Legislative “Ask” on Climate Change

August 2015

We want legislators to:

• Publicly recognize the urgency of addressing climate change
• Work in a bipartisan way to find solutions that leave a stable climate for our children and grandchildren
• Actively support or at least don’t put any obstacles in the path of the Clean Power Plan

Talking Points:

• As Mercy sisters, associates, companions, co-workers, students, volunteers and friends, we see climate change as a moral issue.
• We have a moral duty to care for and preserve God’s creation for our children and grandchildren to come.
• We also have a moral duty to be a voice for the poor and vulnerable who are significantly impacted by climate change.
• Share stories of how you have been impacted by or witnessed others who have been impacted by climate change and why this concerns you.
• 97 percent of climate scientists agree that climate change is happening, humans are primarily responsible and it will get worse if we do not act. The science linking human activities to climate change is analogous to the science linking tobacco smoking to lung cancer.
• Mercy’s ministries and institutions are taking steps to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and give examples.
• We would prefer congressional action on climate change, but in its absence we applaud the setting of limits on carbon pollution from power plants through the Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean Power Plan.
• The Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean Power Plan calls for the biggest reduction in greenhouse gases that the United States has ever taken and will put us on a path of responsibility alongside of other nations at the United Nations climate talks in Paris later this year.
• The Plan if properly implemented also will reduce other pollutants that disproportionately impact persons who are poor and communities of color.
• We recognize that states will have the flexibility to create plans that work best for them, and note that many states are already on a path to meeting the standards (31 states have already made commitments that put them more than halfway toward meeting their 2020 benchmarks, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists).

There also is broad public support for taking these steps: 70 percent say of Americans say the federal government should require limits to greenhouse gases from existing power plants, including 57% of Republicans. Asked whether Washington should still go forward with limits if they "significantly lowered greenhouse gases but raised your monthly energy expenses by 20 dollars a month," 63 percent of respondents say yes, including 51 percent of Republicans. (Washington Post poll, June 2014)

prepared for Mercy College Students’ DC Justice Program and Mercy justice advocates