

FAITH COMMUNITY URGES SUPPORT FOR HOME STAR ENERGY RETROFIT ACT

May 6th, 2010

Members of Congress,

We write to you as people of faith, on behalf of the communities, members, and volunteers we represent. Our traditions teach us that we each have a responsibility to the well-being of our society and to every person in our society. During these tough economic times, too many Americans are only one job or foreclosure away from poverty. The proposed Home Star program would strengthen the American economy by creating green jobs, saving working families money, and reducing our impact on the environment.

In this time of economic crisis, we must turn our attention to the most vulnerable members of our society. The recession has created additional burdens for low-income communities already struggling with low wages, high interest rates, and inadequate health care. Home Star would stimulate an estimated 168,000 high-quality jobs over the next two years in the construction and manufacturing sectors, two industries hit hard by the recession. We urge you to ensure that the jobs created provide pathways to long-term employment for low-income workers and communities. Strong quality assurance framework for states implementing Home Star is an important first step.

The Home Star program would also help millions of homeowners save money on their energy bills by reducing their energy waste. Climate change is a significant concern for our communities, our country, and our world. Scientists predict climate change will have serious consequences for agriculture, water supplies, and human health. Low-income families will have limited capacity to respond to these new threats. The Home Star program would offer millions of homeowners up to \$8,000 in rebates for installing energy efficient technology. This would help millions of families save thousands of dollars on their electricity bills and reduce greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to removing 615,000 cars from the road.

As we work to strengthen our economy, we must consider the specific needs of rural communities. Before the economic downturn, rural economies were struggling against high rates of unemployment. Rural housing is often less energy efficient than housing in urban and suburban communities. We believe rural communities need targeted programs to that help homeowners improve their home energy efficiency and lower their electricity bills.

Every day, our organizations work to live out the values of our faith traditions. We seek to provide economic opportunity for the most vulnerable among us. But we cannot be successful alone. Our efforts must be complemented with a serious plan of action from political leaders. Programs like Home Star have the potential to create economic opportunity for American workers, save working families money, and reduce our impact on the environment.

We ask that you support and help to pass this important piece of legislation.

Respectfully,

- Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life
- The Episcopal Church
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Franciscan Action Network
- Friends Committee on National Legislation
- Green Faith
- Interfaith Power & Light
- Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center
- Jewish Council for Public Affairs
- Jewish Funds for Justice
- Massachusetts Interfaith Power and Light
- Mennonite Central Committee U.S., Washington Office.
- National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
- NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
- New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office
- Tennessee Interfaith Power and Light
- Union For Reform Judaism
- Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
- Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth
- United Church of Christ

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