

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-A098
Title: Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation
Proposer: Task Force on Imagining a Church Grounded in Social Justice as Christian Ministry
Topic: Environment

Directly Related: (Attached)

2022-A087 Commit to Net Carbon Neutrality by 2030
2022-A088 Re-Commit to Addressing Global Climate Change and Environmental Justice
2022-A089 Divest from Fossil Fuel Companies and Invest in Renewable Energy
2018-A020 Divest From Fossil Fuel Companies and Reinvest in Clean Energy
2015-C045 Call for Investing in Clean and Renewable Energy
2012-B023 Seek Environmental Justice
2012-D055 Advocate for Reducing Climate-Changing Emissions

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

2018-D081 Call for Community Development Efforts and Government Policy Initiatives to Address Transition to Clean Energy

Supplemental Documents: (Linked)

Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, [Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty](#), 2021.

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2022, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#).

A098 - Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Task Force on Imagining a Church Grounded in Social Justice as Christian Ministry

Has Budget Implications: Yes

Cost: \$40,000.00

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Requests New Interim Body: No

Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib: No

Directs Dfms Staff: No

Directs Dioceses: Yes

Directs Executive Council: No

HiA: No House Assigned

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: No Committee Assigned

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 81st General Convention authorize Provinces, Dioceses, Congregations, and all other institutions of The Episcopal Church to recognize the efforts of the COP 28 [Conference of the Parties (COP)] regarding fossil fuel non-proliferation and to begin the process of planning in support of this work as reiterated by The Executive Council of the Episcopal Church in October 2023; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention reiterate its engagement in the work of The Episcopal Church, and international organizations to which it is connected, to turn back the effects of climate change and environmental degradation, recognizing the urgent, concentrated action in this present moment that is needed to prevent the suffering of life on this planet, in the near term and the future; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention acknowledge the work of the nations of Vanuatu and Tuvalu, along with other Pacific Island nations, to forge the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, which has been endorsed by the World Health Organization and the European Parliament, along with thousands of civil society organizations and individuals committed to the mitigation of climate change and the factors that contribute to it; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention recognize that the Treaty is calling the people of the world not just to make technical adjustments to negative impacts on the planet, but to transform lives by phasing out fossil fuel production and the reliance on fossil fuels by the parties to the Paris Accords; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention endorse the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty as it is set before the United Nations Climate Summit, held in Dubai in December, 2023; and be it further

Resolved, That Provinces, Dioceses, Congregations, and all other institutions of The Episcopal Church be strongly encouraged to create a plan for phasing out fossil fuels over the next 10 years, post the plan on its websites, present an annual update report at the annual meeting of the diocese and/or ministry, and provide plan and annual updates to the Office of Creation Care; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention requests the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance to consider a budget allocation (excluding meeting expense already in GCO budget) of \$40,000 to primarily address the development of website updates, forms development, and identify staff support the implementation of this resolution.

Explanation

The Episcopal Church has consistently, through past General Convention resolutions, stayed abreast, even taken leadership positions, with respect to advocacy in climate change and environment. The Episcopal Church, in keeping with our following a living Christ, rather than calling to mind a Jesus who visited us once in the past, is a learning, evolving body. Thus, as the latest climate change science and the results of the 2023 Global Stock take have demonstrated, it is no longer sufficient to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we must phase out the use of fossil fuels.

The call to phase out fossil fuels originated in 2023 with seven Pacific island nations, nations who are already experiencing the leading edge of climate change. The call took the form of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. The Executive Council of the Episcopal Church passed a resolution in November of 2023 that endorsed the aims of the treaty, allowing the Presiding Bishop's delegation to COP 28 [Conference of the Parties (COP)] to use the treaty in its policy platform.

By way of background, the meeting purpose of COP is authorized through the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The United Nations Climate Change Conferences serve as the formal meeting of the UNFCCC parties – the Conference of the Parties (COP) – to assess progress in dealing with climate change, and beginning in the mid-1990s, to negotiate the Kyoto Protocol to establish legally binding obligations for developed countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. These annual meetings serve to further negotiations and obligations of the various treaties and protocols which create a general path towards climate action. Any final text of a COP must be agreed by consensus. (1)

The embrace of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and its core goal - the phase out of fossil fuels - by the 81st General Convention will provide an even stronger basis for our Church's advocacy around this essential goal.

(1) Retrieved from

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Climate_Change_conference



Resolution Number: 2022-A087
Title: Commit to Net Carbon Neutrality by 2030
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church commit to a goal of net carbon neutrality in its operations and the work of staff, standing commissions, interim bodies, and General Convention by 2030, through a combination of reducing emissions from travel, reducing energy use, increasing energy efficiency in buildings, and purchasing offsets from duly investigated, responsible, and ethical partners; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention encourage the Presiding Bishop's staff to take concrete actions to reduce fossil fuel emissions from travel by said groups, such as through online meetings or regional gatherings; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention encourage the Presiding Bishop's staff to draft a policy to offset one hundred percent of fossil fuel emissions from unavoidable travel by said groups, either through an internal offset program or through purchase from duly investigated, responsible, and ethical partners, with appropriate accountability and oversight; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$70,000 per year for the implementation of this resolution, taken from existing travel budgets, in order to offset approximately 3500 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (the average annual travel emissions of said groups from previous years) at a rate of \$20 per ton; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention encourage the Presiding Bishop's staff to establish an internal offset program including such activities as carbon forestry and regenerative agriculture, with appropriate oversight to ensure that the program meet the five commonly accepted traits of responsible offset programs: real, permanent, verifiable, additional, and enforceable; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$25,000 to establish this internal offset program, comprising \$15,000 to cover wages and benefits for a part-time Offset Specialist and \$10,000 for implementation and promotion of the program; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention encourage parishes, dioceses, schools, camps, and other Episcopal institutions to pursue their own goal of net carbon neutrality by 2030 through a combination of reducing emissions from travel, reducing energy use, increasing energy efficiency in buildings, and purchasing offsets from duly investigated, responsible, and ethical partners; and be it further

Resolved, that the General Convention request the diocesan bishops of every diocese to begin to build networks of landowners and creation trustees in each diocese who will devote portions of their land to reforestation, prairie restoration, wetland and coastland preservation; adopt and share regenerative agricultural and ranching practices; collaborate with neighboring dioceses for best water practices to protect our watersheds; collaborate on creative means of distributing food; and pray for future generations dependent on the land and water we steward; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church support and advocate for the subsistence rights of Indigenous people and policies that protect and preserve land and resources solely for subsistence use; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention encourage the Presiding Bishop's staff to develop and share resources for parishes and dioceses to commit to and work toward this goal, such as the online carbon tracker already created by the Diocese of California, as well as other online and print resources; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$50,000 to fund the development and promotion of these resources.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), pp. 545-546.



Resolution Number: 2022-A088
Title: Re-Commit to Addressing Global Climate Change and Environmental Justice
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention recognize as the Episcopal Church's position that global climate change is not only a scientific concern or environmental issue, but what the United Nations calls "the defining issue of our time... at a defining moment" (UN Secretary General, September 10, 2018), an all-encompassing social crisis and moral emergency that impacts and interconnects every aspect of pastoral concern including health, poverty, employment, racism, social justice, and family life and that can only be addressed by a Great Work involving every sector of society, including the Church; and affirm the commitment of the 79th General Convention to the House of Bishops' 2011 Pastoral Teaching on the Environment as an official position of the church; and be it further

Resolved, That the Church recommit to the work done by previous General Conventions of The Episcopal Church on the pressing moral dimensions of global climate change and environmental justice, including resolutions 2000-D005, 2012-B023, 2015-C013, 2015-C045, 2018-A011, 2018-A018, 2018-A020, 2018-B027, 2018-C020, 2018-C021, and 2018-C064; and that General Convention reaffirm that the Episcopal Church shall support and advocate for policies, programs, pastoral responses, and theologies that work to ensure no community - especially financially impoverished communities, frontline residents, migrants, and BIPOC communities (Black, indigenous, and people of color) - shall bear a disproportionate impact of the environmental, health, and economic threats of climate change; and be it further

Resolved, That General Convention affirm the decision of the United States federal government to rejoin the Paris Climate Accord, while recognizing that the goals set forth in the Paris Accord are only a first step, insufficient in and of themselves to fully contain rising global temperatures and their impacts; and that General Convention encourage the Presiding Bishop's staff to continue, through our ongoing role as observers at the United Nations, to participate in all meetings of the Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change during the next triennium via delegations selected from an applicant pool and made up primarily of Episcopalians from financially impoverished communities, frontline locations, and BIPOC communities; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$30,000 per triennium to support costs associated with travel to the COP conferences by delegation members who are not members of the Presiding Bishop's staff; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church direct the Office of Government Relations and the Episcopal Public Policy Network to advocate for legislation and other public policies that directly address the impact of climate change among marginalized, indigenous, and frontline communities and that tangibly and financially assist those communities with the costs of both climate change and mitigation, and policies that prohibit the authorization and construction of new fossil fuel infrastructure including but not limited to coal, oil, or gas leases on public lands, all forms of mountaintop removal mining, and tar sands pipelines such as Keystone XL, Enbridge Line #3, and the Dakota Access Pipeline; and be it further

Resolved, That General Convention encourage all Church communities, especially parishes, dioceses, camps, conference centers, schools, and chaplaincies, to learn more about the pressing moral implications of climate change in their regions and existing local organizing efforts, then advocate for policies and solutions to address those local needs utilizing and adapting advocacy resources from General Convention and the Presiding Bishop's staff including the Episcopal Public Policy Network, asset map, carbon tracker, liturgical resources, and advocating at the local and state level, and incorporating local nature, environmental justice, and advocacy for creation care into all aspects of community life and Christian education.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), pp. 546-547.



Resolution Number: 2022-A089
Title: Divest from Fossil Fuel Companies and Invest in Renewable Energy
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention, affirming resolution 2015-C045 and 2018-D081, direct the Episcopal Church to continue to divest all funds from fossil fuel companies and mutual funds including fossil fuel companies, including but not limited to natural gas, oil, coal, and fracking, by 2025 and that these divested funds be reinvested in renewable energy funds and that no fossil fuels funds be purchased in the future; and be it further

Resolved, That dioceses and congregations continue to explore the moral and ethical benefits of divesting from fossil fuel and reinvesting in renewable energy and support their fund managers to act on divestment and reinvestment; and be it further.

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention, also affirming resolution 2018-D081 and recognizing that many of our communities and congregations have been grown and sustained by fossil fuel industries, urge a pastoral and practical approach to just transition to new economies, and direct the Episcopal Church staff to form partnerships with existing just transition organizations to support our dioceses and congregations; and be it further

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention urge the Church Pension Fund (CPF) to be mindful of the Church's desire to become increasingly invested in renewable and clean energy; and be it further

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention request that the Church Pension Fund provide a report that includes a sustainability plan to the 81st General Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention direct the Office of Governmental Relations to advocate for and support public policies that support a just transition for fossil fuel dependent communities.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), p. 454.



Resolution Number: 2018-A020
Title: Divest From Fossil Fuel Companies and Reinvest in Clean Energy
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention call upon the Investment Committee of the Executive Council to report to Executive Council all steps taken in the past triennium to divest from fossil fuel companies and reinvest in clean renewable energy in a fiscally responsible manner in accordance with General Convention resolution 2015-C045; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention reaffirm the language of resolution GC2015-C045 urging all institutions, dioceses, and congregations of the Episcopal Church to engage the topic of divestment from fossil fuels and reinvestment in clean energy and encourage them to share progress toward this goal with the Executive Council and the Advisory Council on the Stewardship of Creation; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention commend the Church Pension Fund for its passion in responding to climate change and for its statement “This does not mean that we would never divest; to do so, however, we would have to believe that divesting would not negatively impact the financial performance of our portfolio” (CPF Report to the House of Deputies, November 2, 2017, page 6); and be it further

Resolved, That in light of this statement, that the General Convention urge CPF to be mindful of the Church’s desire to become increasingly invested in renewable and clean energy; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request that the Church Pension Fund provide a report that includes a sustainability plan to the 80th General Convention.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), pp. 1095-1096.



Resolution Number: 2015-C045
Title: Call for Investing in Clean and Renewable Energy
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention of the Episcopal Church welcomes the release of the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed carbon rule for existing power plants; and be it further

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention calls upon the Investment Committee of the Executive Council, the Episcopal Church Endowment Fund, and the Episcopal Church Foundation to divest from fossil fuel companies and reinvest in clean renewable energy in a fiscally responsible manner; and be it further

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention calls on the Investment Committee of the Executive Council, the Episcopal Church Endowment Fund, and the Episcopal Church Foundation to refrain from purchasing any new holdings of public equities and corporate bonds of fossil fuel companies; and be it further

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention urges all dioceses and parishes of the Episcopal Church to engage the topic of divestment from fossil fuels and reinvestment in clean energy within the coming year.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 879-880.



Resolution Number: 2012-B023
Title: Seek Environmental Justice
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention of The Episcopal Church stands in solidarity with those communities who bear the greatest burdens of global climate change: indigenous peoples, subsistence communities, communities of color, and persons living in deprivation around the world; and be it further

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention calls on congregations, institutions, dioceses, and the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of The Episcopal Church to support policies that provide tangible benefits to overburdened “frontline” communities (those already experiencing the impacts of climate change) and “fence-line” communities (those suffering in body and spirit for their proximity to the extraction and processing of fossil fuels); and be it further

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention calls on congregations, institutions, dioceses, and the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of The Episcopal Church, to work for the just transformation of the world’s energy beyond and away from fossil fuels (including all forms of oil, coal, and natural gas) and toward safe, sustainable, renewable, community controlled energy, and that fossil fuel workers and their families be supported during the transition to a “post-carbon” society; and be it further

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention calls on congregations, institutions, dioceses, and the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of The Episcopal Church to resist the development and expansion of ever more unconventional, dangerous, and environmentally destructive sources of fossil fuel and move toward conversion to more sustainable sources; and be it further

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention calls on congregations, institutions, dioceses and the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of The Episcopal Church to support the self-determined aspirations of communities around the world, who, like the Iñupiaq Community of Kivalina, Alaska, having emitted minimal amounts of carbon and having received negligible material benefit from fossil fuel consumption, nevertheless bear the brunt of climate-change impacts; and be it further

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention calls on congregations, institutions, dioceses and the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of The Episcopal Church, including Episcopal Relief and Development, to support the implementation of grassroots, community-based solutions to climate change, including, but not limited to, adaptations to improve local resilience, to build local food sovereignty, to support ecological restoration and economic re-localization.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), p. 324.



Resolution Number: 2012-D055
Title: Advocate for Reducing Climate-Changing Emissions
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention of the Episcopal Church urge the United States government to enact stricter controls on the use of carbon-based fuels, and create incentives for our nation's transitions from dependence upon fossil fuels to safe, clean, renewable energy and thereby curb emissions of heat-trapping gasses into the atmosphere; and be it further
Resolved, That this Convention encourage every member of The Episcopal Church to urge his/her members of Congress to enact such legislation.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), p. 299.