



COP24 Presiding Bishop's delegation of The Episcopal Church responds to U.S. decision to "note" the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report

Katowice, Poland
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The Episcopal Church delegation representing the Presiding Bishop at the United Nations' 24th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24) calls on the United States federal government and its delegation to COP24 to welcome, formally and substantively, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2018 report and commit to the urgent climate action needed to avoid unprecedented global suffering. In doing so, the United States will help the world to reach a sustainable life, which we, as Christians see as in alignment with God's purposes for humanity and the creation.

The Episcopal Church through its governing body, the General Convention, has officially endorsed evidence-based policy in general, and has embraced the Paris Agreement and the Nationally Determined Contribution for the United States with the goal of holding global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, as in the IPCC report.

We agree with St. Kitts and Nevis delegate Rueanna Haynes who said, "This is not a choice between one word and another" (Joshua Hill, *Clean Technica*, December 10, 2018). Within the United Nations and its processes, to "welcome" a report is to accept its validity and legitimacy, and within this context it means the science and urgency of the report would be fully considered in the rules being negotiated at this Conference of Parties. By "noting" rather than "welcoming" the IPCC report, the US government signals a lack of support for the science and urgent actions.

The reason the U.S. has joined with Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Russia to block the language of "welcome" regarding the IPCC's report is in part due to the report's inclusion of policy statements and recommendations such as, "limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society."

In contrast to the IPCC report, the National Climate Assessment, a U.S. government-produced report, does not contain specific policy recommendations, despite the extensive information in the report about the observable dangers of unchecked climate change.

Additionally, *The Washington Post* brought forward on September 28, 2018, a report regarding a 500-page Environmental Impact Report, or impact statement, issued by the U.S. Administration. This impact statement is in accord with the National Climate Assessment findings - huge temperature rises by the end of the century, and attendant climate chaos and suffering. The impact statement also acknowledges that climate change is human-caused. Unlike the National Climate Assessment, however, there is a startling and disturbing policy recommendation: The Administration will stay on course. The report claims that climate mitigation strategies such as



vehicle emissions standards would not affect the outcome enough to justify their supposed economic cost. The Administration uses the difficulty of a comprehensive solution to justify carrying on with its juggernaut course to disaster.

“The amazing thing they’re saying is human activities are going to lead to this rise of carbon dioxide that is disastrous for the environment and society. And then they’re saying they’re not going to do anything about it,” said Michael MacCracken, who served as a senior scientist at the U.S. Global Change Research Program from 1993 to 2002 (Juliet Elperin, Brady Dennis, and Chris Mooney, *The Washington Post*, September 28, 2018).

“The Episcopal Church is present in more than 15 member states of the United Nations, including the United States, and is part of the global Anglican Communion. Within the Episcopal Church we are experiencing great suffering whose origin can in part be traced to the early expressions of climate change: the worst wildfires California has experienced in more than a century; drought and heat in Central America that has fomented poverty and violence, and has been the origin of migrants making their way to the United States southern border; rising sea levels displacing coastal communities in Alaska, Louisiana and the Pacific Ocean; and monstrous storms destroying lives and property in the Caribbean. The delegation representing the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church carries with it these stories of loss and damage, and our common life and mutual love impels us in our advocacy for urgent climate action,” says the head of the delegation Bishop Marc Andrus.

For more information during COP24, contact our delegates:

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