

## **Congress must pursue a national carbon fee**

I loved T.J. Pignataro's News article about the pope's encyclical, clergy joining environmental groups, and teaching creation care and "tikkun olam." Local projects – eliminating plastic water bottles, solar power, LEDs, community gardens and rain barrels – are terrific. These projects instill values, teach kids lifelong skills, and kids motivate parents to modify their own behaviors.

As religious communities become informed environmentally, they'll realize that local actions are important, but global warming requires national and global coordination. The Environmental Protection Agency's regulations can help cut emissions, but not in as orderly, efficient process as required.

Businesses, investors, inventors, economists, scientists and environmental groups want Congress to enact a carbon fee to be paid by businesses producing fossil fuels. A gradually increasing fee for these fuels will encourage an orderly retirement of the dirtiest fuels, followed by less dirty fuels. Gradually we'll be weaned from fossil fuels. Without long-term national policy, chaos reigns in the form of oil price manipulations, lawsuits against regulations, and temporary, unreliable, renewable energy credits.

In December, Exxon asked Congress to tax its fuels. When a business says, "please tax us," why is Congress ignoring it? If Congress distributes the revenue to the public, consumers will be shielded from rising prices.

Religious communities should please join citizen efforts to urge Reps. Chris Collins and Brian Higgins to co-sponsor a bipartisan national carbon fee.

For more information, contact Citizens' Climate Lobby and Citizens' Climate Education Corp. CCEC just received a MacArthur Foundation grant for our work, "lobbying for the greater good."

Rabbi Judy Weiss  
Volunteer Member  
Citizens' Climate Lobby

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