

[EPPN Creation Care Series: Just Transitions](#)

The United States is undeniably reliant on coal and other fossil fuels for energy. This dependence has led to objective changes in the Earth's climate and the degradation of God's creation. As Christians, we are responsible for balancing the call to care for creation and to love and respect our neighbors around the world. Climate change is real and must be addressed with prompt and sound policy. The substantive change to our reliance on fossil fuels can help address worsening extreme weather, rising seas, and other manifestations of a changing climate we see today...

Addressing the climate crisis means far more than just emission reduction or mitigating environmental impacts of our energy system and economy. We are also called to love our neighbors. The only way for renewable energy to truly work is to ensure that communities reliant on the fossil fuel industries have their own transition plan and are enabled to find a good and equal economic future...

We have a moral obligation to concretely and collaboratively assist communities impacted by this transition... For many Americans, it is an existential debate about the future of jobs, the source of pensions, and the future of communities.

Currently, legislation sits in Congress that would assist in facilitating the transition of communities reliant on the fossil fuel industry, particularly in coal. [The RECLAIM Act of 2019](#) would release \$1 billion from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund to be used by the states for communities impacted by abandoned mine lands. [The American Miners Act of 2019](#) would offer support to miners and their families by protecting the pensions of the 87,000 current beneficiaries and 20,000 more who have not begun drawing from their miner's pension, and extend the Black Lung Disability Fund to ensure that healthcare and benefits are provided to the more than 20% of veteran miners affected...

The Episcopal Church [recognizes](#) the need to simultaneously implement policy to support communities reliant on the fossil fuel industry from Alaska to Appalachia and implement policy that shifts our energy system towards one more focused on renewable energy. The Church has authorized the Office of Government Relations to advocate for policy that would help minimize the disruption energy transition would have on communities in fossil fuel-dependent areas by considering the availability of quality jobs, access to vocational training, college and other educational opportunities, availability to early childhood education, access to adequate and stable housing, and other appropriate community services...

Our faithful call to care for the Earth to sustain generations to come, the New Commandment call to love one another now, and the United States' call to be one out of many require that we not leave any community to suffer.

Prayer and Reflection

May God give us the grace to heed the warnings of Jeremiah and to accept the gracious invitation of the incarnate Word to live, in, with, and through him, a life of grace for the whole world, that thereby all the earth may be restored and humanity filled with hope. Rejoicing in your works, O Lord, send us forth with your Spirit to renew the face of the earth, that the world may once again be filled with your good things: the trees watered abundantly, springs rushing between the hills in verdant valleys, all the earth made fruitful, your manifold creatures, birds, beasts, and humans, all quenching their thirst and receiving their nourishment from you once again in due season. Amen.

-From "A Life of Grace for the Whole World"

At times it is hard to decide if care for creation or care for each other is most important. How can we "quench the thirst" of creation while keeping our siblings in Christ fed and hopeful? How do we weigh the benefits to humanity resulting from more environmentally conscious policies with the costs to humanity of implementing those policies?