

"If we consider that emissions per individual in the United States are about two times greater than those of individuals living in China, and about seven times greater than the average of the poorest countries, we can state that a broad change in the irresponsible lifestyle connected with the Western model would have a significant long-term impact. As a result, along with indispensable political decisions, we would be making progress along the way to genuine care for one another."

Pope Francis, Laudate Deum, 72

ECOLOGY BACKGROUND

2025 IGNATIAN ADVOCACY MADNESS

CURRENT REALITY

[Scientific consensus](#) agrees that humans burning fossil fuels has increased the temperature of the earth's surface and is causing widespread impacts on global systems. With continual record-setting temperatures, an extreme rise in ocean temperatures, and an increase in the frequency and intensity of floods, forest fires, and other natural disasters worldwide, we know that immediate political action can be taken to secure a livable and sustainable future for all. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) 2023 [AR6 Synthesis Report](#), **"The choices and actions implemented in this decade will have impacts now and for thousands of years"** (C.1).

The United States is historically the most significant contributor of human-generated greenhouse gas emissions that drive global warming and is currently the [second largest emitter of carbon dioxide](#) annually. As a result, the U.S. must play a leading role in greenhouse gas emission reductions.

WHAT OUR FAITH TEACHES

A Catholic response to ecological injustice and climate change places care for creation and care for our sisters and brothers who are most vulnerable to environmental harm at the center of its response. At the heart of [Laudato Si'](#) is a call for integral ecology and a call to turn away from a throwaway culture and economy of exclusion. We must recognize that growing consumption and demand for fossil fuels in the global north is leading to increasing intensification of weather patterns such as drought, flood, and natural disasters that are hurting people living in the United States, along with our sisters and brothers around the world.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Environmental and climate change policy in the U.S. finds itself at a critical moment in history. In August 2022, the 118th Congress passed the [Inflation Reduction Act of 2022](#) (IRA), a historic piece of legislation that invested in reducing U.S. carbon emissions, with a goal of a [40% reduction by 2030](#). The bill's \$369 billion in climate funding was the largest climate investment in U.S. history.

Less than three years later, we find ourselves in a different political landscape. Since taking office, President Trump has [issued multiple executive orders](#) that reverse recent progress to address climate change, including pulling the United States out of the Paris Climate Agreement, disrupting climate funding from the IRA and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and expanding offshore drilling.

As the 119th Congress begins, it will be focused on budget [reconciliation](#), a special legislative process that can quickly advance high-priority legislation related to taxes, spending, and the debt limit. This process can cut funding for essential programs, and one of the major environmental concerns during this period is that funding promised during the passage of the IRA could be rolled back.

Beyond reconciliation, it is critical that legislators understand our changing climate and the human causes behind it. The government must play an important role in addressing the cause and consequences of climate change and protecting clean water, land, and air for all people.

ECOLOGY TALKING POINTS

IGNATIAN ADVOCACY MADNESS

ASK: In the coming months, as you consider legislation and make funding decisions through the budget reconciliation process, we respectfully ask that the Senator/Representative:

- provided meaningful solutions to climate change by publicly supporting and passing legislation significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- protect funding for the climate, clean energy, and environmental justice programs passed in the Inflation Reduction Act, reject any proposals to roll back these IRA programs, and vote against the inclusion of cuts to the IRA.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

The most impactful part of any advocacy meeting will be personal sharing. You are a future voter, and the more effective you are at articulating your concerns about the issue, the more impactful your meeting will be. Personalize the issue by sharing your story or the story of someone you know directly affected by climate change, natural disasters, or pollution of the water, land, or air. Or simply share why you are concerned about this issue and would like to see the legislator take action. Use the group reflection questions below to help plan your personal testimony.

Group Reflection Questions:

Use the questions below to help you plan which stories you might share during your meeting. Keep them simple and personal.

- Why is this issue important to you?
- How has climate change (such as increased temperatures, an increase or decrease in rainfall, or wildfires) affected you, your community, or someone you know?
 - Examples:
 - We can't have soccer practice outside in August because of increasing temperatures.
 - The number of days in school has been affected by wildfire smoke.
- How has pollution of water, land, or air affected you, your community, or someone you know?
 - Examples:

- We have high rates of asthma in our community because of the location of the industry.
 - Share a story you have learned about how people are increasingly vulnerable on a warming planet.
- What does the world you would like to live in look like in the next 20-30 years? How can policies that support a clean environment, carbon emissions reductions, and renewable energy create that world? What can your legislator do to make this vision come true?

QUESTIONS FOR THE LEGISLATOR:

Advocacy meetings are an opportunity to create a dialogue with the legislator's office. While it is important for you to share your concerns, it is equally important to ask questions that allow the legislator to share their perspective and how they plan to address your concerns.

- Example Questions:
 - How has the Congressperson supported legislation that responds to the realities of a warming planet?
 - What does the legislator plan to do to address the impacts of climate change?
 - What does the legislator plan to do to reduce carbon emissions?

Research your legislator's voting history, and consider asking more specific questions about past or future legislation. Your honest questions for the legislator will be the most impactful.