



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Catholic Relief Services
Catholic Coalition on Climate Change

UPDATE: CLIMATE CHANGE LEGISLATION
August 9, 2010

SUMMARY

There will apparently be no significant Senate action on climate change this year. The lack of 60 votes and bipartisan support in the Senate has contributed to the demise of comprehensive energy and climate legislation this year. The Senate may yet consider a limited energy and oil-spill response bill this fall, but even that is not a sure thing.

Therefore, there will be no debate this year that will address the major priorities the U.S. bishops, Catholic Relief Services and our Catholic partners have advocated for in climate legislation: ensuring that climate change policies effectively protect the poor and vulnerable. Legislative proposals did address our concerns on assisting low-income consumers in this country, but failed to allocate sufficient resources to protect and assist the most poor and vulnerable people and places on earth.

LOOKING BACK: HOW DID OUR PRIORITIES FARE

Although climate legislation did not cross the finish line this year, your efforts helped establish a framework and starting point for the future. We thank the bishops, social concerns and state Catholic conference leaders who helped raise awareness about the moral dimensions of climate change and advocate for climate policies that protect the poor and vulnerable who are least responsible for contributing to climate change.

Throughout this past year, the U.S. bishops, CRS, and our Catholic and interfaith partners worked to ensure that climate legislation prioritizes the needs of poor and vulnerable people by including:

- sufficient resources that would be available for the poorest individuals and families in the U.S. to help them offset anticipated rising energy costs; and
- adequate funding for programs to help the poorest communities in the most vulnerable countries adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Of the several proposals introduced in the Senate the comprehensive Kerry-Lieberman bill took significant steps, but fell short of meeting our priorities. The American Power Act as stated in a June [letter](#) from USCCB and CRS:

- Fulfilled our domestic priority - by prioritizing the needs of low-income people in the U.S.
- Failed to meet our international priority - by delaying and providing inadequate resources to help people in poverty in the poorest countries adapt to a changing climate.

WHAT'S NEXT

When Congress takes up climate legislation in the future we will ask your assistance again to ensure that climate change policies care for God's creation and care for "the least of these."

The USCCB, CRS and our Catholic partners will engage the Administration and members of Congress about these priorities, especially why these resources are essential and what they would accomplish.

The USCCB, CRS and the CCC will also expand our efforts to reach out to Catholics about climate change and poverty through our ongoing educational campaigns.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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