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Capturing the True Cost of Carbon

By Emily Wirzba and Scott Greenler

With the United States pulling out of the Paris Agreement, discussions in Congress have increased on the need for tools to mitigate the effects of climate change. Pricing carbon emissions is one such tool but it has long been politically controversial.

At FCNL we believe that climate disruption is real and results primarily from human-caused emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG). Responsible use and right sharing of the world’s natural resources are crucial to human survival and welfare. If the U.S. were to put a price on carbon emissions, it would not be the first to do so. Other countries that have successfully enacted carbon pricing systems have seen their GHG emissions drop.

Countries involved in the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme saw an 8 percent drop in their GHG emissions over five years. Canada is set to impose a national carbon price this year. China is considering pricing its emissions.

In 2012, Australia enacted a carbon tax but repealed it two years later. Australia’s carbon emissions jumped 5.5 percent and continues to increase today.

By itself, taxing carbon emissions cannot solve climate change. However, it is a powerful tool we must consider as part of our toolbox. As the national dialogue on carbon pricing advances, FCNL’s advocacy will be guided by these principles:

Enact a Price on Carbon High Enough to Drive Reduction in Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The most important outcome for a carbon tax is the reduction of GHG emissions. The tax should aim to

reduce emissions to 80 percent below the 1990 levels by 2050. This is the widely held global standard. To achieve this, the tax must increase over time so that it is high enough to cause markets to shift toward cleaner energy. This price should be paid at the point of extraction — at the well or the mine.

Prevent “Leakage”

Leakage occurs when greenhouse gas producers move their operations to another country. An effective carbon tax must ensure that heavily polluting industries do not escape paying the tax by moving operations overseas. This could be done through the implementation of a border adjustment tax or a similar mechanism so that it reduces and does not simply displace greenhouse gas pollution.

Reporting and Transparency

To ensure we reach emissions reductions goals, measuring, reporting, and verifying should take place at both the facility and the national level. This means measuring the emissions of each power plant, factory, or waste disposal site, as well as aggregating the data nationally to determine whether the emissions reductions goals are being met or not.

(continued on p. 7)



In 2015, FCNL’s Advocacy Corps class lobbied on climate.

Viewpoint

A Noah's Ark for Congress

By Emily Wirzba

It literally takes a Noah's ark to change minds in Congress. Let me explain. When I started working at FCNL nearly five years ago, it was hard to find a Republican member of Congress who would talk publicly about climate change. However, we knew that bipartisan acknowledgement of human-caused climate change, which is already devastating communities, was essential to create the space for dialogue and action.

For years, FCNL advocates have urged Congress to acknowledge the realities of climate change and to act. We persistently asked Republican legislators questions like: What kind of world do you want to leave to your children and grandchildren? What does your own faith lead you to believe about caring for God's Creation?

The strategy worked. In 2014, then New York Republican representative, Chris Gibson, drafted a climate resolution after meeting with one of FCNL's interfaith delegations. Along with 10 other Republicans, Rep. Gibson introduced H. Res. 424, Expressing the Commitment of the House of

Representatives to Conservative Environmental Stewardship, one week before Pope Francis's September visit. The resolution acknowledges that humans are causing climate change and calls on Congress to address its effects.

The Gibson Resolution led in part to the formation of the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus (CSC) in February 2016. The caucus, founded by Reps. Carlos Curbelo (R, FL-26) and Ted Deutch (D, FL-22), adheres to a Noah's Ark principle. A member can only join the CSC together with a partner from the other party.

The CSC educates members on economically viable policy options to reduce climate risk. Just as important, it serves as a space to explore legislation to address the impacts, causes, and challenges of climate change. While joining the CSC is not our end goal, we see it as an important tool in cultivating a pro-climate bipartisan voting bloc in Congress and building trust and relationships across party lines.

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Members of the Climate Solutions Caucus, Rep. Ann Eshoo (D-CA) and Rep. Ryan Costello (R-PA), engaged in a conversation about climate change at the Quaker Welcome Center.

Reversing Environmental Injustice in Puerto Rico

Scientists say that the intensity of hurricanes has been increasing due to rising global temperatures. As the 2018 Atlantic hurricane season starts, this is ill news for Puerto Rico and other Caribbean countries that are still trying to recover from the devastation of last year's Hurricane Maria.

Maria was the strongest hurricane to hit Puerto Rico in 85 years. It caused massive power outages, \$92 billion in damages, and close to 4,600 deaths. Many of the deaths happened months after Maria hit, mainly due to the lack of access to medicine and treatment.

The government's response to the disaster, largely through the Federal Emergency Management Administration, has been sorely lacking. Aid was deployed slowly, and President Trump's offensive rhetoric toward the people and local leaders of Puerto Rico distracted from the actual recovery efforts.

Nearly a year later, the island's infrastructure is nowhere near the level of resiliency needed to weather this year's hurricanes. The problems with Puerto Rico's infrastructure are rooted in a history of oppressive colonial and economic policies there. These problems were laid bare by Hurricane Maria.

For example, 29 landfills full of coal ash and 18 superfund sites (sites contaminated by hazardous

waste) cover the island of Puerto Rico. More than half do not meet federal standards. Coal ash contains toxins that can leach into the water when not properly contained. These sites are located mostly in low-income and communities of color. Advocates warn that hurricanes like Maria will continue to increase levels of coal ash contamination in Puerto Rico's water supply.

Puerto Rico's experience with Maria provides no assurance that the U.S. will readily be able to help vulnerable populations when climate-fueled disasters strike. Ironically, Puerto Ricans use only one-third as much energy and emit less than half as much carbon dioxide per capita as the rest of the U.S. Yet, they are disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

In the wake of Maria, however, Congress has an opportunity to begin to reverse the trend of institutional racism and oppressive colonialism toward Puerto Rico. For example, in rebuilding the island's electrical grid, Congress could provide incentives to encourage climate-resilient infrastructure. This action alone will not make Puerto Rico invulnerable to climate change, or erase the history of institutional racism. It would, however, represent a first step in good faith to reverse the trend of environmental injustice in Puerto Rico. [f](#)

Change Through Comics

Joey Hartmann-Dow spent her spring residency as a Friend in Washington creating a comic book. However, *Seeks* is not an ordinary comic book.

The first issue of *Seeks*, "Climate Disruption," is grounded on one of FCNL's core goals: We seek an earth restored. It tells the story of J who, with the help of their friends, lobbies their member of Congress. The story is packed with practical advice from FCNL on how citizens can lobby.



"The residency enabled me to bring my artist self, my Quaker self, and my activist self to this project," said artist-activist Hartmann-Dow. "It was pretty cool."

She is currently working on the second of the *Seeks* series, focused on mass incarceration.

Hartmann-Dow is a member of the Leigh Valley Friends Meeting. She was an organizer in the 2015 Young Advocacy Corps.

Copies of the comic books can be ordered by calling FCNL at (202) 547-6000. [f](#)

Advocacy Corps

Advocating for Climate Change Action

Since 2015, FCNL's Advocacy Corps has connected young, local activists with their members of Congress. This annual program helps youth to develop their skills to become effective social justice advocates.

Each cohort focuses their advocacy on one particular issue that FCNL works on. The 2017-2018 Advocacy Corps focused on affecting meaningful, bipartisan action on climate change.

Over the 10 months of their work, the advocates participated in 165 lobby visits that involved getting 586 constituents into congressional offices. The group published 77 op-eds and letters to the editors in their local papers. They worked hard to engage their communities and make their voices heard in many ways.

- » Angela Nalubega brought a staff member from the office of Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) to Antioch College. The staffer talked with 37 students, faculty, and staff about protecting the environment and making climate change a national priority.

- » Corena Owens and a group of Girl Scouts spoke with Rep. David Price (D-NC-04). They asked him to join the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus and support environmental funding.
- » Morgan Mack published a letter to the editor in *Wayne County Indivisible Newsletter*, calling out the record-breaking qualities of 2017's hurricanes. He urged his representative, Luke Messer (R-IN-06), to address climate change.
- » Itzel Perez Hernandez wrote to the *Atlantic Highlands Herald* to highlight the connection between environmental issues and women's rights.
- » Benjamin Wertz advocated for Rep. Susan Brooks (R-IN-05) to co-sponsor H.R. 3681, the 2017 ARPA-E Reauthorization Act. She agreed to co-sponsor the bill due in large part to Wertz's discussions with her office.

More information about the 2017-18 Advocacy Corps can be found at fcnl.org/ac2018.



Members of the 2017-2018 Advocacy Corps gather in D.C. for FCNL's Annual Meeting.

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This summer, the 2018-2019 Advocacy Corps will begin their 10-day summer intensive training in July in Washington, DC.

The new class of advocates will be organizing their local communities to influence federal legislation that promoted the militarization of local police forces. The members of the 2018-2019 Advocacy Corps are:

- » Allie Wolfe (Durango, CO)
- » Bobby Trice (Swannanoa, NC)
- » Brinn Anderson (De Pere, WI)
- » Celina Tijerina (Fayetteville, AK)
- » Ceryn Schoel (Santa Fe, NM)
- » Chelsey Adams (Milledgeville, GA)
- » Christian Sharits (Richmond, IN)
- » Gertrude Smith (Seaside, CA)
- » Jesse Greer (Silver Spring, MD)
- » Katie Thurson (Sarasota, FL)
- » Kiarra Broadnax (Birmingham, AL)
- » Kyla L. Guion (Greensboro, NC)
- » Marcus Red Shirt/Wóun̄spe Khuwá (Lawrence, KS)
- » McLeod Abbott (Lewiston, ME)
- » Micajah Daniels (Las Vegas, NV)
- » Molly McGinty (Salisbury, MD)
- » Omar Hajajreh (Plainfield, NH)
- » RK Doering (Providence, RI)
- » Salvador Oregon-Torres (Salt Lake County, UT)
- » Sierra Cottle (Flagstaff, AZ)

More information about the 2018-19 Advocacy Corps can be found at fcnl.org/lac2019. 

Noah's Ark (from p. 2)


The growth of the CSC demonstrates that our years of grassroots lobbying is paying off. Since the 115th Congress, the caucus has grown from 20 to 84 members. With this growth, the CSC has begun to flex its political muscles.

Last year, CSC members voted against an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act, which would have prevented the Pentagon from researching and addressing climate change. Caucus members were also key in getting several renewable energy tax credits signed into law earlier this spring.

Through the Quaker Welcome Center, FCNL continues to cultivate the bipartisan space for dialogue and trust-building. In the past six months, we have hosted two bipartisan climate dialogues between CSC members. One featured Rep. Ryan Costello (PA-6) and Rep. Anna Eshoo (CA-18), and the second featured Rep. John Faso (NY-19) and Rep. Alan Lowenthal (CA-47).

We are now moving closer to a time where bipartisan climate legislation has traction, so we are shifting our focus toward proactive solutions. We are helping support bills coming out of the Climate Solutions Caucus, including the Challenges and Prizes for Climate Act (H.R. 5031), which promotes the development of innovative climate solutions at the Department of Energy, and the Transparency in Energy Production Act of 2017 (H.R. 4126), which requires the Department of the Interior to publicly disclose the amounts and sources of greenhouse gas emissions from public lands.

We are also delving deeper into more robust climate policies by asking questions like: What would a just carbon pricing system look like? How can communities most impacted by natural disasters, especially communities of color and low-income communities, become more climate resilient?

These are questions that members of Congress from both parties are also asking now. This change is in large part thanks to the persistent lobbying of FCNL advocates like you. I invite you to continue this work alongside FCNL to cultivate bipartisan support for climate action in Congress. 

Quaker Welcome Center

A Quiet But Bustling Place on Capitol Hill

Last October, FCNL opened the Quaker Welcome Center (QWC) in an adjoining townhouse. Completely renovated as a green building, the center is a cozy event space for dialogue and the promotion of peace, justice, and environmental sustainability. It is a place where we train advocates and offer a time for silent reflection.

In June, the place bustled with many programs. The center is equipped with technology that promotes participation for our network across the country.

June 7: Peace in the Korean Peninsula

The National Council of Churches USA and FCNL hosted a one-hour worship gathering before the Singapore Summit between the U.S. and North Korea. A similar worship gathering was held in Seoul by the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK).

“Peace does not spring easily,” wrote Rev. Dr. Lee Hong Jung of the NCCCK. “Thus, we desperately hope to overcome the barriers of ideology and distrust, and that this opportunity we have received once again may open the path of trust and peaceful coexistence flowing toward the stream of life, justice, and peace.”



Rev. Jimmie Hawkins (left) and Rev. Maidstone Mulenga (right) lead prayers during the Korea prayer gathering.

June 20: Creating a More Tolerant Future

Kate Weckesser English spoke about faith and action. An award-winning public school teacher, English is also the executive director of the Educator’s Institute for Human Rights (www.eihr.org).

She spoke about her work as a Quaker and as head of EIHR, which trains teachers in countries recovering from conflict in best practices on human rights, genocide prevention, and Holocaust education.

June 26: Racism in U.S. Foreign Policy

Salih Booker, executive director of the Center for International Policy (www.ciponline.org), talked about dismantling racism and other biases in U.S. foreign policy.

These institutional biases directly contribute to global inequality and conflict as the U.S. seeks to maintain its military and economic superiority. Understanding these biases is critical in achieving a more just and peaceful world.


June 27: Movie Screening: “Elder Voices”

Academy Award-winning director David Goodman screened his film, “Elder Voices: Wisdom for Our Times.” The film tells the stories of Japanese-Americans, European Jews, and conscientious objectors who came of age during the Great Depression and World War II. It addresses the political storm clouds gathering today that uncomfortably mirror those of the past.

Friend in Washington Diana Roose hosted a conversation following the screening. To learn more about the film, visit www.eldervoicesfilm.com.

You Are Always Welcome

When you come to D.C., please visit the Quaker Welcome Center for our public programs, advocacy training, or our time of silent reflection. The schedule of events is available at fcnl.org/events.

If you are unable to visit, but want to virtually attend our events, you can join us through a live stream at facebook.com/quakerlobby. 

Carbon Tax (from p. 1)

Course Correction

If the set price is not sufficiently driving down emissions, then the price should increase. For example, if the overall goal was an 80 percent emissions reduction by 2050, short-term, incremental goals should be set at 2- or 3-year intervals. If these short-term goals are not met, the price would increase, until the overall goal is met.

Protect Vulnerable Communities

The carbon tax should follow a “polluter pays” philosophy and ensure that the costs are not borne by vulnerable and low-income communities.


There are ways a carbon tax could be crafted so these communities are not harmed. For example, a portion of the carbon tax revenue could be given to low-income communities to ensure energy security.

Invest in an Affordable Clean Energy Future

Revenue from a carbon tax should also be invested in renewable energy research, development, and efficiency. This will drive emissions reductions, while creating green jobs and stimulating the economy.

Continuing Revelations

Enacting a price on carbon would be a big step forward in environmental stewardship. We recognize crafting a carbon tax requires good-faith negotiations and compromise. We encourage a collaborative bipartisan process that brings diverse voices to the table.

While there are many ways of achieving our desired outcome, we believe that these principles should be addressed in a carbon pricing bill. At FCNL we will always look for ways to support laws consistent with our values and our grounding as people of faith. 



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245 2nd Street NE
Washington, DC 20002
202-547-6000 | fcnlinfo@fcnl.org | fcnl.org
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Question & Answer with Scott Greenler

The Power of Persistent Advocacy

When did you first find FCNL as a conduit for your engagement?

In 2015, I was a junior in college, studying environmental biology. I was keenly aware of the issue of climate change and trying to find out what I could do to get involved. That year, I found out about FCNL's Spring Lobby Weekend. I was fortunate to be able to attend with a small group of students from Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado.

What was the climate "ask" you brought to Congress?

The ask that FCNL had for us that year was focused on a bill called the Promoting Resilience and Efficiency in Preparing for Attacks and Responding to Emergencies (PREPARE) Act. The PREPARE Act helps federal agencies coordinate with state and local stakeholders to better respond to natural disasters caused by extreme weather. It would not solve the climate crisis, but it would help address some of its effects. More importantly, it would prompt members of Congress to think about how extreme weather exacerbated by climate change is affecting people's lives.

If this bill won't even come close to solving the climate crisis, why advocate for it?

It's all about finding ways to get things moving in the right direction, even if it is slow. Sometimes to get someone to take a leap of faith, you first must get them to confidently take a small step. By finding ways for elected officials to consider new points of view, we get them closer to being able to enact the robust reform needed to address the climate crisis.


What happened with the PREPARE Act after Spring Lobby Weekend?

After Spring Lobby Weekend, the PREPARE Act was referred to committee, and continued to gain cosponsors. In 2014 the PREPARE Act had 17 cosponsors in the House. In 2015 that number grew to 29. After leaving Spring Lobby Weekend, I was inspired to join FCNL's Advocacy Corps to continue working on this issue. As an Advocacy

Corps organizer, I continued to advocate for the PREPARE Act. Early this year, while working as an FCNL Young Fellow, the PREPARE Act passed the House as part of the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act (H.R. 4). It awaits passage in the Senate.

What is your biggest takeaway from this work?

Watching the bill steadily gain traction and finally pass the House of Representatives reminds me that my lobbying, along with over 200 young adults at the 2015 Spring Lobby Weekend, helped influence policy. It also reminds me of the importance of persistent, respectful advocacy. Even as the U.S. pulled out of the Paris Climate Agreement and the administration continues to roll back environmental regulations, the House of Representatives can enact laws to help protect people from the effects of increasingly extreme weather. I think it is important to remember that the climate crisis won't be solved in a day. It is important to take small steps in the right direction that encourage discourse and civility, while providing a path forward.

Scott Greenler has been involved in several FCNL young adult programs focused on addressing climate change, including Spring Lobby Weekend, Advocacy Corps, and as a Young Fellow. Throughout these programs, he focused on climate change. 

From the Editor:

As the new editor of the Washington Newsletter, I am looking for ways to improve your bimonthly publication. My team started by creating new sections: Viewpoint, a Q & A, and a section about the Quaker Welcome Center. We continue to retain the thematic approach for each issue. I hope you like these tweaks. If you have any suggestions — or complaints — please call me at 202-903-2536 or email me, adlai@fcnl.org. FCNL is indeed a wonderful place to put faith into action. Thank you for your support.

Adlai Amor