**UUSJ CAPITOL HILL LOBBY CORPS**

**November 23, 2013**

**Carbon Pollution Standards on Existing Power Plants**

**Support State Incentives for Alternative Energy**

1. **MESSAGE**

**Congress should support a program to reduce carbon pollution from existing power plants as a critical next step in reducing the impacts of climate change and establish incentives for states to encourage alternative, renewable, non-carbon polluting energy sources.**

 **II. SUMMARY**

Electric power plants are the largest individual source of carbon pollution in the United States, and there are currently no federal limits on the amount of carbon pollution new or existing plants can emit. There are few incentives to states to promote renewable, non-polluting power generation resources. Draft Emission Guidelines for reducing carbon pollution from existing fossil fuel power plants are due to be proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency \*EPA) in June 2014, finalized by June 2015. Senator Mark Warner introduced on September 16, 2013U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-VA) has offered his [State Energy Race to the Top Initiative](http://www.warner.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2013/6/sen-warner-introduces-legislation-setting-state-incentives-to-encourage-greater-energy-productivity) as an amendment to [The Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act (Shaheen/Portman),](http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s761/text) which is being considered by the Senate. Sen. Warner’s amendment would establish a competitive program of voluntary federal incentives to encourage states to adopt strategies to improve energy productivity. The Warner amendment will help lower energy bills, produce $8.40 in savings for every $1 invested, and result in a cumulative reduction of CO2 emissions equivalent to the annual greenhouse gas emissions from nearly 15 million passenger vehicles or 20 coal-fired power plants.

The Unitarian Universalist Association’s (UUA) 2006 Statement of Conscience states:

*We declare that we will not acquiesce to the ongoing degradation and destruction of life that human actions are leaving to our children and grandchildren.*

We want Congress to support performance standards for both new and existing plants are essential steps toward spurring innovation and investment in low and no-carbon technologies as well as new energy infrastructure and energy efficiency. New and existing power plants can be designed to cost-effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions while helping transition the power sector toward cleaner energy sources. The need for such standards is urgent. Congressional action to limit carbon emissions from power plans and to promote alternative, non-polluting renewable energy sources is needed and the urgency of the growing risks of climate change require near-term action.

 **III Who are we:**

My name is XXX, and I am speaking on behalf of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of XXXx (Virginia), and the Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice. The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of XXX is a religious community of about XXX adults, youth and children dedicated to the free and responsible search for religious truth and meaning. The UUSJ is made up of XX congregations and XXX members in the Washington DC metropolitan area.

 **IV Talking Points**

* Climate change is real.

81% of Virginians say climate change is real, 75% believe government should limit greenhouse gas emissions. 97% of environmental scientists agree, as does the US military, big businesses such as WalMart, and property insurers

* Humans are causing/contributing to climate change.
* Serious effects of climate change are happening right now, causing harm to people as well as to bird, mammal, and plant species. Soon we will pass a point of no return.
* Yet, the worst effects of climate change can be avoided... there is hope
* We have to act now. Inspired by our faith, we are committed to taking action at the individual/family/group/civic level to reverse the course of global warming.
* As people of faith, and as members of religious organization that affirm the value of life, the sacredness of each person and all life on the planet, we recognize that human actions can impact the interdependent web of life on our planet and we are called to protect and cherish life.

* Global climate change is fundamentally a moral, ethical and social justice crisis. We have a responsibility to work with faith communities everywhere to act to avert and limit the potential catastrophic effects of climate change.
* Although options exist for avoiding the worst consequences of climate change and for limiting the effects of past and current greenhouse gas pollution, we are fast approaching tipping points where climate driven catastrophes will overwhelm humanity’s ability to mitigate effects or adapt to changes
* Climate change is one of the greatest moral, technical and political challenges in human history. We affirm the value of hope even in the gravest of circumstances--a hope justified not only by the power of human action for good, but also by our understanding of the creative force of life in the universe.
* We urge the Congressmen/Senators to counter the forces that are causing climate change, and to do so within the short time we have left to avert the worst of climate chaos:
* To set hard standards for overall emissions reductions in states while providing the maximum flexibility to meet various needs. No two states are alike, there are plenty of options for reducing emissions that meet state needs.
* We urge the Congress and EPA to prioritize shifting energy sources to renewable energy instead of shifting to a lower carbon fossil fuel, such as hydrollically fractured methane.
* Urge Congress and EPA to prioritize plans that will protect low income consumers and communities that will be impacted by shifts from fossil fuels to renewable power.
* Dramatically reduce pollution from power plant energy sources, especially coal- and gas-fired power plants, shifting to emission-free or very low emission alternatives.
* Strengthen renewable energy infrastructures, energy conservation, mass transit and investments in technologies essential for effective use of renewable energies such as the “smart” electrical distribution grid.
* Sharply reduce fossil fuel extraction activities, in particular coal, tar sand oil, fracking, mountain-top coal removal and environmentally damaging drilling.
* Assist vulnerable and impoverished communities, including those communities involved in fossil fuel extraction, refining and distribution who will bear the greatest burdens from global climate change.

**V. STATUS:**

Draft Emission Guidelines for reducing carbon pollution from existing fossil fuel power plants are due to be proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency \*EPA) in June 2014, finalized by June 2015. Senator Mark Warner introduced on September 16, 2013U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-VA) has offered his [State Energy Race to the Top Initiative](http://www.warner.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2013/6/sen-warner-introduces-legislation-setting-state-incentives-to-encourage-greater-energy-productivity) as an amendment to [The Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act (Shaheen/Portman),](http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s761/text) which is being considered by the Senate.

**VII TARGETS:**

 Virginia Congressional Delegation, specifically Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine.

**VIII WHO TO ASK FOR:**

Energy and Environment Legislative Assistant (LA)

* + Senator Tim Kane: Chief of Staff: Mike Henry; Legis. Dir.: Mary Naylor ; Energy LA, Environment LA: Nick Barbash Senate Subcommittee on International Development and Foreign Assistance, Economic Affairs, International Environmental Protection, and Peace Corps
	+ Senator Mark Warner: Chief of Staff: Mike Henry; Legislative Director: Mary Naylor; Chief of Staff: Luke Albee; Energy LA: Mark Brunner

**Tips for preparing for your Congressional visit**

* Time is limited: Expect that you will have less than 30 minutes, be prepared
	+ Write down your comments or talking points, practice them in front of the mirror or in front of friends and family, so you are familiar with what you want to say
* Make it personal and talk from a moral, ethical perspective
	+ Use your comments to put a human face on this national and global problem
	+ Articulate why you are moved by your religious tradition to speak out on this issue
	+ Express your personal concerns about how climate disruption is threatening the places, people and living things that you care about in your community, or the health risks to you and your family/friends from carbon pollution.
		- Have you been personally affected by the effects of climate disruption? Is a place you love in your community threatened by climate disruption? Do you live near a coal-fired power plant, or live in the watershed in which coal or methane extraction is taking place? Do you or a loved on suffer from asthma attacks? Are you a health professional who serves people suffering from pollution?
* Do your research on the member of Congress, his/her past statements on the issue, committee assignments, recent legislation introduced or being considered related to your issue, and key legislative aides.
	+ Senator Tim Kane: Chief of Staff: Mike Henry; Legis. Dir.: Mary Naylor ; Energy LA, Environment LA: Nick Barbash Senate Subcommittee on International Development and Foreign Assistance, Economic Affairs, International Environmental Protection, and Peace Corps
	+ Senator Mark Warner: Chief of Staff: Mike Henry; Legislative Director: Mary Naylor; Chief of Staff: Luke Albee; Energy LA: Mark Brunner
* Include a few key facts:
	+ Pick one or two statistics to frame your personal comments
	+ Don’t worry about highly technical information. You are there as a concerned person of faith, representing others who are moved by their spiritual and moral values and sense of responsibility and justice to speak to your representatives.
* Bring two copies of your talking points to leave behind, and include your name and contact information, and the information about your Congregation or religious organization.

**UUCF Takes Official Stand on Climate Change
*Congregation Passes Resolution on Climate Change***

Nov. 4, 2013

OAKTON, VA – Members of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax (UUCF) overwhelmingly approved a Congregational Resolution on Climate Change at a specially called congregational meeting on Sun., Nov. 3, 2013. The Congregation resolved to act together to make real, measurable, positive impacts that help to reverse the course of global warming and climate change. The congregation resolved to join with other faith- and morally inspired individuals and communities to take actions to reverse climate change and pledged to inspire hope that, together, we can reduce the likelihood of catastrophic climate change.

**About the Resolution**

The UUCF resolution recognizes that “Global climate change is fundamentally a moral, ethical and justice crisis. We, as individual UUs, our UUCF community and faith communities everywhere have a religious responsibility to act and bear witness, to work together to avert and to limit the potential catastrophes of climate change.” With this resolution, UUCF declares that we will not acquiesce to the ongoing degradation and destruction of life that human actions are leaving to our children and grandchildren.

“Climate change is one of the greatest moral, technical and political issues in human history,” says UUCF’s Parish Minister Rev. Mary Katherine Morn. “We affirm the value of hope even in the gravest of circumstances -a hope justified not only by the power of human action for good, but also by our understanding of the creative force of life in the universe. Thus we commit ourselves to live and act with hope.”

Eric Goplerud, chair of UUCF’s Climate Action Group, says, “It is rapidly becoming apparent that climate change overshadows the many great problems facing humanity: War and peace, poverty, injustice, hunger and disease. Humans are causing or substantially contributing to it. Climate disruption is already inflicting suffering on the earth’s most vulnerable peoples and threatening the extinction of many animal and plant species. Soon we will pass a point of no return. Yet, the worst effects of climate change can be avoided… but, we have to act now.”

**About Unitarian Universalist (UU) Congregational Resolutions**

Unitarian Universalist resolutions serve as a form of public witness, with the goal of educating the congregation and broader community and rallying and mobilizing congregational action and participation to create change in the world. An unusual course of action for a UU congregation to take, this climate change resolution signifies that this issue is of the highest importance and urgency to UUCF members. Over the past decade this congregation has voted on only three other resolutions.

**How to Get Involved**

To join with UUCF and other faith-based organizations working together to address climate change, please contact Eric Goplerud, goplerud@gwu.edu. Meetings of the Climate Action Group are the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month from 7-9 p.m., at UUCF.

**About UUCF**

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax is a liberal religious community of about 1,100 adults, youth and children dedicated to the free and responsible search for religious truth and meaning. The congregation’s mission is to “transform ourselves, our community and the world through acts of love and justice.”

For more information about UUCF, please contact Mary Lareau, 703-281-4230, mlareau@uucf.org.

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**Kaine To EPA: Provide Coal-Fired Plants Flexibility To Meet Any New Regulations**

Friday, July 19, 2013

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tim Kaine wrote a letter to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Gina McCarthy to urge the agency to adopt attainable New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) for coal-fired power plants. In the letter, Kaine noted his support as Governor for the permitting of the Virginia City Hybrid Energy Center, a state-of-the-art coal plant in Southwest Virginia that dramatically reduced mercury and sulfur emissions. Facilities like Virginia City could not be permitted if the EPA issued the same regulations for new gas-fired and coal-fired plants.

"In order to get cleaner tomorrow than today, states need strong, achievable goals and the options and flexibility to meet them," **Kaine wrote in his letter to McCarthy.** "I am encouraged by the proposals contained in the President’s recent plan that promote innovation in clean-coal technologies; incentivize energy efficiency; and drive forward the commercialization of renewable alternatives. I believe an NSPS providing these wide-ranging, flexible mechanisms for emissions reduction makes more sense than a standard that effectively shuts down coal, potentially resulting in modern facilities being decommissioned with decades of use left."

The Energy Information Administration ranks Virginia as 12th in the nation in coal production.

Full text of the letter is below:

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

I write to address the Environmental Protection Agency’s consideration of greenhouse gas New Source Performance Standards for power plants.

According to recent news reports, EPA is considering separate standards for coal-fired and gas-fired power plants as part of the reconsidered NSPS it plans to release in September. I would like to share my support for this approach.

I strongly believe we must address climate change and that a phased process is the most effective way to do this. We cannot achieve our climate and clean energy goals by summarily retiring all coal-fired electricity – 37% of U.S. generation, according to the Energy Information Administration. We have to adjust our energy sources and consumption incrementally with smart policy choices, innovation incentives, and appropriate flexibility for states with different energy portfolios to meet pollution standards in different ways.

As Governor of Virginia, I undertook this approach to make needed progress toward lower-carbon energy while being mindful of impacts on coal-reliant communities. In 2008, I supported the permitting of the Virginia City Hybrid Energy Center – a state-of-the-art coal plant in Southwest Virginia – in concert with the retirement or conversion to gas of several older, less-efficient coal plants. Construction of this facility created more than 2,000 jobs while dramatically reducing mercury and sulfur emissions and providing capacity for co-firing of biomass to reduce CO2 emissions. Under a limit of 1,000 lbs/MWh of CO2, as originally proposed in the previous draft NSPS, a facility like this could not have been permitted. I strongly urge you to ensure that the standards you set are achievable for modern coal facilities like Virginia City.

In order to get cleaner tomorrow than today, states need strong, achievable goals and the options and flexibility to meet them. I am encouraged by the proposals contained in the President’s recent plan that promote innovation in clean-coal technologies; incentivize energy efficiency; and drive forward the commercialization of renewable alternatives. I believe an NSPS providing these wide-ranging, flexible mechanisms for emissions reduction makes more sense than a standard that effectively shuts down coal, potentially resulting in modern facilities being decommissioned with decades of use left.

As you prepare the latest New Source Performance Standard, I encourage you to give strong consideration to separate NSPS for coal and gas plants, as well as other measures that reduce emissions while promoting jobs and economic growth. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Tim Kaine