

August 8, 2006

Dear Member of the Illinois General Assembly:

We, the 64 undersigned professors, faith leaders, local officials and civic organizations, are writing to urge you to support proactive state policies to begin to address the threat of global warming. We believe that global warming is the most significant environmental threat we face, that the tools to address this threat exist, and that solving the problem is not only a moral imperative, but will provide many valuable collateral benefits to Illinois's economy.

With the ten hottest years on record all having occurred since 1990, the early signs of global warming are visible throughout the world. The polar ice caps and glaciers are melting before our eyes. In fact, scientists expect that all of the glaciers in Glacier National Park will be gone by 2070. Sea-levels are rising, prompting warnings about inundation of our coastal cities. As the sea temperature increases, the number of category 4 and 5 hurricanes has been on a steep incline. Meanwhile, many parts of the world, including the Midwest, have experienced prolonged drought. All of these signs are consistent with the global warming predictions made by scientists over the last several decades.

The chorus of Americans urging action to address global warming is also growing to include business leaders, evangelical Christian leaders, and insurance commissioners, to name a few. For example:

- John Rowe, the CEO of Exelon, said: "We accept that the science on global warming is overwhelming. . . There should be mandatory carbon constraints."
- This February, 86 prominent evangelical Christian leaders, including the president of Illinois's Wheaton College called for action to fight global warming and launched the Evangelical Climate Initiative, available at [www.christiansandclimate.org](http://www.christiansandclimate.org).
- Last year the National Association of Insurance Commissioners formed a task force to develop a global warming response in response to rising premiums caused by dramatic increases in weather related losses.

The longer we wait, the more difficult it will be to prevent catastrophic climate change. Dr. James Hansen, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, has warned, "[T]he Earth's climate is nearing, but has not passed, a tipping point, beyond which it will be impossible to avoid climate change with far ranging undesirable consequences." He said that these consequences would "constitute practically a different planet."

Several states have responded to the threat and challenge by getting started with concrete, achievable steps that can be used as models for Illinois. For example, the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers have set a goal of returning to 1990 emission levels by 2010 and 10% below 1990 levels by 2020. New Mexico has set a goal of returning emissions to 2000 levels by the year 2012, 10 percent below 2000 levels by 2020 and to 75 percent below 2000 levels by 2050. Eight states have set emission caps for their electric power industry to reduce by 10% by 2019. California has set a goal of returning emissions to 2000 levels by 2010, 1990 levels by 2020, and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. Ten states have adopted automobile standards for global warming pollution.

City governments are also stepping up to the plate to reduce global warming pollution. The mayors of more than 200 U.S. cities, including Richard M. Daley of Chicago, Ross Ferraro of Carol Stream, Michael Belsky of Highland Park, Al Larson of Schaumburg, and Richard Hyde of Waukegan have signed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, pledging, among other things, that they will meet the Kyoto goal of reducing greenhouse emissions in their own cities to 1990 levels by 2012.

Illinois has much to gain by being proactive in developing our response to global warming. As a large agricultural state, the long-term outlook for water availability is key to our continued economic stability and growth. At the same time, Illinois farmers have much to gain by being part of the solution – developing our wind power potential, developing alternative fuels and sequestering carbon in plant matter. Similarly, by getting cleaner cars on the roads we can reduce our dependence on oil and save consumers money at the pump. Finally, by having a global warming plan, we can better assess the wisdom of new investments in carbon-emitting technologies such as conventional coal plants which may be uneconomic in a carbon-constrained future.

Illinois needs to develop its own plan and process to reduce global warming pollution, as other states have done. We urge you to support the following actions:

1. Illinois should adopt a near-term and long term goal for greenhouse gas reductions of 10% in 10 years, and 75-80% by 2050;
2. Illinois should establish a commission to determine specific steps we will take to meet these targets. The commission should, at a minimum:
  - Adopt a renewable energy standard that achieves the Governor's goal of 8% of our power generated using clean, renewable energy sources by 2012, and further sets a goal of 20% renewable energy by 2020.
  - Adopt energy efficiency standards for furnaces, appliances and residential buildings, and establish a dedicated funding source for cost-effective energy efficiency investments.
  - Adopt the standards that limit global warming pollution from automobile tailpipes.
  - Adopt a moratorium on the construction of new, conventional coal plants until such time as it can be determined whether any such plants are consistent with our global warming response plan.

We would love to speak with you about how you can help. To respond, please contact Rebecca Stanfield, Director of Environment Illinois at 312-291-0696.

Sincerely,

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44<sup>th</sup> Ward, City of Chicago

Alderman Helen Shiller  
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Alderman Gene Schulter  
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Alderman Mary Ann Smith  
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Environment & Energy Citizen's Advisory Commission  
Village of Oak Park, IL

Michael Belsky  
Mayor, City of Highland Park, IL

Eugene Marks  
President, Village of Northbrook, IL

Alan Larson  
President, Village of Schaumburg, IL

Larry Keller  
President, Village of West Dundee, IL

George Van Dusen  
Mayor, Village of Skokie, IL

Chicago Botanic Garden  
David Lentz, Vice President for Scientific Affairs & Senior Scientist

Faith in Place  
Rev. Clare Butterfield, Director

Episcopal Diocese of Chicago  
Bishop William Persell, President

Protestants for the Common Good  
Alexander Sharp, Executive Director

Chicago Metropolitan Association, Illinois Conference, United Church of Christ  
Rev. Michael Denton, Association Co-Minister

Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ  
Rev. Clare Overlander, Pastor

Illinois Solar Energy Association  
Mark Burger, Executive Director

Illinois Renewable Energy Association  
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Solar Service Inc.  
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On behalf of the Executive Committee,  
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Southeast Environmental Task Force  
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Gerry Weston, President

South Cook County Environmental Action  
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Lake County Conservation Alliance  
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