**UUA Actions of Immediate Witness:
Info pulled from UUA Website to support
preparation of & related info
http://www.uua.org/statements/process/guide/index.shtml
UUA Web Search, 28 May 2014**

**Contents of this Document:**

**Proposer's Guide—Part 2: Actions of Immediate Witness**

**What is witness as it pertains to Actions of Immediate Witness?**

**What kind of issue is appropriate for an Action of Immediate Witness (AIW)?**

**Who may propose an Action of Immediate Witness?**

# Where do I begin in proposing an Action of Immediate Witness (AIW)?

# 2014 Currently Proposed AIWs:

# What should my proposed Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) look like?

**Past Social Justice Statements**

# How do I submit my proposed Action of Immediate Witness (AIW)?

# What happens after the Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) filing deadline?

# What happens to an Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) after General Assembly (GA)?

# EXAMPLE: Clean Up the Clean Energy Bill - 2010 Action of Immediate Witness

# Example: Consider Divestment from the Fossil Fuel Industry - 2013 Action of Immediate Witness

# Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change - 2006 Statement of Conscience

**Past UUA Statements of Conscience**

**UU Social Justice Statements with search on sub-topic "Global Warming"**

**Proposer's Guide—Part 2: Actions of Immediate Witness**

General Assembly offers delegates the opportunity to participate in the high-energy Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) process. People come impassioned on a wide range of issues, engage one another in conversation, craft proposed statements, sign petitions, debate the issues, vote, and bring to life the values of Unitarian Universalism, all within the span of one General Assembly (GA). Unlike a Statement of Conscience, an AIW does not carry the full authority of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA); rather, it expresses the conscience and carries the authority of the delegates at the GA at which it is passed. This distinction follows from the difference in procedure: Congregational Study/Action Issues are initiated by congregations or districts or specified UUA sponsored organizations and move through a three-year period of study and action with opportunities for congregational and district comment. There are no such opportunities for AIWs, which are initiated by individual delegates or groups of delegates and move through their entire creation and adoption process during one GA. Nonetheless, AIWs are the product of considerable thought, collaboration, and commitment. The AIW process allows Unitarian Universalists to respond quickly to social issues deemed urgent. Adopted AIWs are used by congregations in local efforts and empower [Multicultural Growth & Witness](http://www.uua.org/directory/staff/multiculturalgrowth/index.php) to take action and recommend action through other departments of the UUA and other Unitarian Universalist groups.

**What is witness as it pertains to Actions of Immediate Witness?**

* Witness is the public profession by word or deed of the convictions of an individual or group regarding a particular issue. Actions of Immediate Witness profess convictions grounded in Unitarian Universalism.

**What kind of issue is appropriate for an Action of Immediate Witness (AIW)?**

* An issue that requires **immediate** action for our witness to make an impact
* An issue that is **specific** and that is too narrow to merit three years of study and action that define the Congregational Study/Action Issue process
* An issue that does not duplicate a recent AIW
* An issue that is **grounded** in our Unitarian Universalist theology and practice
* An issue that **fits** with our member congregations’ capacity to take meaningful action
* An issue that presents **opportunity** for our member congregations to become respected participants in public dialogue
* An issue that is crafted in civil language

**Who may propose an Action of Immediate Witness?**

* Any member of a Unitarian Universalist congregation who is present at General Assembly, though only a delegate may present the AIW on the plenary floor. **However**, preference will be given to proposed AIWs that emerge from a documented group process, typically arising from a committee or board at the congregational or district.

# Where do I begin in proposing an Action of Immediate Witness (AIW)?

If you are thinking of proposing an AIW, consider posting your idea go to [Planning for AIWs at General Assembly (GA)](http://www.uua.org/statements/current/104486.shtml) to get a head start and gain partners or allies.

To assist Unitarian Universalists in organizing Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs) at the 2011 General Assembly (GA), the Commission on Social Witness (CSW) encourages you to plan and collaborate online.

To post your idea between April 15 and June 1, email your:

1. topic title,
2. two-sentence description, and
3. contact email address to: socialwitness @ uua.org
(Please start your Subject line with AIW).

The [proposed AIWs will be posted online](http://www.uua.org/statements/current/104486.shtml) and people interested in learning more about a particular topic or collaborating on drafting an AIW can communicate directly with the original proposer. If you prefer to just propose a topic for others to consider, send only the title and description to be posted. If another person wants to coordinate planning that issue, they can notify us at socialwitness @ uua.org.

Proposed AIWs **CANNOT** be submitted online. You **must** visit the Commission on Social Witness booth in the Exhibit Hall, where you can get the necessary forms, updates, and assistance with fine tuning your proposed AIW.

For additional help as you proceed, please contact the Commission on Social Witness at *socialwitness @ uua.org*. Through our social witness process, we work together so that the moral arc of the universe bends ever more closely toward justice.

# 2014 Currently Proposed AIWs:

## Proposed AIWs: Last updated on Thursday, May 22, 2014.

**http://www.uua.org/statements/current/104486.shtml**

**Title: Affirming Congregational Commitment on Gun Violence Prevention**

**Description:** This AIW solicits an endorsement from this General Assembly renewing the focus and call for congregational commitment, as such was approved in previous GA AIW/Statements of Conscience, to work for gun violence prevention initiatives as demanded by the recent mass tragedies of VA Tech, Aurora, Tucson, Newtown and the Washington Navy Yard – and the insanity of individual gun homicides numbering close to a thousand each month.Recent congregationally-approved resolutions and statements of conscience in No. Virginia will hopefully inspire other congregations to emulate our examples, initiating a wave of calls to action spreading across the UUA world, congregation by district by region, and also prepare congregations for the work required by the CSAI on Gun Violence: A Public Health Issue under consideration this year.

**Contact:** Bob Hatfield, rjhatfield2@verizon.net

**Title: End the FDA's Anti-Gay Blood Ban**

**Description:** The FDA still bans men who have had sex with men (MSM) since 1977 from donating blood, preventing an estimated 130,000 men from donating over 219,000 pints of blood each year, a policy the American Medical Association calls "antiquated" and "not based on sound science." This AIW calls for an end to this discriminatory policy and calls upon congregations and their members to take immediate action to raise awareness of the policy while also promoting the life-saving act of donating blood.

**Contact**: Derrick, dmust001@fiu.edu

**Title: Support Diplomacy with Iran**

**Description:** This AIW urges respect for the interests and dignity of all parties in negotiations over Iran's nuclear program and supports sanctions relief as part of an agreement. It reiterates the 2011 AIW's opposition to a military strike.

**Contact**: David Keppel, UU Church of Bloomington, IN, keppel@sbcglobal.net

# What should my proposed Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) look like?

Your AIW must have a title that clearly identifies the subject. It may be written as a narrative or in a "resolution format" (with "Because," "Whereas," and "Therefore Be It Resolved" clauses).

It should be concise. There is a 500-word limit.

It must be clear. Someone with no previous knowledge of your topic should be able to read the proposed AIW and understand exactly what the issues are and what actions you are proposing. Time restrictions at General Assembly (GA) do not permit the Commission on Social Witness (CSW) to make substantial or substantive edits. Visit the CSW booth if you have any questions about clarity or how to write your proposal for maximum impact.

You are strongly encouraged to attach reputable documentation to substantiate facts you set forth in your proposed AIW.

<http://www.uua.org/statements/results.php?ftst=regular&search_in_body=1&search_in_title=1&search_text=&topic=&subtopic=&type=Action%20of%20Immediate%20Witness&from_year=&Submit=Submit>

**Past Social Justice Statements**

[Search Social Justice Statements](http://www.uua.org/statements/index.php)

Pages: **[**[1](http://www.uua.org/statements/results.php?ftst=regular&search_in_body=1&search_in_title=1&search_text=&topic=&subtopic=&type=Action%20of%20Immediate%20Witness&from_year=&Submit=Submit&pg_pager=1)**]**[2](http://www.uua.org/statements/results.php?ftst=regular&search_in_body=1&search_in_title=1&search_text=&topic=&subtopic=&type=Action%20of%20Immediate%20Witness&from_year=&Submit=Submit&pg_pager=2)[3](http://www.uua.org/statements/results.php?ftst=regular&search_in_body=1&search_in_title=1&search_text=&topic=&subtopic=&type=Action%20of%20Immediate%20Witness&from_year=&Submit=Submit&pg_pager=3)[4](http://www.uua.org/statements/results.php?ftst=regular&search_in_body=1&search_in_title=1&search_text=&topic=&subtopic=&type=Action%20of%20Immediate%20Witness&from_year=&Submit=Submit&pg_pager=4) [Next](http://www.uua.org/statements/results.php?ftst=regular&search_in_body=1&search_in_title=1&search_text=&topic=&subtopic=&type=Action%20of%20Immediate%20Witness&from_year=&Submit=Submit&pg_pager=2) >

[Amend the Constitution: Corporations are not Persons and Money is](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/288862.shtml)
2013 Action of Immediate Witness
BECAUSE Unitarian Universalists believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every human person, and in the use of the democratic process in society at large, and because approval of the 2011 AIW opposing ...

[Condemn the Racist Mistreatment of Young People of Color by Polic](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/288864.shtml)
2013 Action of Immediate Witness
WHEREAS, programs such as the “War on Drugs” and practices such as “Stop and Frisk” are actively used by police to harass and oppress communities of color;WHEREAS, Michelle Alexander, ...

[Consider Divestment from the Fossil Fuel Industry](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/288863.shtml)
2013 Action of Immediate Witness
BECAUSE the Sources of Unitarian Universalism counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science;BECAUSE Unitarian Universalist congregations covenant, in their Seventh Principle, to ...

[Oppose Citizens United—Support Free Speech for People](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/185343.shtml)
2011 Action of Immediate Witness
BECAUSE Unitarian Universalists (UUs) believe in the “inherent worth and dignity of every person,” and in the “use of the democratic process” in society at large;WHEREAS the U.S. ...

[Protest Representative Peter King’s Hearings on](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/185341.shtml)
2011 Action of Immediate Witness
BECAUSE Unitarian Universalist Principles affirm the goal of a just community, representing unity in our multiracial world;WHEREAS the hearings of Rep. Peter King, the Chair of the House Homeland Security ...

[Support Southern California Supermarket Workers’ Strugg](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/185342.shtml)
2011 Action of Immediate Witness
BECAUSE our Unitarian Universalist Principles affirm “the inherent worth and dignity of every person” and call for “justice, equity and compassion in human relations” andBECAUSE ...

[Clean Up the Clean Energy Bill](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/169258.shtml)
2010 Action of Immediate Witness
BECAUSE Unitarian Universalist Principles affirm the interdependent web of existence, as well as the democratic process; andWHEREAS the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico illustrates ...

[Gulf Coast Environmental and Economic Justice 2010](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/169257.shtml)
2010 Action of Immediate Witness
Because of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, thirteen parishes (counties) in Louisiana and two counties in Mississippi continue to work towards recovery from the devastating impact of the storms; andBECAUSE ...

[Oppose Anti-Immigrant Measures at the State Level (Arizona Law SB](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/169112.shtml)
2010 Action of Immediate Witness
BECAUSE our Unitarian Universalist Principles affirm and promote:the inherent worth and dignity of every person: justice, equity and compassion in human relations; and the goal of world community ...

[Advocate Pending Legislation Toward Clean, Honest, and Fair Elect](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/144448.shtml)
2009 Action of Immediate Witness
As we support the struggles of the Iranian people to have their voices heard and their votes counted, we must ensure the same for voters in the United States, so we can elect leaders who work for the good ...

[In Support of America’s Red Rock Wilderness Act](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/144456.shtml)
2009 Action of Immediate Witness
BECAUSE Unitarian Universalists respect the interdependent web of all existence, of which we are a part; andBECAUSE the Unitarian Universalist Association is holding its 2009 General Assembly in Utah, ...

[Oppose Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity-Based Violence in I](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/144459.shtml)
2009 Action of Immediate Witness
WHEREAS the first and sixth Unitarian Universalist [UU] Principles affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person and the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for ...

[Support Bolivian UUs Struggling for Justice and Human Rights](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/144457.shtml)
2009 Action of Immediate Witness
BECAUSE Bolivian Olga Flores Bedregal, who helped found a UU [Unitarian Universalist] congregation in La Paz, had a brother, Carlos Flores Bedregal, who disappeared at the hands of the military dictatorship ...

[U.S. Ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (C](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/144455.shtml)
2009 Action of Immediate Witness
BECAUSE Unitarian Universalism affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every person, respect for the interdependent web of existence, and the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice ...

[U.S.-Sponsored Torture: A Call for a Commission of Inquiry](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/144458.shtml)
2009 Action of Immediate Witness
BECAUSE one of our core Principles as Unitarian Universalists is our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all persons; andWHEREAS torture violates the basic dignity of the human person, degrades ...

[End Present-day Slavery in the Fields](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/115809.shtml)
2008 Action of Immediate Witness
Because: Unitarian Universalists affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person; the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society ...

[Extend the Tax Credit for Wind and Solar Power](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/115811.shtml)
2008 Action of Immediate Witness
Because: Unitarian Universalists as a community of faith respect the interdependent web of all existence, of which we are a part;Whereas: The 2006 UUA [Unitarian Universalist Association] General Assembly ...

[Oppose a U.S. Attack on Iran](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/115808.shtml)
2008 Action of Immediate Witness
Because: Unitarian Universalist Principles affirm the worth and dignity of every person, justice in human relations, and the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all;Whereas: Bombing ...

[Oppose the Florida and California Marriage Protection Initiatives](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/115812.shtml)
2008 Action of Immediate Witness
Because: Unitarian Universalists affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person;Whereas: The Unitarian Universalist Association [UUA], its member congregations and individual Unitarian ...

[Raise the Federal Minimum Wage to $10 in 2010](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/115810.shtml)
2008 Action of Immediate Witness
Because: Unitarian Universalists as a community of faith uphold the inherent worth, rights and dignity of all people;Whereas: We have supported a fair minimum wage since 1961, passing a resolution supporting ...

[Single Payor Health Care](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/115807.shtml)
2008 Action of Immediate Witness
Whereas: Unitarian Universalists are concerned with the worth and dignity of all people; Whereas: We spend over $2 trillion for health care in the United States, yet 50 million people are still not covered ...

[Pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act with Transgender Incl](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/31607.shtml)
2007 Action of Immediate Witness
WHEREAS our Unitarian Universalist Principles call us to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person and to promote justice, equity and compassion in human relations;WHEREAS Largo. Florida City ...

[Repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/31606.shtml)
2007 Action of Immediate Witness
WHEREAS our Unitarian Universalist Principles call us to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person and to promote justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;WHEREAS under a federal ...

[Stop U.S. Sponsored Torture—A Religious Call to Action](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/31605.shtml)
2007 Action of Immediate Witness
BECAUSE one of our core Unitarian Universalist principles is our belief in and affirmation of the inherent worth and dignity of all persons; andWHEREAS torture violates the basic dignity of the human person ...

[Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education Legislation](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/31604.shtml)
2007 Action of Immediate Witness
BECAUSE our Unitarian Universalist principles call on us to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person; justice, equity and compassion in human relations, and the goal of world community ...

(Continued on UUA website)

# How do I submit my proposed Action of Immediate Witness (AIW)?

**Get official forms and instructions** at the Commission on Social Witness (CSW) Booth in the Exhibit Hall on the first days of General Assembly. The booth will have a check list of the deadlines and other instructions, as well as the official AIW "Cover Sheet" and "Petition Sheets." (Note: While a sample Cover Sheet may be available online, only the current official cover and petition sheets available at GA may be used, and signatures may not be gathered until GA has begun.)

**“Pre-post”** your proposed AIW topic on a flip chart at the CSW booth, along with your contact information. Check this site frequently before you finalize your proposed AIW text. The purpose is to permit proposers on similar topics to collaborate. Otherwise, the CSW will select from proposals on similar topics the proposal which best meets AIW criteria.

**"Post"** your proposed AIW at the CSW booth by 5 p.m. on the Thursday of General Assembly. That is, deliver to the CSW booth the text of your proposed AIW, with a Cover Sheet attached to the front. If you can, bring an electronic form of your documents. You will have access to a computer at the CSW Booth. (Do not attach signature lists to the copy of your proposed AIW that you turn in for posting.)

**Gather** your signatures—from delegates only! You must acquire at least 150 delegate signatures from at least 25 different congregations, representing at least five different districts. You are strongly encouraged to exceed the 150 signature requirement. The text of the AIW must be attached to each page of signatures.

**"File"** your proposed AIW at the General Assembly Office by 5 p.m. on the Friday of General Assembly. The filing copy must have a properly completed "Cover Sheet" on top, the text of the proposed AIW, and the "Petition Sheets" with the requisite number and distribution of signatures.

# What happens after the Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) filing deadline?

The Commission on Social Witness (CSW) will review all proposed AIWs with the requisite signatures, and select up to six according to the [criteria cited](http://www.uua.org/statements/process/guide/aiw/187034.shtml). The CSW may edit them and may combine two or more proposed AIWs on related subjects (although the CSW encourages proposers addressing the same issue to form a joint proposal before such proposal is posted at the CSW booth, [as set forth in this guide](http://www.uua.org/statements/process/guide/aiw/187037.shtml)).

Once the CSW has made its decisions, a CSW member attempts to notify each sponsor at the phone number indicated on the Cover Sheet, during a designated two-hour span on Friday evening. It is important for the sponsor to be available for the call. Cell phones sometimes don't work in convention facilities, so either cite a land line in addition to the more commonly cited cell phone number on the Cover Sheet, or ensure that you are in a location that has cell phone service during the two-hour call period.
 **The CSW's selection of a proposed AIW does not automatically place it on the Final Agenda**. At the Saturday morning plenary, an advocate for each of the selected proposed AIWs speaks for up to two minutes on its behalf. After all AIW proposers have made their presentations, delegates will vote by ballot for up to three AIWs that they would like to see added to the final agenda. After the tellers count the ballots, the CSW chair will make a motion to add to the agenda the three proposed AIWs with the most votes. A two-thirds vote of the delegates is required to admit a proposed AIW to the Final Agenda.

For each AIW admitted to the Final Agenda, there is a mini-assembly. Proposers will be strongly urged to attend these mini-assemblies and sit up front, available for questions of clarification. These mini-assemblies provide delegates with their only opportunity to submit amendments to the proposed AIWs. The mini-assemblies run concurrently after the Saturday morning plenary.

After the mini-assemblies, the CSW meets to determine which amendments to incorporate and prioritizes any unincorporated ones for possible adoption by the delegates in plenary. The amended AIWs are available to delegates through the CSW Alert before the plenary on Sunday at which delegates debate and vote on each proposed AIW. A two-thirds affirmative vote is required for adoption.

Proposed AIWs are not in competition with one another as are proposed Congregational Study/Action Issues. Each of the proposed AIWs admitted to the Final Agenda may be adopted or rejected by the delegates.

# What happens to an Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) after General Assembly (GA)?

If GA delegates adopt an AIW, then the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), other UUA leaders, congregations, districts, and Unitarian Universalists organizations may use it as a basis for public statements on the matter and are urged to act on it.

For additional help as you proceed, please contact the Commission on Social Witness at *socialwitness @ uua.org*. Through our social witness process, we work together so that the moral arc of the universe bends ever more closely toward justice.

For more information contact socialwitness @ uua.org.

# EXAMPLE: Clean Up the Clean Energy Bill

## 2010 Action of Immediate Witness

BECAUSE Unitarian Universalist Principles affirm the interdependent web of existence, as well as the democratic process; and

WHEREAS the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico illustrates the tragic cost of fossil fuel energy, the recklessness of corporations that allow the public to bear their risk, and the moral imperative to conserve energy; and

WHEREAS greenhouse gas emissions threaten to bring about catastrophic climate change—current levels exceed the safe upper limit for atmospheric carbon dioxide and business as usual would take them even higher; and

WHEREAS nuclear energy is plagued by unsolved problems of radioactive waste disposal, the risk of terrorism, and weapons proliferation, and requires highly capital-intensive investment that diverts funds from safe, renewable sources; and

WHEREAS renewable energy and conservation can expand only when dirty and dangerous sources of energy are made to pay for the cost they impose on society; and

WHEREAS President Barack Obama, responding to the BP oil disaster, said: “The time has come, once and for all, for this nation to fully embrace a clean energy future”; and

WHEREAS in 2009, the House of Representatives passed the American Clean Energy and Security Act, and the Senate is currently considering the American Power Act, as well as the Carbon Limits and Energy for America’s Renewal Act; and

WHEREAS the American Power Act provides loan guarantees for nuclear power, subsidies for so-called “clean coal,” and expanded offshore oil drilling; and

WHEREAS the oil, coal, and nuclear industries spend millions of dollars each year on lobbying and public relations, thereby distorting scientific fact and the democratic process; and

WHEREAS current energy legislation will shape United States energy and climate policy for the next generation, with even longer-term consequences for Earth’s natural systems and human welfare;

THEREFORE the 2010 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association urges member congregations to ask the Senate immediately to act on the energy legislation it is considering, which must be amended to make dirty and dangerous energy pay its full societal cost and truly favor clean energy and conservation. Legislation must:

* cap greenhouse gas emissions (methane as well as CO2) in all economic activities, at a level recommended by scientists in order to prevent catastrophic climate change;
* remove all liability limitations (including the Price-Anderson Act for nuclear power) for any energy source, allowing risk to affect the price of energy and safe energy to become cost-competitive;
* impose stringent control and meaningful inspection of offshore oil drilling; halt mountaintop removal coal mining; eliminate the exemption of hydraulic fracturing of shale from Environmental Protection Agency regulation;
* direct loan guarantees and subsidies exclusively to safe, renewable sources (solar, wind, geothermal, tide) and conservation; and
* include a national Renewable Energy Standard, requiring utilities to generate 25 percent of their electricity from renewable sources by 2020.

# Example: Consider Divestment from the Fossil Fuel Industry

## 2013 Action of Immediate Witness

**BECAUSE** the Sources of Unitarian Universalism counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science;

**BECAUSE** Unitarian Universalist congregations covenant, in their Seventh Principle, to respect the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part, and member congregations have demonstrated their commitment to this Principle in various ways, including by Green Sanctuary certification;

**BECAUSE** the 2006 Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Statement of Conscience calls on Unitarian Universalist congregations to “[u]se congregational financial resources to positively address the global warming/climate change crisis”; and

**BECAUSE** the “UUA Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines” (2008) state that investments in companies engaged in negative global impact activities are to be avoided;

**WHEREAS**, we understand our lives are tied up in the consumption of energy;

**WHEREAS**, the fossil fuel industry currently controls fossil fuel reserves that, if burned, will produce more than five times the amount of greenhouse gas emissions required to raise global temperatures beyond 2º C, the level that leaders of 167 countries, including the United States, have agreed represents a threshold beyond which civilization cannot survive without enormous suffering;

**WHEREAS**, the global and growing movement 350.org is calling upon universities, pension funds, public entities, and religious institutions to divest their investments in 200 fossil fuel companies;

**WHEREAS**, further information and discussion regarding the divestment movement in UUA congregations is available at [Unitarian Universalists for Fossil Fuel Divestment](http://divestfossilfuels.wordpress.com/) or by email at divestment@uumilwaukee.org; and

**WHEREAS**, given the reality of climate change, passively profiting from business as usual in carbon-intensive fossil fuel companies is an abdication of our responsibility and thus morally wrong;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the 2013 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association calls upon delegates to begin a denomination-wide conversation within their congregations about divesting from fossil fuels or exercising shareholder influence. Congregations might discuss the following:

1. Stopping any new direct investments in fossil fuel companies, as listed in Carbon Tracker reports;
2. Divesting of all direct securities holdings in fossil fuel companies within the next five years;
3. Investing in diversified, socially responsible, and climate-friendly securities, and securities in the renewable energy and efficiency sector;
4. Investing in making their own facilities more energy efficient, make widespread use of renewable energy, adopt conservation and efficiency measures;
5. Evaluating the effectiveness of shareholder advocacy; and
6. Retaining the option of owning the minimum number of shares necessary to be an activist shareholder. These shares would be considered “influence payments” and not investments.

**Guide for Congregational Comments for a Statement of Conscience or Congregational Study/ Action Issue**

1. *Comments must be congregationally authorized.*
The most common way to prepare comments authorized by the congregation is to request that the congregation’s Board of Trustees authorize a committee or group to gather and prepare comments on behalf of the congregation. If a Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) District submits comments, the District Board may authorize a group to prepare comments.
2. *Comments will ideally reflect a group’s consensus and not be those of one person.*
A congregation or District may submit only one set of comments. Those comments should reflect the group opinion of those in the congregation or district interested in the topic and process. Comments may also be obtained from a congregational meeting, or from a post-sermon discussion, authorized by the Board.
3. *Ways to collect information for comments.*
There are different ways to collect comments and different tactics in doing so. All comments should be submitted through the Congregational Login.
	* Hold a congregational meeting after posting a hard copy of the congregational poll ballot and the text of the proposed CSAIs. Introduce the process. Allow time for discussion. Ask for a vote on each proposed CSAI—yes, no, or abstain. If you go with a majority for each proposed CSAI, make sure that the minority have been heard.
	* Designate a Sunday to make your congregational decision. Announce it beforehand in orders of service and in the service that day. Stay in your worship space to conduct this process. At the conclusion of your service, post sheets of newsprint on the walls of your sanctuary, each with the title of a proposed CSAI and a few summary sentences. Make copies of the full text available as well. Invite participants to walk around to all posted items, with each person checking no more than five for inclusion on the GA agenda. Submit the top five as your congregational vote. (Thanks to Fred Muir of Annapolis, MD for this option.)
	* Delegate the decision process to a congregational body that addresses social justice, denominational affairs, and/or congregational governance. Ask that body to solicit input from the rest of the congregation through your newsletter, e-mails, and/or alternative posting of the information. Publicize to the whole congregation how you voted.
	* Solicit individual votes through your newsletter, including the text of the proposed CSAIs and the options of Yes/No/Abstain. Tally these and cast your congregational vote accordingly.

## Organize Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs) for General Assembly 2014!

If you are thinking of proposing an AIW, the Commission on Social Witness (CSW) encourages you to plan and collaborate online. Consider posting your idea now! Go to [Planning for AIWs at General Assembly](http://www.uua.org/statements/current/104486.shtml) (GA) to see current proposed AIWs and get a head start and gain partners or allies in organizing one of your own.

To post your idea between April 15 and June 1, email your:

* topic title,
* two-sentence description, and
* contact email address to: socialwitness @ uua.org. (Please start your Subject line with AIW).

Call on Local, State, & US Government, Corporate, Financial & Religious leaders to be models of and voices for Global Leadership on a Fair & Effective Global Climate Treaty, during UN Pre-negotiations 20 & 21 September 2014 in NYC , and the Global Climate Summit, Paris, November 2015.

# Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change

## 2006 Statement of Conscience

Earth is our home. We are part of this world and its destiny is our own. Life on this planet will be gravely affected unless we embrace new practices, ethics, and values to guide our lives on a warming planet. As Unitarian Universalists, how can our faith inform our actions to remedy and mitigate global warming/climate change? We declare by this Statement of Conscience that we will not acquiesce to the ongoing degradation and destruction of life that human actions are leaving to our children and grandchildren. We as Unitarian Universalists are called to join with others to halt practices that fuel global warming/climate change, to instigate sustainable alternatives, and to mitigate the impending effects of global warming/climate change with just and ethical responses. As a people of faith, we commit to a renewed reverence for life and respect for the interdependent web of all existence.

### A Matter of Science

There is scientific consensus that the Earth's climate is changing due to global warming/climate change caused primarily by the human use of oil, coal, and natural gas. The burning of these fossil fuels releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, which traps more heat from the sun. Global warming/climate change is accelerating as planetary temperatures reach record highs. The melting of polar ice and mountain glaciers may cause sea levels to rise by at least three feet, probably much more, and by eighty feet in coming centuries if the average temperature rises five degrees, warming that will be difficult to avoid. Half of the world's plant and animal species are at risk of extinction by 2100 as habitats are destroyed and ecosystems unravel. The huge Siberian permafrost peat bogs are apparently starting to melt, releasing methane and accelerating global warming/climate change. Antarctic glaciers are sliding into the ocean faster than previously expected, which may result in worldwide coastal flooding. Rapidly melting polar ice caps and glaciers provide visual evidence of global warming/climate change. Indirect effects due to melting polar and Greenland ice can upset the delicate salt balance in the North Atlantic Ocean, triggering a shift in the thermohaline current, which ironically may result in a local ice age in Northern Europe and parts of North America .

Increasing temperatures can devastate human communities and wildlife habitats. Warmer climates are extending toward the poles, dramatically altering ecosystems. Melting polar ice caps raise sea levels and upset the delicate balance of ocean salinity. This imbalance may lead to a shift in ocean circulation patterns, which could wreak havoc with regional climates. Recent increases in sea surface temperatures are linked with more intense hurricanes.

Global warming/climate change can cause both increases and decreases in local temperatures and precipitation. Until now the effects of global warming/climate change have been proportionate to increases in greenhouse gas concentrations. We can minimize the damage of climate change only if we act vigorously and soon—in the next decade according to top climate scientist. Since human-generated greenhouse gases are at a level not seen for at least 600,000 years, effects will persist and increase for a while even as we begin to control emissions. Climatic changes, combined with habitat destruction and pollution, are causing loss of species, forests, human settlements, glaciers, and coastal heritage sites. All living organisms depend on ecosystems that can be sustained only in relatively narrow temperature ranges.

The recent rapid global average temperature increase is indeed the result of human activity. While the climate is always changing, attribution studies using sophisticated supercomputer global climate models show that natural causes do not account for the recent rapid temperature increase and that human activity does. See the 2001 IPCC/SPM report, Figure 2.4.

#### A Matter of Faith and Justice

As Unitarian Universalists, we are called by our seventh Principle to affirm and promote "respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." We envision a world in which all people are assured a secure and meaningful life that is ecologically responsible and sustainable, in which every form of life has intrinsic value. In other words, Unitarian Universalists are called to defer to a balance between our individual needs and those of all other organisms. Entire cultures, nations, and life forms are at risk of extinction while basic human rights to adequate supplies of food, fresh water, and health as well as sustainable livelihoods for humans are being undermined. To live, we must both consume and dispose. Both our consumption and our disposal burden the interdependent web of existence. To sustain the interdependent web, we must burden it less while maintaining the essentials of our lives. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are painful omens of how racism, sexism, and poverty worsen the effects of global warming/climate change. Our world is calling us to gather in community and respond from our moral and spiritual wealth; together we can transform our individual and congregational lives into acts of moral witness, discarding our harmful habits for new behaviors and practices that will sustain life on Earth, ever vigilant against injustice.

#### A Matter of Policy

Global warming/climate change is not only an environmental phenomenon; it is a hotly contested policy issue. All countries, in particular developing countries, will be unable to protect their residents from sea level increases, frequent and intense droughts, heavy rains, and violent hurricanes and tornadoes. Species worldwide face extinction from these same events. It is a bitter irony and a grave injustice that economically developed countries that are most responsible for global warming/climate change possess the wealth, technology, and infrastructure to cope with its negative effects, while those who have the least will have the largest burdens to bear.

In 1992, the United States ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Convention calls for its signatories to stabilize their greenhouse gas emission rates. It also states that economically developed countries will take the lead in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and not use scientific uncertainty about some aspects of climate change as a cause for delaying an immediate response. While the scientific evidence is solid, there seems to be an effort by some to confuse the public. To date, the United States has not ratified the Kyoto Protocol to the Convention, which sets milestones for reducing greenhouse gas emission rates. International cooperation is critical for addressing this global dilemma.

### A Call to Action

Affirming that we are of this earth and that humankind has brought about global warming/climate change, we, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, pledge to ground our missions and ministries in reverence for this earth and responsibility to it as we undertake these personal practices, congregational actions, and advocacy goals.

### Personal Practices

* Reduce our use of energy and our consumption of manufactured goods that become waste;
* Use alternative sources of energy to reduce global warming/climate change and to encourage the development of such sources;
* Choose the most energy-efficient transportation means that meet our needs and abilities (e.g., walk, bike, carpool, use mass transit and communication technologies, and limit travel);
* Determine our personal energy consumption and pledge to reduce our use of energy and carbon emissions by at least 20 percent by 2010 or sooner and into the future;
* Reuse, recycle, and reduce waste;
* Plant and preserve trees and native plants and choose sustainably harvested wood and wood products;
* Eat and serve energy-efficient food that is locally produced and low on the food chain;
* Use financial resources to encourage corporate social responsibility with reference to global warming/climate change;
* Model these practices by committing to a life of simplicity and Earth stewardship;
* Consume less, choose appliances that are rated energy-efficient (e.g., by the EPA Energy Star Program), and choose products and materials that are made from renewable resources and can be recycled at the end of their usefulness; and
* Commit to continue to learn about the science, impact, and mitigation of global warming/climate change and communicate this knowledge by teaching about and discussing the problems and dangers of, and actions to address, climate change.

### Congregational Actions

* Celebrate reverence for the interdependent web of existence in all aspects of congregational life;
* Treat environmentally responsible practices as a spiritual discipline;
* Seek certification through the Green Sanctuary Program of the Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth;
* Educate ourselves, our children, and future generations on sustainable ways to live interdependently;
* Whenever possible, plan congregational facilities around proximity to public transportation and encourage congregants, as they are able, to travel by public transportation, walking, biking, and carpooling;
* Seek U. S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification for all new congregational building projects and use LEED guidelines for renovation projects;
* Use congregational financial resources to positively address the global warming/climate change crisis;
* Practice environmentally responsible consumption and encourage voluntary simplicity among members;
* Build a broader base for environmentally mindful policies and practices through congregational alliances within Unitarian Universalism, through interfaith channels, and with secular entities; and
* Maximize the energy efficiency of congregational facilities by enrolling in the EPA's Energy Star for Congregations Program.

### Denominational Affairs

We call upon our denominational leaders to provide:

* Leadership, by calling upon the major political parties to develop energy and climate change policies and to make them central topics of debate in state, congressional, and presidential elections;
* Education, by providing spiritual, educational, and technical resources for congregational and individual responses;
* Justice, by seeking opportunities for public witness for environmental justice, including joining interfaith and public events promoting a just response to climate change;
* Sustainable practices, by exploring the options for performing environmental audits of all UUA properties and for modeling appropriate management and purchasing practices;
* Sustainable investing, by exploring the potential for using the ownership rights of the denomination's financial resources to positively address the global warming/climate change crisis;
* Support, by assisting congregations in evaluating and addressing the risks and challenges they face as a result of global warming/climate change;
* Recognition of congregational action, by encouraging, honoring, and publicizing the work of UU congregations, including those that achieve Green Sanctuary accreditation; and
* Ministry, by recognizing and supporting the need for UU leaders to help others understand the urgency and severity of addressing global warming/climate change, the resulting potential for despair, and places to find hope for the future.

### Advocacy Goals

* Full compliance with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, with the understanding that because human activity is affecting global climate change, it follows that the greater our total population the greater the impact;
* Ratification of and compliance with the Kyoto Protocol;
* Funding for research and development of renewable energy resources and energy-efficient technologies that includes a shift of federal subsidies from fossil fuel industries to renewable energy technologies and improved energy efficiency;
* Funding of regional, national, and international programs to assist in mitigating the effects of global warming/climate change;
* Safe and responsible development of power sources with low greenhouse gas emissions;
* Policies and practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase forestation and other forms of carbon dioxide sequestration;
* Funding for development of energy-efficient mass transit and encouragement of its widespread use;
* Global warming/climate change impact studies (including physical, social, and economic effects) to be conducted by local and regional governments, with the findings to be incorporated into local government processes;
* Urban and regional planning designed to reduce energy consumption;
* Access to family planning services in the United States and around the world;
* Significantly strengthened Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) standards for automobiles and light trucks;
* National greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets of 10 percent below current levels by 2015, 20 percent by 2020, and 60 percent by 2030;
* United States policy that takes a leadership role in future global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the negative impacts of global warming/climate change;
* Monitor, propose, and support legislation at the local and state level related to global warming/climate change and opportunities to reduce emissions; and
* Provide information on legislative advocacy opportunities to members of the congregation.

Given our human capacity to reflect and act upon our own lives as well as the condition of the world, we accept with humility and determination our responsibility to remedy and mitigate global warming/climate change through innovation, cooperation, and self-discipline. We undertake this work for the preservation of life on Earth.

For more information contact web @ uua.org.

This work is made possible by the generosity of individual donors and congregations. Please consider [making a donation](http://giving.uua.org/page.aspx?pid=419) today.

Last updated on Wednesday, August 24, 2011.

**Past UUA Statements of Conscience:**

[Immigration as a Moral Issue](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/288860.shtml)
2013 Statement of Conscience
A belief in “the inherent worth and dignity of every person” is core to Unitarian Universalism: every person, no exceptions. As religious people, our Principles call us to acknowledge the immigrant ...

2012 ?

[Ethical Eating: Food & Environmental Justice](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/185320.shtml)
2011 Statement of Conscience
Aware of our interdependence, we acknowledge that eating ethically requires us to be mindful of the miracle of life we share with all beings. With gratitude for the food we have received, we strive to ...

[Creating Peace](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/13394.shtml)
2010 Statement of Conscience
We believe all people share a moral responsibility to create peace. Mindful of both our rich heritage and our past failures to prevent war, and enriched by our present diversity of experience and perspective, ...

[Moral Values for a Pluralistic Society](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/31485.shtml)
2007 Statement of Conscience
Moral values increasingly frame public discourse. As Unitarian Universalists, we must affirm the moral influence of liberal religion in society.At great personal risk, the forebears of our faith have taken ...

[Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/8061.shtml)
2006 Statement of Conscience
Earth is our home. We are part of this world and its destiny is our own. Life on this planet will be gravely affected unless we embrace new practices, ethics, and values to guide our lives on a warming ...

[Criminal Justice and Prison Reform](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/13397.shtml)
2005 Statement of Conscience
Background: This Statement of Conscience of the Unitarian Universalist Association builds upon more than a dozen social witness statements on criminal justice adopted by the Unitarian Universalist Association ...

[Civil Liberties](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/13422.shtml)
2004 Statement of Conscience
PreambleLiberty is at the core of our Unitarian Universalist faith. Civil liberties are at the heart of our American experiment in democracy. Those civil liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, Amendments ...

[Economic Globalization](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/13439.shtml)
2003 Statement of Conscience
Summary of the Statement of Conscience While economic globalization has helped some people attain higher standards of living, it has marginalized and impoverished many others and has resulted in ...

[Alternatives to the "War on Drugs"](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/13981.shtml)
2002 Statement of Conscience
Background: This final draft Statement of Conscience of the Unitarian Universalist Association builds upon four social witness statements on drug policy adopted by the Unitarian Universalist Association ...

[Responsible Consumption Is Our Moral Imperative](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/14003.shtml)
2001 Statement of Conscience
Preface Material comforts that we enjoy in the United States and Canada come at a greater cost than we often realize. Our two countries, together with other industrial nations, consume a disproportionately ...

[Economic Injustice, Poverty, and Racism: We Can Make a Difference](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/14008.shtml)
2000 Statement of Conscience
We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, hereby rededicate ourselves to the pursuit of economic justice, an end to racism, and an end to poverty. We recognize that racism ...

[Beyond Religious Tolerance: The Challenges of Interfaith Cooperat](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/14225.shtml)
1999 Statement of Conscience
We live in a global village that brings people of diverse economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds into close and interdependent contact. The resulting challenges are immense. They defy traditional ...

**UU Social Justice Statements with sub-topic Global Warming**

[Consider Divestment from the Fossil Fuel Industry](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/288863.shtml)
2013 Action of Immediate Witness
BECAUSE the Sources of Unitarian Universalism counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science;BECAUSE Unitarian Universalist congregations covenant, in their Seventh Principle, to ...

[In Support of America’s Red Rock Wilderness Act](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/144456.shtml)
2009 Action of Immediate Witness
BECAUSE Unitarian Universalists respect the interdependent web of all existence, of which we are a part; andBECAUSE the Unitarian Universalist Association is holding its 2009 General Assembly in Utah, ...

[Extend the Tax Credit for Wind and Solar Power](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/115811.shtml)
2008 Action of Immediate Witness
Because: Unitarian Universalists as a community of faith respect the interdependent web of all existence, of which we are a part;Whereas: The 2006 UUA [Unitarian Universalist Association] General Assembly ...

[Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/8061.shtml)
2006 Statement of Conscience
Earth is our home. We are part of this world and its destiny is our own. Life on this planet will be gravely affected unless we embrace new practices, ethics, and values to guide our lives on a warming ...

[Protecting the Biosphere](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/14474.shtml)
1989 General Resolution
Guided by our respect for the sanctity of all life and for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part; Recognizing the stress placed upon the biosphere through excessive demands upon ...

[Law of the Sea Treaty](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/20161.shtml)
1982 General Resolution
WHEREAS, the oceans of the world cover 70% of its surface; and WHEREAS, there is no international, oceanic policy; the United States has no such policy and recent incidents have shown the extreme dangers ...

[Population and Development](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/14248.shtml)
1996 General Resolution
BECAUSE Unitarian Universalists affirm concern for the whole earth, all of earth's inhabitants, and the future we share; and WHEREAS the Unitarian Universalist Association is an advocate for women's empowerment, ...

[U.S. Ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (C](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/144455.shtml)
2009 Action of Immediate Witness
... values which would be flagrantly violated by the massive killing of civilians by the lasting harm to the **global** environment, which would result from any use of nuclear weapons; andWHEREAS the UUA [Unitarian ...

[Endorse the Earth Charter](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/13992.shtml)
2002 Action of Immediate Witness
... within the coming century unless urgent steps are taken to prevent this irreparable disaster; Whereas **global** warming is likely to increase the surface temperature of the earth in our lifetimes, melting ...

[Nuclear Freeze](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/19954.shtml)
1983 General Resolution
... nuclear weapons could release tax funds and scientific talent for pursuit of projects to improve the **global** human condition; BE IT RESOLVED: That the 1983 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist ...

[Responsible Consumption Is Our Moral Imperative](http://www.uua.org/statements/statements/14003.shtml)
2001 Statement of Conscience
... that assumes that our planet is available for us to exploit to fulfill our needs and pleasures. Our **global** dominion is limited, and we have already begun to encounter its limits. By continuing to follow ...