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**FAITH COMMUNITIES  
GO GREEN**

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## **Two good energy bills have a chance in Lame Duck, and other grounds for hope!**

Sunday, Dec. 1, 2024

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**Dear Advocates for Creation,**

We're writing in this last month of 2024, as the days get darker, to share hope and resources you can draw on to protect life on our planet:

- Community solar and energy efficiency bills could pass in the Lame Duck session! Written testimony is due Dec. 2 by 10 am for Senate's proponent hearing Dec. 3.
- OEC webinar Dec. 12 on reducing methane emissions in Ohio, 12-1 pm.
- Discover America is All In, the climate coalition representing over half the US population.
- Share FCGG's Toolkit on incentives to make your home energy-efficient.
- NRDC ready to fight rollback of US environmental protections.
- How to access "Inside Climate News" reporting on Ohio.
- Ohio has been awarded \$16.5 billion in Infrastructure Act and IRA funding since 2021.
- Invite your congregation and colleagues to join a mighty wave of advocates.

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# Tell Ohio Senate and House Public Utilities Committee members to vote yes on community solar!

## Take action now

Sign here to send an e-mail to your elected senator and house representative AND key member of the Public Utilities Committees in the House and Senate to support HB 197 and SB 247 respectively. We encourage you to customize your message as you see fit

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**by 10 am.** We're excited to report that two bills we've encouraged you to support since 2023 will have proponent hearings in the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee in a shortened session Tuesday, Dec. 3 at 10 am.

- [SB 247](#), sponsored by Senator George Lang (R-West Chester) is the Senate version of the community solar pilot program bill passed by the Ohio House this summer. [Click here](#) to write your state Senator now to support the bill if it reaches a floor vote!
- [Sub HB 79](#), sponsored by Reps. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati) and Rose Bride Sweeney (D- Westlake), partially restores energy efficiency incentives killed by HB 6 in 2019. Participation by utilities is voluntary rather than mandatory.

Both bills have bipartisan support. There is still a chance they can pass during the Lame Duck session this month and go to Governor DeWine for his signature. **You can help immediately by writing a short letter on each bill**, giving your perspective as a faith-based vote. Submit each letter by email to the committee chair Senator Bill Reineke at [Reineke@ohiosenate.gov](mailto:Reineke@ohiosenate.gov). For each bill on which you submit testimony, please complete, save and attach a [witness slip](#).

Key points for both bills include:

- Why this matters to you as a person of faith.
- Each bill will reduce carbon and particulate emissions, slowing the havoc of climate change and protecting Ohioans- especially children - from asthma and cardiovascular disease.
- Each bill will reduce energy bills for all by reducing demand on the grid. Rising utility bills - especially as Ohio's summer heat emergencies get more and more prolonged and deadly - are a major factor in Ohio's growing affordable housing crisis.

In addition, [SB 247 promotes](#) market-driven brownfield remediation, the creation of high-paying jobs, and \$490 million in local tax revenue, according to a study by Ohio University.

Here's the format and introduction to copy and paste into your written testimony:

“Testimony by [your name] on Senate Bill \_\_

[TITLE], [ORGANIZATION IF APPLICABLE]

Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee

December 3, 2023

Chairman Reineke, Vice-Chair McColley, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on [either SB 247, Community Solar, or Sub HB 79, Energy Efficiency]. My name is [NAME], and I am [TITLE] with [ORGANIZATION if applicable].”

Then add your story and points.

**OEC Webinar Dec. 12, Methane and Ohio, 12-1 pm.** [Register here.](#)

The Ohio Environmental Council, a statewide nonprofit that works closely with Green Umbrella, will update you and lead a discussion on

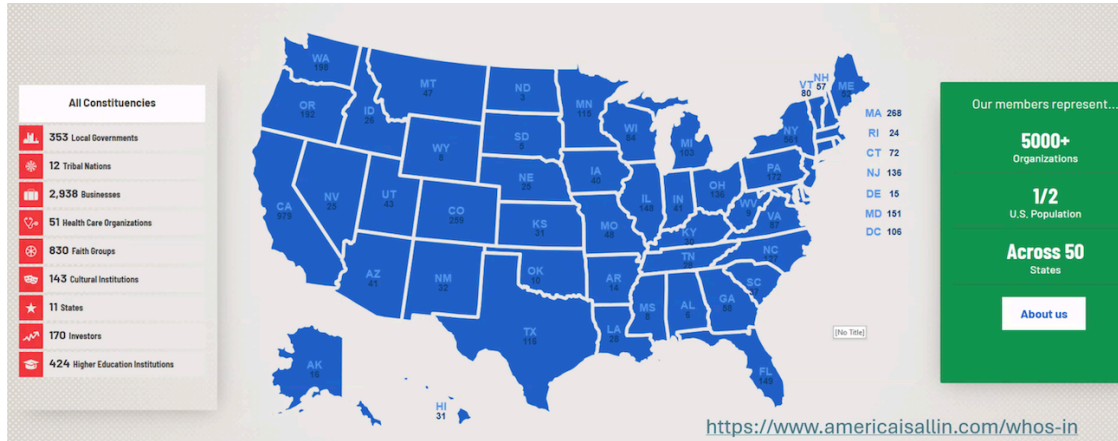
- The impact of methane emissions in our communities
- Key federal and state policies affecting our climate and economy
- Strategies for holding our politicians accountable to constituents, not fossil fuel interests
- Opportunities to get involved in Ohio's methane reduction plan

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the US population is represented by the 5,000 organizations who have joined America is All In: state and local governments, businesses, major foundations, universities, and religious organizations. All members have committed to reducing US emissions by at least 50% by 2030, and to achieve net-zero by 2050. [Read about the goals](#), and share this opportunity with your faith community, employer, and civic and professional networks.



136 members – Ohio: Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, 12 other cities; 52 faith communities  
 30 members – Kentucky: Louisville; 15 faith communities  
 41 members – Indiana: Indianapolis, Bloomington, Fort Wayne, Gary, 2+ more cities ; 16 faith communities

Click on Ohio on the [national map](#) to see who's already all-in from our state. Ohio's 139 members include Green Umbrella, the City of Cincinnati, and EarthConnection, led by FCGG Steering Committee member Sister Cj Willie, PhD. Several of Ohio's Catholic dioceses, religious orders, and parishes, plus some from other faiths, are signatories. You can help broaden that base!



**Use FCGG's toolkit on incentives to make your home energy efficient:** [Use this link to share](#) the toolkit compiled by FCGG's Education and Lifestyles Working Group on what you can do personally to reduce your emissions and household energy costs. This includes a recording of Nikki Vandivort's FCGG webinar, "Cash Incentives to Make Your Home Energy Efficient," as well as the [handbook](#) provided by Power a Clean Future Ohio: "Inflation Reduction Act Resource Hub: Resources for Ohio Residents." Held a week after the election, the webinar provided an infusion of hope and resources to increase our impact. Nikki is the FUSE Executive Fellow leading community education about clean energy and electrification for Cincinnati's Office of Environment and Sustainability. Heartfelt thanks to Nikki and FCGG Education and Lifestyles chair Becca Desai (both shown above) for organizing the webinar and the wonderful online toolkit.

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working with the Climate Action Campaign, a coalition of environmental nonprofits including EarthJustice, the Sierra Club and the Environmental Defense Fund, to defend the environmental laws and progress of the United States.

NRDC's role centers on a three-part strategy: litigation in federal courts, advocacy at every level of elected government, and enforcement of environmental law. It was really heartening to hear litigation director Mitch Bernard cite NRDC's record in the first Trump Administration: NRDC filed almost 200 lawsuits and prevailed in 90%. That includes winning in 8 of 10 appellate cases before panels with at least one Trump appointee.

Bernard acknowledged that it will be harder in this second Trump Administration, especially after the Supreme Court's ruling this year rescinding the Chevron ruling which had for decades supported environmental rule-making led by scientists in federal agencies. "We are trying to defend climate and pollution rules and the Inflation Reduction Act," he said. "The Justice Department will not defend them. We will... We need to fend off challenges to older regulations opened by the Supreme Court's reversal of the Chevron precedent."

He added that NRDC has 3.2 million members and the capacity to inform and mobilize big campaigns. 85% of the IRA's funds and 60% of the new jobs to date have gone to Republican Congressional districts. "The messenger is as important as the message," said Executive Director Manish Bapna.

That's where your voice can help. You can text NRDC to 61636 to receive text message alerts, and [click here](#) to listen to the recording of the Nov. 14 webinar. The passcode is NRDC1970!

**How to access "Inside Climate News" Ohio reporting:** "Inside Climate News" provides responsible coverage of environmental crises, solutions, and policy across the United States. ICN has an Ohio newsroom with reporters Dan Gearino and Kristoffer Tigue. You can read the posts and subscribe [here](#).

**Ohio has been awarded \$16.5 billion in federal Infrastructure and IRA funding since 2021**, reports the think tank Policy Matters Ohio. Published Nov. 20, Molly Bryden's [report](#) "Federal Investments in Climate and Clean energy Infrastructure in Ohio" describes how this money is being used for projects to lower energy costs for farmers, clean up brownfield sites and retrain workers in coal communities, and build greener infrastructure in urban neighborhoods. The impact combines good jobs with a safer, cleaner environment. Bryden's report spotlights the goal of Just Transition for historically marginalized communities, including the Justice40 Initiative which harmonizes with FCGG's Facilities Team's quest to help congregations in marginalized communities to finance energy efficiency.

**Invite your congregation and colleagues to join a mighty wave of advocates.** FCGG is thankful to be part of a fast-growing interfaith witness to protect the environment we share. Please share this invitation with your congregation and other people who know and trust you:

**Add your voice to a powerful choir:** *National and statewide nonprofits such as the NRDC, Interfaith Power and Light, and the Ohio Environmental Council are prepared to mount a vigorous defense of the conditions essential to life on our planet. As people of faith, your first-hand stories and your values add power and credibility to the rising chorus of people working to prevent the rollback of climate action and environmental safety regulations, and to make the case that environmental sustainability is a winning strategy for all of us.*

*[Faith Communities Go Green](#), a collaboration of Green Umbrella and the interfaith coalition EquaSion, welcomes you to join us in learning and taking action to protect the environment we share with all terrestrial life. The FCGG advocacy team will email you about informative webinars and opportunities to advocate for responsible public policy. Please fill out [this form](#) to join Faith Communities Go Green's rapid response team working to bend the arc of federal and state policy towards environmental justice.*

As always, we encourage you to share news and resources by writing to us at [advocacy@fcgg.org](mailto:advocacy@fcgg.org).

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Yours faithfully,  
Ted Bergh and Ariel Miller, Advocacy Co-Chairs, Faith Communities Go Green

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