

We write to bring to your attention some matters regarding environmental policy and legislation in New York State which we believe would be of great interest to your church organization and require some action.

On January 22, 2018, Interfaith Climate Justice Community of Western New York met to discuss a state initiative to divest state pension funds of fossil fuel stocks. We also discussed the Climate and Community Protection Act and an accompanying bill which would impose a "polluter penalty" fee on companies that are failing to meet New York standards that will provide financing to help our state to transition to 100% renewables. The group is now embarking on a statewide campaign to ask other religious bodies and people of faith across the state to consider signing two letters:

1. A letter to NY Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, calling on him to divest its NYS public pension funds currently invested in fossil fuels.
2. A letter to Governor Cuomo asking him to support the Climate and Community Protection Act and a companion bill which would impose a "polluter penalty" fee the revenue of which will be invested to pay for clean energy infrastructure while supporting social justice communities and displaced workers.

As we launch this initiative, the letters have already been formally adopted by the Interfaith Climate Justice Community, The Presbytery of Western New York, The Interfaith Peace Network, Environmental Ministries of the United Church of Christ (National), Riverside-Salem United Church of Christ/Disciples of Christ, (Grand Island), the Environmental Task Force, United Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, Western New York Area Association and the New York State Council of Churches. These first signers, now call on every faith organization in each part of New York to sign these letters. We ask you to copy the letters on your organization's letterhead and have the letters signed by the official representative of those bodies (e.g., regional moderator, bishop, pastor, social justice committee or environmental task force chair etc.) We recognize that every religious body has its own approach and timing to signing on to such documents. Please do what will work best for you given a February 26 deadline. In addition to official organizational and local church signers, we welcome faith leaders to sign individually and identify their title and organization.

The signed letters should be sent to The Reverend Peter Cook, Executive Director of the New York State Council of Churches at 1580 Central Avenue, Albany, New York, 12205 or e-mail a PDF to [PCook@nyscoc.org](mailto:PCook@nyscoc.org). Peter will serve as our conduit to the environmental group, [350.org](http://www.nyrenews.org), which is leading the divestment campaign and to NY Renews <http://www.nyrenews.org> which is leading the Climate and Community Protector Act and "Polluter Penalty" campaigns. These two organizations are collecting hundreds of organizational letters and they will present them respectively to the Comptroller and to the Governor. For your information, we also attach talking points on the Fossil Fuel Divestment Act, back ground on the Climate and Community Protection Act and Polluter's Tax.

Peter will keep you apprised of the status of the letters and campaigns. We also need your help in reaching out to your congregations, partner judicatories, and faith leaders across the state. Please feel free to share this communication with them. The Council will coordinate with you and encourage linkages across the state.

Our target date is to have the faith organization letters signed and delivered to Peter by February 26.

If you have any questions, please e-mail Peter Cook at ([Pcook@nyscoc.org](mailto:Pcook@nyscoc.org)) or call at 508-380-8289. You also contact Roger Cook ([rogercook@wnycosh.org](mailto:rogercook@wnycosh.org)) or call at [716-773-1426](tel:716-773-1426)). Thanks, everyone, for participating in these campaigns.

Sincerely,

The Reverend Peter Cook, New York State Council of Churches  
Roger Cook, Riverside-Salem, United Church of Christ/Disciples of Christ  
Churches  
Sister Eileen O'Connor, RSM