



ACTION ALERT

Saving Planet Earth

The Kyoto Protocol, negotiated in 1977, is an international agreement that provides a framework to avoid dangerous climate change. The 141 industrialized nations of the world that agreed to the Protocol committed to taking steps to reduce greenhouse gas by 2012. (Target levels vary from country to country and are related to 1990 pollution levels.) Greenhouse gases “regulate our climate by trapping heat and holding it in a kind of warm-air blanket that surrounds the planet.”¹ Without it scientists estimate the average temperature on earth would be colder by approximately 30 degrees Celsius (54 degrees Fahrenheit), far too cold to sustain our current ecosystem. The U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement notes that such climate disruption “is an urgent threat to the environmental and economic health of our communities.”²

To date over 160 countries have signed on to the Kyoto Protocol. The Protocol calls for a U.S. reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by seven percent below its 1990 levels by 2012. The U.S. signed the Kyoto Protocol but the treaty has not been approved by the U.S. Senate. The Senate raised concerns that rapidly developing nations such as China and India should be held at the same requirements. The White House has stated the Kyoto Protocol would harm the American economy. Despite the U.S. position many states and cities are adopting climate control policies. Because the U.S. did not ratify the Kyoto Protocol, the Honorable Greg Nickles, Mayor of Seattle, Washington, initiated his own U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement to involve American citizens in advancing the aims of the Protocol by taking three actions:

- Meeting or exceeding the Kyoto Protocol targets in their local communities through measures such as anti-sprawl land use policies, urban reforestation projects or public education campaigns.
- Advocating at the state and federal levels to pass or fund programs to achieve by 2012 the recommended seven percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels.
- Urging Congress to pass greenhouse gas reduction legislation that would include an emission trading system (i.e. offsetting pollution by promising to plant trees or taking other actions that create a carbon “neutral” condition).

Earth Day is April 22



In 2007 the entire U.S. Conference of Mayors adopted The U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, holding their communities to the Kyoto Protocol’s targets. Today mayors of 780 cities have signed-on. The mayors have also established the Climate Protection Center to serve as a clearing house to provide information on best practices and enable its membership to “build momentum for a national movement.” The Center is providing assistance to cities that are examining ways to purchase hybrid-electric vehicles, use cleaner energy



UNITED METHODIST WOMEN’S ACTION NETWORK

Women’s Division – General Board of Global Ministries
100 Maryland Avenue, NE Suite 530 – Washington, DC 20002
Tel. (202) 488-5660 * Fax (202) 488-5681

www.umwmission.org

sources and apply energy-efficient lighting. Cities are also being aided by the International Council for Local Environment Initiatives (ICLEI) which provides software and training to help managers learn how to calculate a geographic area's emissions quantity reductions and track progress. The ICLEI also helps cities prepare plans of action.

Increasingly Americans are becoming aware of the role they can play protecting the earth. Results of an online poll conducted by Zogby International, and commissioned by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, indicated that "the majority of Americans believe that by going green, their local communities will get an economic boost by the creation of new jobs—including *green collar* jobs...while at the same time making their communities better places to live."³ The survey also pointed to opportunities for changing behavior—75 percent of commuters noted that they drive to work alone—and affirmed the Mayors' emphasis on the need to reduce reliance on the automobile. Big city and small town Mayors point out that there is something everyone can do to be part of the solutions that save the earth. The examples of actions that achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions range from local campaigns against airport expansion to international movements for global justice.⁴



Take Action to Save the Earth!



Read *The Book of Resolutions 2004* #7 Environmental Justice for a Sustainable Future, pg. 83.

Read *Earth Trek – Celebrating and Sustaining God's Creation* from the 2008 Reading Program. To purchase a copy visit the E-Store on the Women's Division web site at www.umwmission.org and click on "Resources" on the top right side of the page and then click on "E-Store." Enter the stock number R1014 to purchase the book. You may also call the Mission Resource Center at 1-800-305-9857. Use the book for the seven day celebration of the earth.

Join the Online Community Earth Trek Program for the month of April and participate in Earth Day events and read other resources on caring for God's creation. Go to: www.umwonline.org and sign on to the Environment community.

Find Earth Day Resources for worship and Bible Study from the Eco-Justice Programs of the National Council of Churches: www.ncccecojustice.org.

View the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement *Map of Participating Mayors* on the Mayors Climate Protection Center web site at www.usmayors.org/climateprotection/climatechange.asp to find out if your city has made a commitment to climate protection. You may also call them at (202) 861-6700 to obtain more information. Has your city made a commitment to climate protection? If not, start a petition drive to get your Mayor to sign the Agreement. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper recommending that your city participate in this campaign and let us know when your Mayor signs-on!

The Charity Guide for Environmental Protection points out that "you can help global warming in less time that it takes to polish off a latte (in your reusable mug of course!)," and their web site suggests ways that everyone can "protect the environment in just 15 minutes." For more information visit their web site at <http://www.charityguide.org/volunteer/fifteen/topic/environmental-protection.htm>

Take the "How Earth Friendly Are You? A Lifestyle Self-Assessment Questionnaire." To obtain a copy of the questionnaire visit <http://www.newroadmap.org/pdf/HowEarthFriendlyAreYou.pdf>

Additional Resources: Women's Division May 2006 Action Alert entitled *Climate Change*
(View this Action Alert by visiting www.umwmission.org and clicking "Action Alerts.")
Visit the Reading Program online community at <http://www.umwonline.org/>

April 2008

¹ <http://environment.about.com/od/globalwarming/a/greenhouse.htm>

² www.urbanforestsouth.org/resources/library/us-conference-of-mayors-climateprotection

³ Feuerberg, Gary. National Poll: 'Going Green' Locally Is Good For the Economy. *The Epoch Times*. 01/28/2008.

⁴ Be Carbon Positive, *New Internationalist*, pg. 20, July 2006 Issue 391.