policy Review*. [Vol. 41: 377] 2017. p. 377.

<sup>28</sup> Supran, Geoffrey, and Naomi Oreskes. “Assessing ExxonMobil’s climate change communications (1977–2014),” published in *Environmental Research Letters*, Volume 12, Number 8. August 23, 2017.

<https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/aa815f>.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Banerjee, Neela, John H. Cushman Jr., David Hasemyer, Lisa Song. *Exxon: The Road Not Taken*. Published by *Inside Climate News*. (Kindle Edition). October 28, 2015. p. 1.

creating an entire culture of climate science denial.<sup>31</sup> Because corporations will not make decisions for the good of the whole at the expense of shareholder profits, we need strong regulatory and research bodies at the federal level that will not only perform their own research, but also enforce regulations and ensure that profits do not come before people.

Recently, we have seen a systematic effort to defund the federal agencies that conduct scientific research and enforce regulations.<sup>32</sup> For example, the Environmental Protection Agency's budget has been on a downward spiral, having been funded at \$5.4 billion in 1979, compared with \$8.2 billion in 2017.<sup>33</sup> Adjusted for inflation, the 1979 budget would be worth over \$18 billion in 2017, showing a steady decline in the value of EPA funding of about \$10 billion from 1979 to 2017.<sup>34</sup> Further, the Trump administration is interfering with the work of these agencies, forbidding certain scientific terms and research in certain fields due to conflict with its political platform.<sup>35</sup> Because of such interference and targeted budget cuts, the work of U.S. environmental regulators and scientists has been sadly weakened. This must stop. These agencies are essential to our knowledge and to our wellbeing. They must be fully funded and be held above partisan, ideological rhetoric, so that they can carry out their mission of ensuring health and safety for the general public and the environment, over and above private profit.

Further, these environmental and regulatory agencies must be allowed to perform their duties under statute. As of June 2019, the Trump Administration "undertook at least 94 actions to undermine or reverse climate protections, according to Columbia University's Sabin Center for Climate Change Law."<sup>36</sup> Neither the White House or Congress should be permitted to interfere in the work of science-based regulatory agencies based on partisan ideologies.

### **Precautionary Principle**

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved a statement on the precautionary principle, which states that "when an activity raises threats of harm to

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<sup>31</sup> Schultz, Colin. "Meet the Money Behind the Climate Denial Movement," published in *Smithsonian Magazine*. December 23, 2013. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/meet-the-money-behind-the-climate-denial-movement-180948204/>.

<sup>32</sup> Jacobson, Louis. "How much have Republicans cut EPA budget, staff in two years?" published by *Politifact at the Poytner Institute*. April 26, 2018. <https://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2018/apr/26/evan-jenkins/how-much-have-republicans-cut-epa-budget-staff-two/>; and Scott Waldman, "Trump Budget Would Slash Science Across Agencies," published in *Scientific American*. February 18, 2018. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/trump-budget-would-slash-science-across-agencies/>.

<sup>33</sup> Gaby, Keith, "EPA's budget has been devastated for decades: Here's the Math," published in *The Hill*. January 24, 2018. <https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/370334-epas-budget-has-been-devastated-for-decades-heres-the-math>.

<sup>34</sup> CPI Inflation Calculator, <http://www.in2013dollars.com/>.

<sup>35</sup> Eilperin, Juliet; Josh Dawsey and Brady Dennis, "White House blocked intelligence agency's written testimony calling climate change 'possibly catastrophic,'" published in *The Washington Post*. June 8, 2019. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2019/06/08/white-house-blocked-intelligence-aides-written-testimony-saying-human-caused-climate-change-could-be-possibly-catastrophic/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.2fb822b25f08](https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2019/06/08/white-house-blocked-intelligence-aides-written-testimony-saying-human-caused-climate-change-could-be-possibly-catastrophic/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.2fb822b25f08).

<sup>36</sup> Pullano, Nina, "3 Republican Former EPA Heads Rebuke Trump EPA on Climate Policy & Science," published by *Inside Climate News*. June 12, 2019.



human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not yet fully established scientifically. In this context the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof.”<sup>37</sup>

In light of this call for caution, activities such as fracking and the construction of pipelines should immediately be halted. The industry has failed to prove that fracking is a safe procedure by which to extract natural gas from the earth or that pipelines provide a safe, spill-proof conveyance through which to transport fossil fuel. In fact, there is significant evidence to the contrary—that these procedures are indeed not safe.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, federal and state agencies must cease issuing permits for pipeline construction and fracking and require affirmative evidence that these activities can be done safely, without contaminating ground water or otherwise degrading the environment, before allowing these processes to continue.

In particular, public lands should not be open to use for these purposes. Public lands have been set aside for posterity, in order to preserve biodiversity, wildlife habitat, pristine wilderness, and spaces for the enjoyment of the public, so that future generations might enjoy access to this legacy. As Christians, we believe that God placed us as stewards of the earth, “to tend to keep” a creation whose beauty and diversity we must preserve (Gen. 2:15). We must continue to preserve and expand public lands. Any activity on public land that threatens the health and safety of the ecosystem should be disallowed. Instead, we should be investing in our public lands, not only by expanding them through the designation of new wilderness areas for protection, but also by restoring those public lands that have been degraded.

### **Addressing Global Climate Change and Investing in our Future**

The 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), powerfully addressed the need to address global climate change through its policy recommendations in *The Power to Change: US Energy Policy and Global Warming*. This and many Assemblies since have spoken eloquently on the need to address climate change,<sup>39</sup> so it only needs to be added that the situation of carbon pollution has grown significantly more dire in the twelve years since the statement. Global climate change requires immediate, swift, and effective action to reduce carbon emissions in order to prevent catastrophic climate change, mass species extinction, mounting risk to human health, and increasingly erratic and dangerous weather patterns. These effects of climate change are already disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable people, in the U.S. and around the world, with disastrous effects.

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<sup>37</sup> “Item 08-03- *Precautionary Principle: Managing Technological Risks to Protect Humanity and Our Planet—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.*” Approved by the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *Minutes*, p. 715.

[https://oga.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/minutes2018.pdf](https://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/minutes2018.pdf).

<sup>38</sup> “Forum: Just How Safe is Fracking of Natural Gas?” *YALE Environment 360* published at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. June 20, 2011.

[https://e360.yale.edu/features/forum\\_just\\_how\\_safe\\_is\\_fracking\\_of\\_natural\\_gas](https://e360.yale.edu/features/forum_just_how_safe_is_fracking_of_natural_gas).

<sup>39</sup> See Appendix

As stated in the *Power to Change* policy, “We will stand with ‘the least of these’ (Matthew 25:40) and advocate for the poor and oppressed and present and future generations who are often the victims of environmental injustice and who are at least able to mitigate the impact of global warming that will fall disproportionately upon them.” We further reiterate that “the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) supports comprehensive, mandatory, and aggressive emissions reductions that aim to limit the increase in the earth’s temperature to 2 degrees Celsius or less from preindustrial levels.” We support policy mechanisms that will achieve this aim, preferably combining a multi-pronged approach that will marry the use of aggressive regulation with market and tax-based solutions currently in favor with economists. But we also demand that any solution must, first and foremost, address the concerns of historically underserved communities who have been the target of systemic environmental racism.

### **International Cooperation**

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) also urges the United States to engage in good faith with the international community in the negotiations to address global climate change. For decades, the community of nations has been meeting and slowly negotiating benchmarks for salvaging a sustainable future. The most recent Paris Agreement set forward global benchmarks which nations must meet in order to avert catastrophic climate change. Unfortunately, in 2017, President Trump announced that the United States would withdraw from the Paris Agreement and our national commitments to our global partners.<sup>40</sup> While actually withdrawing from the international treaty will not be possible until 2020, this decision effectively put a stop to U.S. participation and cooperation in the process of addressing global climate change. Whereas other nations are making policies in order to meet carbon emissions reduction goals, the United States, along with the other largest emitting countries in the world,<sup>41</sup> have instead chosen denial and selfish indulgence.

Meanwhile, other countries are making significant strides toward meeting long-term climate goals. 190 nations have made INDC’s (individual nationally-determined commitments) toward the 2015 Paris Agreement’s goals of limiting the increase in earth’s temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. Technically, the U.S. has also made a commitment, but with President Trump’s announcement that that the U.S. will withdraw, the previous commitment has been discounted by the international community.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Roberts, Timmons. “One year since Trump’s withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement.” Published by the Brookings Institution. June 1, 2018. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/planetpolicy/2018/06/01/one-year-since-trumps-withdrawal-from-the-paris-climate-agreement/>.

<sup>41</sup> Gillis, Justice, and Nadja Popovich, “The U.S. Is the Biggest Carbon Polluter in History. It Just Walked Away From the Paris Climate Deal.” Published by *The New York Times*. June 1, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/06/01/climate/us-biggest-carbon-polluter-in-history-will-it-walk-away-from-the-paris-climate-deal.html>.

<sup>42</sup> “Where Carbon is Taxed.” Published by the Carbon Tax Center. Accessed July 5, 2019. <https://www.carbontax.org/where-carbon-is-taxed/>

The European Union has had an emissions trading system (ETS) in place since 2005,<sup>43</sup> while Great Britain has a carbon tax on top of the EU standard<sup>44</sup> and Germany plans to meet its Paris Agreement targets by closing all 84 of its coal-fired power plants by 2038.<sup>45</sup> South Africa just joined the ranks of nations that employ a carbon tax,<sup>46</sup> China has pledged to peak its carbon emissions by 2030 if not sooner,<sup>47</sup> and Costa Rica has been producing its electricity from 99 percent renewable sources since 2014, is working to eradicate single-use plastics by 2021, and has recently announced that it will be completely carbon neutral by 2021.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, large and small economies are showing that significant steps can be made toward reducing global climate emissions, though experts project that, without more aggressive action from some of the world's largest polluters, including the U.S. and China, the world will fall short of the Paris goal.<sup>49</sup>

Further, the U.S. has not signed the recent “Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration,” which was developed at the COP24 United Nations Climate Change Conference (2018) in Katowice, Poland.<sup>50</sup> This document outlines the social and political ramifications of addressing climate change and commits to a climate transition that invests in “decent work and quality jobs,” and emphasizes the ongoing need for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty, with a special concern for the most vulnerable and economically poor people in the world.<sup>51</sup>

It is time for the U.S. to stop playing partisan games with the future of our global community. In particular, we denounce the Trump Administration's decision to remove the United States from the Paris Agreement and its failure to take part in ongoing negotiations, including the

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<sup>43</sup> Appunn, Kerstine, and Luke Sherman. “Factsheet: Understanding the European Union's Emissions Trading System.” Published by *Clean Energy Wire: Journalism for the energy transition*. August 21, 2018.

<https://www.cleanenergywire.org/factsheets/understanding-european-unions-emissions-trading-system>

<sup>44</sup> “Where Carbon is Taxed – Great Britain.” Published by the Carbon Tax Center. Accessed July 5, 2019.

<https://www.carbontax.org/where-carbon-is-taxed/#United%20Kingdom>

<sup>45</sup> Kirschbaum, Erik. “Germany to close all 84 of its coal-fired power plants, will rely primarily on renewable energy.” Published by *LA Times*. January 26, 2019. <https://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-germany-coal-power-20190126-story.html>

<sup>46</sup> Reuters. “South African carbon tax finally becomes law.” Published by Thomson Reuters Foundation News. May 26, 2019. <http://news.trust.org/item/20190526152548-tq9mc/>

<sup>47</sup> “Where Carbon is Taxed.” Published by the Carbon Tax Center. Accessed July 5, 2019.

<https://www.carbontax.org/where-carbon-is-taxed/>

<sup>48</sup> Steffen, Luana. “Costa Rica Set To Become The World's First Plastic-Free And Carbon-Free Country By 2021.”

Published by *Intelligent Living*. May 10, 2019. <https://www.intelligentliving.co/costa-rica-plastic-carbon-free-2021>

<sup>49</sup> “What Is The European Union Doing About Climate Change?” posted by *Ask EP* on the European Parliamentary Research Service Blog. March 26, 2019. <https://epthinktank.eu/2019/03/26/what-is-the-european-union-doing-about-climate-change/>

<sup>50</sup> “Just Transition Document.” Approved by 38 nations at the United Nations COP24 in Katowice, Poland. December 2018. <https://cop24.gov.pl/presidency/initiatives/just-transition-declaration/>

<sup>51</sup> “Just Transition Document.” Approved by 38 nations at the United Nations COP24 in Katowice, Poland. December 2018.

[https://cop24.gov.pl/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Solidarity\\_and\\_Just\\_Transition\\_Silesia\\_Declaration\\_2\\_.pdf](https://cop24.gov.pl/fileadmin/user_upload/Solidarity_and_Just_Transition_Silesia_Declaration_2_.pdf)

development and signing of the Just Transition Silesia Declaration. The U.S. government must re-engage with our international partners to ensure the future safety of the planet we share.

### **Conclusion**

This vision for a renewed and restored creation is daunting in its scope, but we know that God's abundance makes this transition possible. There is no doubt that transition to a low carbon / zero emissions economy will be difficult. Indeed, most people living today cannot imagine a society in which we have left behind fossil fuels, the internal combustion engine, degradation of the environment for profit, poverty, and racism, but we believe that such a vision is possible. Environmental degradation and climate change cannot be addressed without also tackling the underpinning sins of racism, white supremacy, and economic injustice, and so we must engage in the hard work dismantling white supremacy, starting within our own institutions. The work of anti-racism is the necessary foundation to the ongoing work of restoring creation to a right relationship.

As the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) commits itself to a new turnaround decade for creation, let us go forth knowing that God is with us, championing the people and environments that humans, in our sinfulness, have neglected. We believe that God is calling the church to the trifold work of environmental justice, racial justice, and economic justice.

In seeking to affect the change we wish to see, we must focus on this vision for the future that God is giving to us, and on the benefits it will bring to society, the human family, and all of God's Creation. To those who would worry about how difficult this transformation will be or how expensive to achieve, we must lift up our vision – an environment renewed, better health outcomes, living wage jobs, clean air and water, wilderness preserved for its own sake, access to healthy food, and the reparation of broken relationships.

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## APPENDIX

### Book of Order / Book of Confessions

Brief Statement of Faith (1991)	<a href="https://www.presbyterianmission.org/what-we-believe/brief-statement-of-faith/">https://www.presbyterianmission.org/what-we-believe/brief-statement-of-faith/</a>
G-1.0304	

### Policies

<b>ACSWP Social Witness Policy by Topic</b>	<a href="https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/acswp/topics/">https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/acswp/topics/</a>
<b>Ecology and Environmental Concerns</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Restoring Creation for Ecology &amp; Justice (1990)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Hazardous Waste, Race, and the Environment (1995)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Power to Change – U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming (2008)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Report and Recommendations on Limited Water Resources and Takings with Study Guide (2004)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Precautionary Principle: Managing Technological Risks to Protect Humanity and our Planet</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Economic Justice, Globalization</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development (1996)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Tax Justice: A Christian Response to a Second Gilded Age (2014)</a></li> </ul>	

### Overtures

On Climate Change and the Persistence of Its Causes (1999) – calls to urge Senate to ratify Kyoto Agreement (Bill Gibson)	<a href="http://index.pcusa.org/nxt/gateway.dll/GAMinutes%2F50799%2F51113%2F52087%2F52450%2F52451%2F52452">http://index.pcusa.org/nxt/gateway.dll/GAMinutes%2F50799%2F51113%2F52087%2F52450%2F52451%2F52452</a>
Guide to Going Carbon Neutral (2006) [Response to the General Assembly 2006 Resolution Calling on all Presbyterians to go	<a href="https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/guide-going-carbon-neutral/">https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/guide-going-carbon-neutral/</a>

Carbon Neutral as a Bold Christian Witness to Help Combat the Effects of Climate Change.]	
On Responding to Environmental Racism and to Promote Environmental Justice (2018)	<a href="https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000297">https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000297</a>
The Earth is the Lord's, Not Ours to Ruin (2018)	<a href="https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000298">https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000298</a>

## PCUSA Programs and Program Resources

Six Agencies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PC(USA) Collaborative Agenda on Environmental Stewardship (2016)</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/environmental-issues/collaborative-agenda-for-environmental-stewardship/">https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/environmental-issues/collaborative-agenda-for-environmental-stewardship/</a>
Presbyterian Hunger Program	<a href="https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/hunger/">https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/hunger/</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enough for Everyone</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/hunger/enough/">https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/hunger/enough/</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Living and Earth Care Concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Earth Care Congregations</li> <li>○ A Guide to Greening Presbyterian Churches</li> <li>○ Blessed Tomorrow</li> <li>○ Let's Talk Faith and Climate: Communication Guidance for Faith Leaders</li> <li>○ 15 Steps to Create Effective Climate Communications</li> <li>○ Earth Day Sunday Resources</li> <li>○ Eco-Justice Journey Blog</li> <li>○ Treading Lightly into Lent</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/">https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/</a> <a href="https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/earth-care-congregations/">https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/earth-care-congregations/</a> <a href="https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/earth-care-congregations-guide-greening-presbyteri/">https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/earth-care-congregations-guide-greening-presbyteri/</a> <a href="https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/blessed-tomorrow/">https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/blessed-tomorrow/</a> <a href="https://blessedtomorrow.org/resources-category/communications-engagement/">https://blessedtomorrow.org/resources-category/communications-engagement/</a>
Mission Responsibility Thru Investment	<a href="https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/mrti/">https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/mrti/</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MRTI Metric Guidelines for shareholder engagement (2018)</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-MRTI-Guideline-Metrics-with-annotations.pdf">https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-MRTI-Guideline-Metrics-with-annotations.pdf</a>

## Resources

Church & Society	
Energy in God's World (Mar/Apr 2004)	<a href="https://www.pcusastore.com/Products/7263004602/c--s-marapril-2004energy-on.aspx?bCategory=PSCS">https://www.pcusastore.com/Products/7263004602/c--s-marapril-2004energy-on.aspx?bCategory=PSCS</a>
Studies	
And the Leaves of the Tree are for the Healing of the Nations (1997, 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed. 2006)	<a href="https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/and-leaves-tree-are-healing-nations/">https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/and-leaves-tree-are-healing-nations/</a>
And the Leaves of the Tree are for the Healing of the Nations – Single Session Study Guide	<a href="https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/and-leaves-tree-are-healing-nations-single-session/">https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/and-leaves-tree-are-healing-nations-single-session/</a>
Cherishing God's Creation (1998, updated 2010) DVD	<a href="https://www.pcusastore.com/Products/2436010002/cherishing-gods-creation-dvd.aspx?bCategory=PSSW">https://www.pcusastore.com/Products/2436010002/cherishing-gods-creation-dvd.aspx?bCategory=PSSW</a>
“Cherishing God's Earth” study guide	<a href="https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/cherishing-gods-earth-study-guide/">https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/cherishing-gods-earth-study-guide/</a>
The Thoughtful Christian Downloadable Studies:	<a href="https://www.thethoughtfulchristian.com/">https://www.thethoughtfulchristian.com/</a>
Being Green at Home (2009) The Green Study Pack (2009) Being Green in Daily Life (2009) Developing a Green Action Plan for Your Congregation (2010)	
Books Published by Presbyterian Publishing Corporation	
<i>50 Ways to Help Save the Earth</i> , Rebecca Barnes (2008, revised 2016)	<a href="https://www.pcusastore.com/Products/0664262554/50-ways-to-help-save-the-earth-revised-edition.aspx">https://www.pcusastore.com/Products/0664262554/50-ways-to-help-save-the-earth-revised-edition.aspx</a>
<i>Inhabiting Eden</i> , Patricia Tull (2013)	<a href="https://www.pcusastore.com/AdvancedSearch/DefaultWFilter.aspx?SearchTerm=inhabiting+eden">https://www.pcusastore.com/AdvancedSearch/DefaultWFilter.aspx?SearchTerm=inhabiting+eden</a>
<i>God of Earth</i> , Kristin Swenson (2016)	<a href="https://www.pcusastore.com/Products/0664261574/god-of-earth.aspx">https://www.pcusastore.com/Products/0664261574/god-of-earth.aspx</a>
Ecumenical / Interfaith Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental Racism: A Study Guide (from National Council of Churches USA)</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/racialjustice/environmentalracismecumenicalstudyguide.pdf">https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/racialjustice/environmentalracismecumenicalstudyguide.pdf</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty (United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries)</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.ejnet.org/ej/twart-light.pdf">https://www.ejnet.org/ej/twart-light.pdf</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States (United Church of Christ, Commission for Racial Justice)</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML1310/ML13109A339.pdf">https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML1310/ML13109A339.pdf</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accra Confession (World Communion of Reformed Churches)</li> </ul>	<a href="http://wrc.ch/accra/the-accra-confession">http://wrc.ch/accra/the-accra-confession</a>

## Presbyterian-Related Organizations

Living Waters for the World (1993)	<a href="https://www.livingwatersfortheworld.org/">https://www.livingwatersfortheworld.org/</a>
Presbyterians for Earth Care organized (1995)	<a href="http://presbyearthcare.org/">http://presbyearthcare.org/</a>
Eco-Stewards (2007)	<a href="https://ecostewardsprogram.wordpress.com/">https://ecostewardsprogram.wordpress.com/</a>
Solar Under the Sun (2009 – first training 2010)	<a href="https://www.solarunderthesun.org/">https://www.solarunderthesun.org/</a>
Fossil Free PCUSA organized (2014); Project of Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (2018)	<a href="https://www.fossilfreepcusa.org/">https://www.fossilfreepcusa.org/</a> <a href="https://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/">https://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/</a>

## Ecumenical / Interfaith Organizations and Resources

Creation Justice Ministries [founded as the National Council of Churches (NCC) Eco-Justice Working Group (1983) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creation Justice Resources - Educational Resources for All Ages</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.creationjustice.org/">http://www.creationjustice.org/</a>  <a href="http://www.creationjustice.org/educational-resources.html">http://www.creationjustice.org/educational-resources.html</a>
National Religious Partnership for the Environment (1997)	<a href="http://www.nrpe.org/">http://www.nrpe.org/</a>
Blessed Tomorrow	<a href="https://blessedtomorrow.org/">https://blessedtomorrow.org/</a>

## Financials and Investments

Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program	<a href="https://pilp.pcusa.org/">https://pilp.pcusa.org/</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restoring Creation Loan (2015)</li> </ul>	<a href="https://pilp.pcusa.org/restoring-creation-loan/">https://pilp.pcusa.org/restoring-creation-loan/</a>
Presbyterian Foundation	<a href="https://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/">https://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Five-Point Approach to Address Climate Change Through Its Investments</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/five-point-approach-to-address-climate-change-through-investments/">https://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/five-point-approach-to-address-climate-change-through-investments/</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caring for the Environment Through Investing</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/10022-PFD-Environmental-Investing-Rebrand-F-nocrops.pdf">https://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/10022-PFD-Environmental-Investing-Rebrand-F-nocrops.pdf</a>
Board of Pensions	<a href="http://www.pensions.org/">http://www.pensions.org/</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental Stewardship (Fossil Fuel-Free Pax Global Environmental Fund added to Retirement Saving Plan Investment options 1/1/17; Board of Pensions Balanced Investment Portfolio funded fossil fuel free global equity portfolio with Impax (parent of Pax Fund) with \$100 million in May 2017)</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.pensions.org/our-role-and-purpose/about-us/environmental-stewardship">http://www.pensions.org/our-role-and-purpose/about-us/environmental-stewardship</a>