

April 8, 2020

The Honorable John Barrasso  
Chairman  
Committee on Environment & Public Works  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thomas Carper  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Environment & Public Works  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

As members of the Washington Interreligious Staff Community's Energy and Ecology Working Group (WISC-EEWG), we appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony on S. 2754, the American Innovation and Manufacturing (AIM) Act. As a coalition of diverse faith traditions, we are united across theological lines by our commitment to be stewards of creation and are called to serve vulnerable communities. We have come together out of a deep concern for the environment and for people who suffer most from the ill effects of a warming planet. Therefore, we urge the committee to advance S. 2754, the American Innovation and Manufacturing (AIM) Act of 2019.

As our economy is hit by the effects of COVID-19, it is imperative that we take this simple step to protect American jobs. American industries have led the way in bringing new alternatives and the products that use them to the marketplace, creating many good-paying jobs in the process. To maintain this leadership and preserve these jobs, **American companies need the encouragement and certainty that this bill will provide.** This is one reason why we urge enactment of the AIM Act.

We strongly believe that the climate crisis demands a dramatic and rapid reduction of emissions of the greenhouse gases that are causing the earth to warm dangerously. One of the most potent groups of climate-changing super pollutant chemicals are hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), used in air conditioning, refrigeration, and many other applications.

Pound for pound, HFCs have thousands of times the heat-trapping capacity of carbon dioxide. Effective and much less heat-trapping alternatives to HFCs are now available. These potent climate pollutants also have significant harmful effects on human health, agricultural productivity and the environment. Because super pollutants are shorter-lived and remain in the atmosphere for a shorter time than carbon dioxide, reducing HFCs is an effective near-term strategy for reducing the rate of global warming. **Actions that quickly reduce warming are essential if we are to avoid disastrous self-reinforcing climate change feedbacks and tipping points.**

That is why it is so important that the Senate pass the AIM Act. This bipartisan bill, which has received strong support from both the environmental and the business communities, will phase down the use of HFCs by 85% over 15 years.

Unfortunately, use of HFCs has been growing, in both developed and developing countries, much more rapidly than carbon dioxide. It has been calculated that if no actions were taken to phase down their use, HFCs could add nearly another 0.5 degree centigrade (nearly a full degree Fahrenheit) to global average temperatures by 2100. In a world struggling to find ways to hold warming to 1.5° or even 2°C, we cannot afford to add another half degree of new warming.

While the transition to safer alternatives has already started, **we urgently need a framework for an orderly and expeditious phase-down under federal law. The AIM Act provides such a framework.**

While attention is now understandably focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, we must not neglect the longer-term but equally serious crisis posed by global warming. The AIM Act presents a welcome opportunity to show that Congress can act on a bipartisan basis, just as it did with the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, to address the serious dangers to health and the economy posed by the buildup of powerful heat-trapping chemicals like HFCs. We strongly urge enactment of S. 2754 the AIM Act.

Sincerely,

Church World Service

Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility

Interfaith Power and Light

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

Unitarian Universalists Association

Unitarian Universalists Service Committee

Unitarian Universalists Ministry for Earth

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