

**Southeastern Iowa Synod
March 1, 2021**

**Resolution
ELCA Advocacy Support for the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act**

WHEREAS, God created heaven and earth and everything therein and proclaimed it good (Gen 1:1ff); and God has entrusted humankind with the care of the earth (Gen 2:15); and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has adopted social policy statements, “Caring for Creation” (1993) and “Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood” (1999) that call for economic and environmental justice, to protect the health and integrity of creation both for its own sake and for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations, and for economic justice, to consider how our actions affect the ability of all people to provide for their material needs and the needs of their families and communities; and

WHEREAS, in 1993 with the Caring for Creation social statement, we realized the urgency was already “widespread and serious, according to the preponderance of evidence from scientists worldwide [of] dangerous global warming, caused by the buildup of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide” from the burning of fossil fuels, and that “action to counter degradation, especially within this decade, is essential to the future of our children and our children’s children. Time is very short;” and

WHEREAS, carbon pricing is one policy tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel combustion, which complements other tools like regulations on polluting industries and tax incentives encouraging investment in energy efficiency and renewable forms of energy production; and

WHEREAS, in January 2019, over 3,500 of our nation’s leading economists across the political spectrum, including 28 Nobel Laureates and 4 former chairs of the Federal Reserve, issued a joint “Economists’ Statement on Carbon Dividends” that argued “A carbon tax offers the most cost-effective lever to reduce carbon emissions at the scale and speed that is necessary,” but also recommended “the revenue should be returned directly to U.S. citizens through equal lump-sum rebates,” and concluded “The majority of American families, including the most vulnerable, will benefit financially by receiving more in ‘carbon dividends’ than they pay in increased energy prices;”¹ and

WHEREAS, in 2019 the Churchwide Assembly received with gratitude a memorial from the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin regarding a Carbon Fee and Dividend, and the Church Council directed the Domestic Mission unit to develop “a plan that promotes educational resources on

¹ Climate Leadership Council, [“Economists Statement on Carbon Dividends,”](#) January 17, 2019.

Carbon Fee and Dividend to assist in forming the basis for any potential advocacy strategy;² and

WHEREAS, in October 2019 ELCA Advocacy published a primer on “Carbon Pricing Basics” that provides an overview to the topic and identifies several principles rooted in ELCA social statements that “can move us toward the pressing goal of reduced GHG emissions and just application of that [carbon] pricing or policy”;³ and

WHEREAS, the “Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019”⁴ has received bipartisan support in the last two sessions in Congress and is broadly consistent with the following principles outlined in ELCA Advocacy’s “Carbon Pricing Basics” primer:

- Any carbon tax must be structured to respect the jeopardy of vulnerable populations and those living in poverty.
- Any carbon pricing mechanism must not be fiscally regressive but rather must respect vulnerable populations and those living in poverty.
- Emissions targets should be consistent with credible science and with the IPCC special report’s directive that global warming be kept at 1.5 degrees Celsius or less.
- An adjustment mechanism should be included in case the emissions targets are not being met.
- Federal agencies should not be prohibited from proposing new regulations on GHGs if such regulations are needed.
- An effective carbon tax must be applied to as many sectors as possible. Because of the global nature of the problem, border issues and trade policies must also be considered in designing the tax, so that problems aren’t remedied through workarounds.
- The process for identifying problems and implementing solutions in a carbon tax should be participatory and transparent for all stakeholders.
- The pricing mechanism itself should be transparent and accountable to government authority to ensure that goals are being met.
- Portions of the revenue collected should be used to invest in worker transition, community resilience and renewable energy, with priority given to helping all communities adapt and become more resilient.
- Transparency and accountability should be built into the pricing mechanism.
- The mechanism for awarding rebates to individuals/households should reach the most vulnerable, regardless of income or citizenship.
- Existing environmental and climate change protections should not be rolled back.

WHEREAS, ELCA Advocacy does advocate for particular pieces of legislation after careful review and moral grounding in the ELCA’s social statements; therefore be it

² [Report of Actions of the Church Council \(November 12-14, 2020\)](#).

³ ELCA Advocacy, [“Carbon Pricing Basics,”](#) October 2019.

⁴ [H.R. 763, Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019](#).

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod urges ELCA Advocacy to advocate for the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, or similar legislation during the 117th United States Congress and, if necessary, future Congresses; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod thanks the ELCA Church Council for receiving this resolution at their next meeting, and requests the Council or its Executive Committee to forward this resolution to ELCA Advocacy with encouragement to advocate for the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act or similar legislation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod encourages congregations in our synod to utilize “Carbon Pricing Basics” in adult education offerings; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod rededicates itself to care for creation and to advocate for social and environmental justice, using the resources of Lutherans Restoring Creation (lutheransrestoringcreation.org) and other organizations.

Signed by:
Jamie McCoy