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November 5, 2009

United States Senate
Committee on Environment and Public Works
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, we welcome the consideration of *S. 1733, The Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act*, and the leadership of Chairmen Kerry and Boxer in moving this legislation forward. Consideration of this legislation by the Environment and Public Works Committee begins a serious and overdue effort to face up to moral, environmental, and human dimensions of global climate change. While we are encouraged to see provisions in the legislation that protect the poor and vulnerable at home and abroad, we are deeply concerned that the level of funding for these provisions is inadequate and must be improved, particularly the resources for international adaptation to help the poorest countries and people around the world.

For the United States Catholic bishops and for many others in the faith community, we are called to care for creation and for “the least of these.” We believe that a fundamental moral measure of climate change legislation is how the poor—in our own country and around the world—are affected. Without effective action by the Senate which upholds this moral requirement, the poorest and most vulnerable communities and people, who contribute least to the problem and have the least capacity to deal with its effects, will continue to suffer the most from climate change. As the bishops wrote in their statement, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good*:

Action to mitigate global climate change must be built upon a foundation of social and economic justice that does not put the poor at greater risk or place disproportionate and unfair burdens on developing nations.

We are pleased to see provisions that protect low-income individuals and families in the United States from potential increases in energy prices resulting from the legislation. Unfortunately, the Senate bill provides about one-sixth less funding than the House bill does for assistance to low-income families and individuals, and falls short of what is needed to fund fully the low-income protections in the House bill. As the Senate moves forward with this legislation, a major priority should be to ensure that low-income people receive the resources and assistance they need. We will actively support efforts to increase funding for these provisions and to ensure that vehicles for delivering these resources to those most in need are both adequate and effective.

We also welcome provisions that provide adaptation assistance for poor and vulnerable populations internationally. **However, we are deeply disappointed that the funding resources committed to international adaptation fall fundamentally short of what is needed.** A

significant increase in initial funding, followed by a faster ramp-up of these resources, is crucial to ensure that the world's most vulnerable people and nations can respond to the impacts of climate change that would otherwise devastate those living in poverty. Expanded resources would also send an essential message of U.S. commitment to exercise international leadership in shaping an effective global agreement.

We believe that an allocation equivalent to \$3.5 billion annually, starting in 2012, and moving rapidly toward \$7 billion annually by 2020, is needed. This figure is based on estimates by the Framework Convention on Climate Change. The needs already being seen by Catholic Relief Services and other relief and development agencies on the ground justify this level of funding. We will continue to work with Senators Kerry, Boxer, and others to fulfill our common goal of substantially greater funds for international adaptation. However, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Charities USA, and Catholic Relief Services cannot support the current legislation, since it falls fundamentally short of a central moral criterion for climate change legislation: adequate resources for mitigating and adapting to climate change for the poorest people and nations. Without these needed resources, poor persons who have contributed the least to this problem will suffer the most from climate change and its remedies.

As the legislative process proceeds, we look forward to working with Congress and the Administration to ensure that needed climate legislation both cares for creation and protects "the least of these" in our own nation and around the world.

Sincerely yours,



Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard
Bishop of Albany
Chairman,
Committee on International
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Fr. Larry Snyder
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