

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-D029
Title: Commit to the 30x30 Initiative for Biodiversity
Proposer: White, The Rev. Deborah
Topic: Church Property, Environment

Directly Related: (Attached)

2018-D053 Call for Model Policies for Sustainable Church Land Use
1994-D062 On the Topic of Biodiversity and Natural Habitats (Rejected)

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

2022-A087 Commit to Net Carbon Neutrality by 2030

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](#).

D029 - Commit to the 30x30 Initiative for Biodiversity

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: White, The Rev. Deborah

Endorsed by: Metoyer, The Rev. Eric M. M., Lawton, Ms. Sarah

Supported by: Creation Care Caucus

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Requests New Interim Body: No

Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib: No

Directs Dfms Staff: Yes

Directs Dioceses: Yes

Directs Executive Council: Yes

HiA: No House Assigned

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: No Committee Assigned

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: Yes

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 81st General Convention direct Provinces, Dioceses, Congregations, and all other institutions of The Episcopal Church to adopt the 30x30 target in the report from the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (also known as The Biodiversity Plan), to ensure 30% of land and water are conserved by 2030; and be it further

Resolved, That in order to support the 30x30 target goals, dioceses and congregations seek to collaborate with local communities, including other faith-based advocacy groups, non-profit organizations, and local and state governments to establish effective and responsible methods of land management; and be it further

Resolved, That Episcopal Church leaders making decisions about church properties routinely and comprehensively consider the environmental repercussions of decisions about local and diocesan properties. Such decisions may include prioritizing native plant species to reduce irrigation needs and encourage pollinators; transforming open grass lawns into native plant meadows; and seeking to use environmentally friendly products and services in

performing buildings and grounds upkeep (such as halting use of gas-powered leaf blowers and lawn mowers and environmentally toxic chemicals); and be it further

Resolved, That those who implement these practices and policies for protection and promotion of biodiversity report such efforts by submitting them to the Creation Care website (<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/creation-care/>) thereby providing usable information and templates for Congregations, Dioceses, Provinces, and the Creation Care ministry of the Episcopal Church.

Explanation

“God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear and dread of you shall rest on every animal of the earth and on every bird of the air, on everything that creeps on the ground and on all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered’” (Genesis 9: 1-2).

God gave the stewardship of creation into our hands. The dual crises of climate change and mass wildlife extinctions threaten to forever change God’s beautiful creation unless we act decisively. The Episcopal Church identifies Creation Care as a critical goal that protects God’s creation. This objective is multifaceted and can be difficult for regional and local communities to operationalize. The 30x30 Initiative for Biodiversity provides specific ways that dioceses and congregations can contribute to environmental efforts that are manageable and can make a significant impact.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was adopted during the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) following a four-year consultation and negotiation process. This historic framework includes 23 targets for 2030. Colloquially called “30x30,” the third target is a worldwide initiative for governments to designate 30% of Earth’s land and ocean area as protected areas by 2030.

It is estimated that The Episcopal Church is the collective steward of properties worth billions of dollars. This Resolution offers several achievable and pragmatic pathways for dioceses and congregations to make intentional and far-reaching inroads to support the 30x30 initiative by modeling environmentally conscientious methods of land management including working collaboratively with local communities to establish responsible methods of land management; deliberately making property management decisions which prioritize environmental stewardship; and sharing achievable contributions to the 30x30 target throughout the wider church.

This resolution builds on General Convention and Executive Council resolutions, including: MBMW 002, establishing biodiversity as a central priority for the Episcopal Church’s creation care strategies and encouraging education about how our everyday decisions affect the lives and health of endangered species; A087 Net Carbon Neutrality by 2030, requesting diocesan bishops 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, and collaborate with neighboring dioceses for best water practices to protect our watersheds, and GC 2009-D015; GC 2003-D046; and GC2015-A030.

Note: this resolution and/or its explanation contains external references, such as URLs of websites, that may not be in the required languages of General Convention. Because of copyright restrictions, the General Convention cannot provide translations. However, your web browser may be able to provide a machine translation into another language. If you need assistance with this, please contact gc.support@episcopalchurch.org.



Resolution Number: 2018-D053
Title: Call for Model Policies for Sustainable Church Land Use
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention recommends that all dioceses, faith communities and institutions create partnerships enabling the use of church-owned land for regenerative agriculture and biodiversity conservation projects in order to sequester carbon and to mitigate climate change; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention direct the Executive Council to appoint a body to gather information from the Church Pension Group, dioceses and other sources in order to create an inventory of all church-owned properties; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention requests that each Diocese consider the potential for utilization of church-owned property for new ministries integrating the care of Creation, particularly in situations where properties are no longer regularly utilized; and be it further

Resolved, That the body appointed by Executive Council develop model processes by which dioceses, faith communities and institutions may collaborate with partner agencies to care for creation and sequester carbon through regenerative agriculture, biodiversity conservation, green burial, and habitat restoration; and be it further

Resolved, That the appointed body report back 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. 686-687.



Resolution Number: 1994-D062
Title: On the Topic of Biodiversity and Natural Habitats
Legislative Action Taken: Rejected
Text of Resolution:

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, That this 71st General Convention of the Episcopal Church:
Affirm the inherent goodness and value of all creatures by virtue of their creation by God, independent of their aesthetic or utilitarian value to humanity or the human enterprise; and
Affirm the right of all wild creatures to natural habitat in sufficient quantity and quality that will insure their species' continuation and natural development, to protect and sustain both the integrity of each species and the biodiversity of the planet, with which it has been imbued by God; and
Call upon the members of the Episcopal Church to adopt lifestyles that are consistent with these principles and to urge their legislators to draft and work for the adoption of appropriate laws that will provide for the protection of the rights of all wild creatures to natural habitat, not only those now deemed "endangered species."