



*and the Illinois  
Interfaith Power &  
Light Campaign*

[date]

To the Honorable Midwestern Governors:

Rod Blagojevich of Illinois  
Chet Culver of Iowa  
Mitch Daniels of Indiana  
Jim Doyle of Wisconsin  
Jennifer Granholm of Michigan  
Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota  
M. Michael Rounds of South Dakota  
Kathleen Sebelius of Kansas  
Ted Strickland of Ohio

Dear Midwestern Governors,

The undersigned religious leaders respectfully submit these comments regarding your implementation of the Midwestern Greenhouse Gas Reduction Accord.

As representatives of the faith community we believe that it is our responsibility to care for God's creation by acting as stewards of the world we have been blessed with. The threat of global warming is a matter of increasing concern for the faith community and other persons of good will. Global warming threatens to push endangered species toward the brink of extinction by jeopardizing the stability of delicate and unique ecosystems like coral reefs, rainforests, grasslands, and freshwater marine habitat. The decisions we make today to address global warming will determine the health of the planet for generations to come.

As people of faith, we further believe that it is our responsibility to share God's gifts equitably and ensure the highest quality of life for all individuals today and for generations to come. In addition to the unnatural changes occurring to the Earth itself, global warming has a disproportionately adverse effect on low-income communities throughout the world. Those with the least resources to adapt to a changing environment contribute little to the problem of global warming. As a developed region, it is our responsibility to correct this injustice by leading the way and working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions today.

For these reasons, we believe it is our moral responsibility to mitigate the consequences of global warming by enacting strong regional policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

There are several key policy recommendations that you are considering that we feel are important to emphasize:

**1. Targets:**

It is important that any plan to address global warming is designed to reflect the reduction needs outlined by the scientific community. The consensus agreement of more than 2,000 leading climatologists and scientists in the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report calls for an 80% reduction in global warming emissions from current levels. Several recent reports including one from noted climate researcher James Hansen indicate that even more aggressive cuts may be necessary to stabilize our climate. In the interest of being good stewards of the earth we must heed these recommendations and establish goals that require at least an 80% reduction in the Midwest's global warming emissions by 2050.

**2. A Strong Cap & Trade Program:**

This is the most important policy recommendation since it will deliver the greatest amount of global warming emission reductions. This must be a strong program with science-based reduction targets that are not compromised by the use of offsets or other potential loopholes. It is important that polluters are not rewarded for their previous pollution by simply giving away allowances or creating an artificial price cap on pollution credits.

Auctioning 100 percent of pollution credits will generate revenue that can be used to support energy efficiency projects in low income communities and reduce rate impacts on low income families. Making those investments as soon as possible will help to reduce energy bills, ensure that the rising cost of energy does not fall disproportionately on low income communities, and simultaneously achieve major reductions in global warming emissions.

**3. Establish Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee to Examine Impact of Cap and Trade on Low Income Communities:**

While we must reduce greenhouse emissions to minimize the most harmful consequences of global warming on low-income communities throughout the world, we must do so in a fair and equitable way. We therefore recommend establishing an advisory committee to examine the impact of a cap and trade system on low income communities. This committee should include representatives from low-income and faith communities, as well as other interested stakeholders, to provide recommendations to minimize harmful economic consequences on low-income communities.

We appreciate the hard work that has already gone into the process and understand the complexity of these issues. We hope that these recommendations help guide the development of a strong regional greenhouse gas reduction plan that will equitably protect God's creation and minimize the impact of global warming on low-income communities.

Sincerely yours,

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