

ENV-07: To docket ten minutes for Treasury Department to Educate about Inflation Reduction Act

A. Resolution

We request that the 226th General Assembly (2024) docket 10 minutes in its plenary sessions to allow a US Department of Treasury official to speak to the General Assembly on how available government funds can help our churches and members faithfully care for God's creation.

Further, we request the PC(USA) Office of Public Witness, PCUSA Sustainable Living and Earth Care Concerns – Hunger Program Office, Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program, and Presbyterians for Earth Care expand their efforts to educate our churches and members on how they can access the Inflation Reduction Act funds to care for God's creation.

Rationale

“Over the past year, we've experienced the hottest year on record, the hottest ocean temperatures on record, and a seemingly endless string of heat waves, droughts, floods, wildfires and storms,” said Rick Spinrad, administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). “We must recognize that these are clear signals of the damage carbon dioxide pollution is doing to the climate system, and take rapid action to reduce fossil fuel use as quickly as we can.” ([NPR Morning Edition, 6/7/2024](#)).

After GA 225, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) was signed into law to make the largest climate and clean energy investments in U.S. history. The climate investments in the IRA are historic and are imperative in addressing the urgent moral issue of climate justice.

Presbyterian News Service reported on June 24 that “Treasury official briefs Episcopal bishops, then sits down with Presbyterian News Service: Ronald Newman, the department's senior advisor on implementing the Inflation Reduction Act, comes to Louisville to talk up ways congregations can save on their energy bills and care for the Earth”. <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/treasury-official-briefs-episcopal-bishops-then-sits-down-with-presbyterian-news-service/>

Mr. Ronald Newman has asked to address our General Assembly along with national meetings of other denominations this summer. Interfaith Power & Light is helping him meet church leaders.

We are grateful for how the PCUSA Office of Public Witness supported the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act. The PCUSA Sustainable Living and Earth Care Concerns – Hunger Program, as well as Presbyterians for Earth Care, have sought to educate Presbyterians about the IRA, but too many people do not know how it can benefit our churches as well as individual members.

The new law puts the nation on the path to cut greenhouse gas emissions, saving thousands of lives, creating millions of good-paying clean energy jobs, investing in environmental justice, and reducing energy bills for working families across the country.

GA 226 planners need to take advantage of this opportunity now, as we might not have this opportunity in GA 227. There is a presidential election in November 2024 and one of the candidates has pledged to eliminate programs like these and eliminated positions like Mr. Newman's during his last administration.

Churches now have easier access to clean energy funds and tax credits through a program called "direct pay." Before the IRA, only homeowners and commercial entities with some tax liability could claim tax credits when installing solar panels, wind turbines, or other eligible technologies on an eligible property. Now, the "direct pay" option means non-taxable entities like churches can also benefit from these credits.

"People get what's happening, though. [Gallup reports that](#) 62% of U.S. adults worry "a great deal" or "a fair amount" about climate change, and 61% understand that the planet is warming primarily because of 'pollution from human activities.' And the [Pew Research Center found](#) 67% of Americans believe the nation should prioritize developing alternative energy sources, such as wind and solar, while just 32% would prioritize expanding production of oil, coal and natural gas" ([Washington Post, June 20, 2024](#)). Churches using IRA funds to care for God's creation have the potential of attracting new people who are looking for a church that seeks to make a difference for God's world.

Mr. Newman's presentation can help educate the commissioners and promote a webinar shortly after GA ends for the whole church. Presbyterians for Earth Care would be happy to coordinate this webinar in cooperation with national church staff.

In 2016, over 400 General Assembly commissioners voted to make "Caring for God's creation" one of twelve marks of ministry of all church members. In 2017 thousands of commissioners in over 100 Presbyteries voted to make "Caring for God's creation" part of our *Book of Order*, our national church constitution (see G-1.0304). All Presbyterians are called to care for God's creation. IRA funds can help our churches, our members and God's creation.

C. Signatures

Mark Eakin (REC), National Capital Presbytery

Mark Montfort (TEC), Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley

Perry Chang (REC), Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky