

Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

S. 2754, American Innovation and Manufacturing Act of 2019

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WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

Submitted by email: qfr@epw.senate.gov

Submitted by:

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On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development and Committee on International Justice and Peace, we are grateful for the opportunity to offer written testimony on S. 2754, the American Innovation and Manufacturing Act of 2019 (AIM Act). This bipartisan legislation seeks to mitigate climate change and ozone depletion by initiating a regulatory phase-down of powerful greenhouse gases.

As Pope Francis has written, climate change “represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day” (*Laudato Si'*, no. 25), threatening the wellbeing of peoples and the environment. Catholic social teaching envisions a sustainable and authentic human development, where technological solutions respect the principle of integral ecology and take into account social, economic and ecological considerations. In his address to the joint meeting of the U.S. Congress, Pope Francis stated that “building a future of freedom requires love of the common good and cooperation in a spirit of subsidiarity and solidarity.”¹

The phase-down of Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) respects the principle of integral ecology by protecting the atmosphere from harmful substances, promoting public health and stimulating sustainable economic development. The AIM Act is an opportunity for the United States to build a better future for our nation and the world.

HFCs, used predominantly in the air conditioning and refrigeration industry, affect atmospheric warming and indirectly contribute to ozone depletion. Developed to replace ozone-depleting

¹ Pope Francis, Address of the Holy Father to the Joint Meeting of the United States Congress, September 24, 2015.

substances under the Montreal Protocol, HFCs were useful alternatives to harmful chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), and helped contribute to the recovery of the ozone layer. Despite this success, HFCs have a global warming potential hundreds to thousands of times greater than that of carbon dioxide. In 2019, the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol initiated a global phase-down of HFCs to mitigate climate change. Our Committees supported this improvement to the Montreal Protocol, stating that “decisive action by the United States in support of the amendment will be a sign of our nation’s moral leadership and solidarity.”

Once again, our country has the opportunity to play a leading role in environmental stewardship. The AIM Act would establish a federal regulatory framework to incrementally phase-down the production and consumption of HFCs. This legislation will deliver economic and environmental benefits, and is the product of fruitful dialogue among scientists, politicians, and members of the economic and industrial sectors. The orderly implementation of new technologies will ensure U.S. competitiveness in the global marketplace, and for this reason the bill has been endorsed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and numerous industry stakeholders.

We commend the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works for pursuing this spirit of cooperation by engaging multiple stakeholders, and we pray that this dialogue will be a sign of our nation’s moral commitment to protect human dignity and care for our common home.

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