

**President's Advisory Council
on Faith-Based and Neighborhood
Partnerships**

**A New Era of Partnerships:
Report of Recommendations to the President**

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Environment and Climate Change

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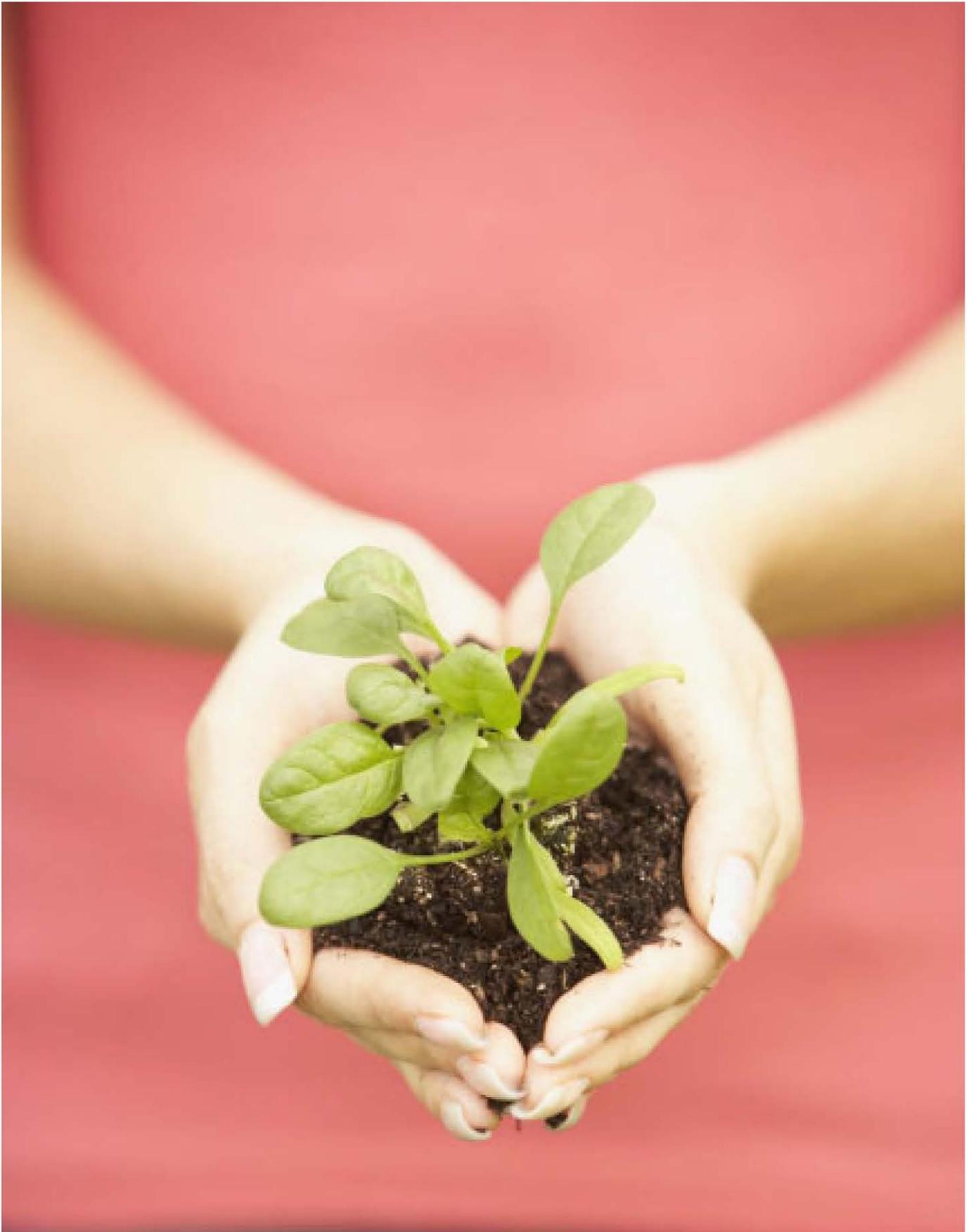
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Environment and Climate Change

INTRODUCTION

The charge from President Barack Obama to the President’s Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships is, in part, to focus on how those partnerships can benefit persons and families who often experience barriers to full participation in the Nation’s abundance. Keeping the President’s charge in view, the Council presents nine recommendations building on the great potential for engaging faith- and community-based groups in environmental stewardship, with a special focus on how to include those most disadvantaged in our communities.

The recommendations call for enhanced communication between government and small nonprofits on subjects related to environment and climate change. Some call for clearer information about what is available already through government agencies for faith-based and neighborhood organizations, as well as information on how such organizations can access what is available. Other recommendations propose the creation of channels for faith-based and nonprofit communities to communicate their on-the-ground knowledge back to government (especially on matters related to climate change adaptation). The recommendations address both domestic and global environmental concerns, appropriately acknowledging that such issues know no national borders.

Over the last 10 to 15 years, leaders in the political, environmental, scientific, and economic fields have recognized that environment and climate change will require cooperation across disciplines, and that the solutions are not only technical but also connect to our morality and values of America. The importance of engaging with religious organizations in addressing climate change and environmental concerns has become even clearer—as has the importance of faith-based organizations taking a prominent leadership role in influencing policy, education, and action in those areas. The more than 370,000¹ houses of worship alone provide locations for information to be shared, training to take place, and modeling of best environmental practices to occur.

This is a moment of great opportunity to engage the nonprofit sector in building a green economy that benefits all. The Council offers the following recommendations with a sense that enhanced communication and partnership among the Federal Government and the faith-based and neighborhood communities will go a long way to address a shared concern for the poor while claiming a shared responsibility for the wholeness of creation.

¹ This data is based on the most recent Commercial Building Energy Consumption Survey (CBECS) of the Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration (2003).



OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs:

Recommendation 1: Form an Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and assign Faith- and Community-Based Liaisons to EPA regional offices.

Recommendation 2: The Administration should provide guidance to State and local governments on how to partner with faith-based and nonprofit organizations to retrofit and green buildings.

Recommendation 3: Encourage the Department of Labor, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and other Federal agencies to work cooperatively with faith-based and neighborhood organizations to ensure that low-income communities and workers with barriers to employment are targeted when creating green job training programs.

Environmental Education and Communications:

Recommendation 4: The Administration should sponsor a public educational campaign on the environment, utilizing a centralized Website, such as Environment.gov.

Recommendation 5: The White House should sponsor regional conferences to mobilize faith- and community-based organizations to promote environment sustainability and energy efficiency.

Sustainable, Community Gardening and Small-Scale Agriculture:

Recommendation 6: Support partnerships and collaboration for sustainable, community gardening and small-scale agriculture.

Climate Change Adaptation:

Recommendation 7: Provide the opportunity for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) to apply for funds to implement international adaptation objectives.

Recommendation 8: Set up a taskforce to study how emission offsets can maximize climate-resilient development and the participation of PVOs in such efforts.

Recommendation 9: Active engagement of the NGO sector in the review and design of domestic and international adaptation strategies.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND GREEN JOBS

Recommendation 1: Form an Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the EPA, and assign Faith- and Community-Based Liaisons to EPA regional offices.

In order to actualize the potential of faith-based and community groups and their networks across the country toward greening and retrofitting buildings, and other key environmental outcomes, the Council recommends that an Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships be formed at the EPA. We further recommend that the EPA assign or hire Faith- and Community-Based Liaisons at all of their regional offices.

There is a new and unprecedented wave of interest in the environmental sustainability and climate change among America's diverse religious communities and in neighborhoods across the country.

Faith- and other community-based nonprofit institutions are in the unique position of serving as visible examples to the community. Houses of worship can exert a powerful influence when they practice good energy stewardship and preaches and teaches about conservation as a moral value, it has a powerful influence. Similarly, actions taken by nonprofit organizations can serve as an important role model for their employees, volunteers, and beneficiaries. There is a multiplier effect as congregants and nonprofit participants adopt the energy-saving practices in their homes and businesses.

A coordinated effort staffed through an Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the EPA could help to unleash this potential and activate faith- and community-based networks to promote energy efficiency, environmental responsibility, and green jobs. With minimal personnel costs to the Government, massive partnerships could be scaled up through engaging religious and community leaders and organizations.

Regional staff in local EPA offices, working in close collaboration with the new Office of Faith-Based and

ENERGY STAR Congregations: A Program of the Environmental Protection Agency *<http://www.energystar.gov/partners>*

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ENERGY STAR Congregations is a program that helps congregations operate and build green, environmentally friendly facilities. The availability of the ENERGY STAR rating for worship facilities was announced by EPA on September 1, 2009. The ENERGY STAR label means that a rating of 75 or higher on a 1 to 100 scale has been achieved, indicating that the worship facility is within the upper 25% of energy efficiency. As a taxpayer supported program to prevent pollution without regulation, there is no cost to participate or to be awarded the attractive bronze plaque for the achievement.

In addition, EPA ENERGY STAR Congregations hosts the ENERGY STAR National Building Competition, the first coast to coast contest to save energy and fight global warming in commercial buildings. ENERGY STAR partners are invited to nominate one or more of the facilities they own or manage from across the United States. Approximately a dozen contest participants are selected by EPA and work off the waste through improvements in energy efficiency with help from EPA's ENERGY STAR program. The building that reduces its energy use the most on a percentage basis is recognized by EPA as the winner. Contest participants take part in outreach activities, periodic weigh ins to measure progress, and a final celebration to announce the winner.

Joining ENERGY STAR Congregations provides organizations with:

- Free, accurate, unbiased information;
- Technical support through an Ask a Technical Question service and technical resources;
- A "how-to" guide for analyzing and upgrading a facility;
- Availability of an even more detailed guide, the Building Upgrade Manual;
- Energy equipment and service contractors and utilities;
- Information about ENERGY STAR labeled products;
- National and local recognition;
- Public relations materials to promote energy efficiency efforts; and
- Marketing resources.

Neighborhood Partnerships, would work to help promote existing EPA resources for faith- and community-based groups around the country, such as ENERGY STAR Congregations. Regional staff would work to engage local faith- and community-based groups to help meet Obama administration targets for greening buildings and promoting environmental quality.

One of the biggest barriers for faith- and community-based groups in greening buildings is obtaining access to financing. These regional staff liaisons, working in partnership with programs like ENERGY STAR, could assist faith- and community-based groups in either establishing revolving loan programs or working with utility companies to help finance greening building projects. These kinds of financing options, whether through utilities or with local revolving loan programs, need to be fostered at the local and regional levels and would greatly benefit from the ongoing support of regional staff to help facilitate these partnerships.

Recommendation 2: The Administration should provide guidance to State and local governments on how to partner with faith-based and nonprofit organizations to retrofit and green buildings.

State and local governments, as well as other Federal grantees, have a unique opportunity to include faith-based and neighborhood organizations in their energy efficiency programs. However, these entities often lack the knowledge or expertise needed to identify and work with faith-based and neighborhood organizations. By providing basic information and instruction as well as encouragement, the Administration could enhance the overall energy efficiency work at the Federal, State, and local levels.

Guidance should therefore be provided that:

1. Makes explicit where Federal funds provided, through State or local government, to retrofit buildings for energy efficiency and environmental benefit, can be awarded to retrofit buildings owned and operated by nonprofit entities, including faith-based organizations; and
2. Describes how such programs should be structured to conform to relevant constitutional and legal parameters.²

The Department of Energy currently offers grants, provided through block grants to States, local governments, and tribal territories, for small businesses, commercial buildings, research, industrial efficiency, and residential efficiency. Only one opportunity, a loan guarantee program, is currently understood to be applicable to nonprofit, including faith-based, organizations. The Department should determine whether the legislation governing other

² Council members agree that the administration should provide guidance to federal, state and local government to promote partnerships with faith-based and non-profit organizations to retrofit and green buildings. They differ, however, over the kinds of aid that the government could or should make available to houses of worship (and, for some, parochial schools) for this purpose. Some Council members believe that under current law, it is constitutionally permissible for the government to provide houses of worship the kind of direct government retrofit grants described in this section, see *American Atheists v. City of Detroit*, 567 F.3d 278 (6th Cir. 2009) at <http://www.ca6.uscourts.gov/opinions.pdf/09a0188p-06.pdf> (upholding development program whereby city reimbursed up to 50% of the costs of refurbishing the exteriors of all buildings in downtown area, including church buildings) affirming 503 F. Supp. 2d 845 (E. D. Mich. 2007), and they also support the extension of such aid on policy grounds. Others would oppose direct cash aid for improvements to buildings used for religious purposes, including houses of worship, as a violation of the First Amendment's Establishment Clause, see *Tilton v. Richardson*, 403 U.S. 672 (1971) (upholding construction grants for buildings and facilities used exclusively for secular educational purposes), *Committee for Public Education v. Nyquist*, 413 U.S. 756 (1973) (prohibiting extension to parochial schools of unrestricted maintenance and repair grants for nonpublic schools). Even if direct cash aid to houses of worship were found to be constitutional, these Council members would oppose it on policy grounds. Some Council members in this latter category would support the flow of certain other forms of government aid -- such as loan guarantees -- to houses of worship (as well as to other religious and secular entities) to retrofit and green buildings. For further discussion of these issues, see the introductory section and Recommendation 12 of the Council's Reform of the Office report.

Adat Shalom's Green Building Process, 1997 to 2001

<http://www.adatshalom.net>

Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda, Maryland, is the second synagogue in the United States to receive the EPA ENERGY STAR Congregations award. As with every facet of the congregation's communal life, the building was a collaborative communal process. Virtually every aspect of its design, not to mention the campaign to raise the money for the building, was driven by members and involved a large cross section of its membership. The congregation's Rabbi and numerous lay leaders helped the community in its attempt to walk lightly on the Earth while building a permanent home. Energy conservation was a consistent concern.

A few of its major environmental accomplishments were:

- Passive solar heating through clerestory windows and a dark floor in the social hall;
- A ner tamid (eternal light) hooked up to a photovoltaic (solar energy) cell on the roof;
- A designated percentage of wood from certified sustainable forestry operations;
- A good zone-by-zone heating and lighting system implemented, with many settings and options;
- Compact fluorescent lamps, LED exit signs, and other low-energy fixtures installed throughout the building;
- Much material from the existing building saved or kept in place for new construction;
- Mostly local materials used; limited Jerusalem stone shipped from Israel for symbolism;
- The maximum number of trees onsite before construction saved by careful planning;
- Low-water use (xeriscaping), low-maintenance, low-chemical, native landscaping;
- Low-impact cork flooring used in lobby areas; recycled carpet used in the sanctuary and offices;
- Mostly-recycled or limestone composite "vinyl alternative" tile flooring in the social hall and classrooms;
- A permeable driveway and parking lot for groundwater recharge (gravel, then alternative paving); and
- Wide buy-in sought from the congregation on the environment as a key priority during the building process.

programs it currently operates can include nonprofit organizations. If so, the Department should issue appropriate regulations and guidance to implement such inclusion.

Congress is considering as part of new energy efficiency and climate change legislation the creation of a new program under which the Department of Energy will provide new funds to subsidize the retrofitting of residential and nonresidential buildings. As currently pending, the legislation would explicitly state that such subsidies are available to non-profit-owned buildings, including faith-based. But even while final action on this legislation is awaited, the Administration can undertake appropriate steps to accelerate the retrofitting of faith-based and neighborhood nonprofit buildings by making it clear to local and state governments how to legally partner with these groups.

There are over 370,000 houses of worship alone in the United States, not to mention thousands more nonprofit facilities. Many would participate in energy-saving programs if given the opportunity. Currently, only nonprofits with the means to raise capital and with adequate expertise have so far installed "greener" systems. Accelerating these efforts is good public policy.

Recommendation 3: Encourage the Department of Labor, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and other Federal agencies to work cooperatively with faith-based and neighborhood organizations to ensure that low-income communities and workers with barriers to employment are targeted when creating green job training programs.

One of the few areas where jobs are being created is the clean-energy sector. Most of these green-collar jobs are blue-collar jobs transformed to meet the needs of the economy.

A sound green jobs program should help ensure that green jobs put marginalized and low-income communities on a pathway to prosperity. Faith-based and neighborhood organizations are often in the best position to reach low-income, under-served, and marginalized communities.

A recent report released by the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts, commissioned by Green for All and The National Resources Defense Council documents the scale of jobs that will be created through the clean energy sector. Investments in clean energy of \$150 billion are projected to create 1.7 million net American jobs, lower the unemployment rate by 1 percentage point, and raise living standards for the working poor. Many of these green jobs will build pathways to prosperity for the poor. Almost 50 percent will be accessible to people with low levels of formal education, and include high potential for advancement.

For faith-based organizations and the nonprofit sector, there is a commitment to ensuring that this new economy provides quality jobs for those who have not traditionally benefited from employment opportunities. There are numerous barriers to employment facing low-income communities of color that include individuals with limited educational attainment or language proficiency, higher percentages of prison reentry, and minimal access to job centers.

Creative partnerships, financial and otherwise, should be developed to help promote job training and placement for these disadvantaged job seekers. Faith- and community-based groups can play a critical role in connecting government green job programs with those that need them most.



Solar Richmond

<http://www.solarrichmond.org>

Solar Richmond is a nonprofit organization that provides solar installation training and job placement services, and supports consumers who want to go solar in a way that creates jobs for underemployed local residents. The organization ushers low income local residents into the green economy by providing them with hands on solar installation training and job placement services. The solar training is a component of a 14 week program in partnership with RichmondBuild, which includes 7 weeks of pre apprenticeship construction and 3 weeks of energy efficiency training. Solar Richmond also works with solar companies to meet their staffing needs and works with customers who want to go solar in a way that is socially sustainable.

The mission of Solar Richmond is to:

- Develop green-collar jobs, clean energy, and economic opportunity through solar installation training and innovative job creation to empower emerging leaders of the green economy.

Solar Richmond's major goals by 2010 were to:

- Create 100 new green-collar jobs for local residents;
- Install 50 solar installations on low-income homes in Richmond completed by Solar Richmond trainees; and
- Install 5 megawatts of solar power in Richmond.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

Recommendation 4: The Administration should sponsor public educational campaign on the environment, utilizing a centralized Website, such as Environment.gov.

There is a rising interest across the country in personal and collective environmental responsibility. However, government information and resources can be hard to locate across diverse Federal agencies. Traversing the information on grants and other support programs from the Department of Energy or other Federal agencies is difficult, particularly for faith-based and neighborhood organizations without the professional expertise in this area.

We believe that faith- and community-based groups, as well as the general American public, could be better mobilized toward environmental goals with a well-publicized and centralized educational campaign, housed and promoted through a central Website, such as Environment.gov.

We recommend the Administration coordinate a nationwide education and communication campaign on the environment that:

- Emphasizes addressing environmental issues and climate change as a moral issue. Highlights ways (such as educational resources and funding sources) the Federal Government can assist such organizations in addressing those issues;
- Develops a user-friendly Website, such as Environment.gov, that pulls together all the resources available for faith-based and community groups across government, including education and grant resources;
- Asks faith-based and neighborhood organizations to collaborate in developing these resources which should emphasize that environmental and climate change concerns are often closely connected to issues of justice and equity;
- Gears messaging around climate change toward specific regions, based on climate change's impacts within that region. Emphasizes the benefits of reducing carbon emissions in terms of decreasing pollution, improving health, creating green jobs, strengthening national security through reducing dependency on foreign oil, and so on; and
- Emphasizes areas in which individuals and communities can take action, such as:
 - Transportation choices;
 - Food choices; and
 - Home care and maintenance choices

It is clear that many faith-based and neighborhood organizations do not know what Federal Government resources are available to them. A centralized education campaign would meet a real need among diverse religious and community-based organizations to engage their members in environmental action.



Recommendation 5: White House should sponsor regional conferences to mobilize faith- and community-based organizations to preserve the environment and reduce the impact of climate change.

We recommend the White House, working with the EPA, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Department of Energy, convene regional conferences to bring together a diverse representation of leaders from a variety of fields to promote local and regional action on environmental sustainability and energy efficiency.

Among other things, these regional conferences would:

- Highlight innovative programs in areas like green jobs, access to and training for those jobs for low-income and minority groups, initiatives around location and building efficiency, and faith- and community-based gardening and local sustainable agricultural projects;
- Serve as an avenue through which faith-based and neighborhood organizations can find out about Federal resources available to them;
- Serve as an avenue through which government officials can discover effective programs and seek to replicate those around the country;
- Network leaders, government officials, and organizations within regions; and
- Serve as working meetings, not only conferences.

Along with White House officials, diverse community leaders should be invited to participate, such as:

- Recognized leaders and speakers from multiple faith traditions and local/regional neighborhood organizations;
- Scientific experts;
- Sustainable business owners and economists;
- Green building and urban design experts;
- International representatives, particularly from those countries already experiencing significant impacts from climate change; and
- Sustainable agriculture and gardening advocates and practitioners.

Regional HUD and EPA faith- and community-based liaison staff could help to facilitate these gatherings and provide the staff support to turn one-time conferences into ongoing sustained action toward environmental goals.

SUSTAINABLE, COMMUNITY GARDENING AND SMALL-SCALE AGRICULTURE

Recommendation 6: Support partnerships and collaboration for sustainable, community gardening and small-scale agriculture.

We recommend the Administration direct the EPA, the Department of Agriculture, and any other relevant agencies to find ways to facilitate collaboration and connections between faith-based organizations, community gardening advocates and educators, and small-scale, sustainable agricultural projects and practitioners, such as Community Supported Agriculture farms. Particular attention should be paid to incorporating the needs of low-income and minority neighborhoods in relation to their access to healthy food.

Community gardening groups seek opportunities to expand the amount of land in urban/suburban areas under cultivation. Many faith-based institutions have land available to them. And, more and more faith-based organizations see the connections between their values and sustainable food systems. Community and congregational gardens are sprouting up on religious institutions' property around the country. Furthermore, religious institutions provide a ready-made market for small-scale, sustainable farmers' produce.

The benefits of this type of gardening and farming are numerous: water and soil are protected, community connections are built and strengthened, healthy food can be provided to food pantries and neighborhoods with little access to such food, and local foods decrease carbon emissions associated with transporting food thousands of miles. Supported on a large enough scale, the Administration could provide opportunities for agricultural job creation and rural community revitalization, one more approach to creating green jobs.

Clean Greens Farm and Market *<http://www.cleangreensfarm.com>*

On 22 acres of leased land in Duvall, Washington, this innovative project was begun by the Black Dollar Days Task Force, an organization dedicated to creating economic opportunity and equity in Seattle's low-income communities. The Black Dollar Days Task Force recognized that African Americans are underrepresented in farming in Washington. Currently, there is no local market in King County that supplies the types of vegetables that are relevant to the African American and African immigrant food culture. Low-income communities frequently do not have access to fresh, wholesome produce and have higher rates of poor diet-related illnesses such as diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, and elevated cholesterol. The Task Force program, Clean Greens Farm and Market, operates as an agricultural producer engaged in the production of chemical-free collard, kale, mustard, turnip greens, relish, and spinach.

Fundamentally the Clean Greens Farm and Market in Seattle, Washington, strives to grow and deliver clean, healthy, and fair produce to everyone at reasonable prices.

Goals for the Clean Greens Farm and Market are the following:

- Promote a healthier cultural diet.
- Grow chemical-free, organic vegetables.
- Supply locally grown produce to the inner city market.
- Educate inner city community residents about the benefits of buying locally grown produce.
- Expose inner city youth to the growing and marketing of produce that is vital to their health.
- Collaborate with Ethiopian, Hmong, Latino, Sumatran, and other independent farmers to ensure the viability of small farms.
- Be good stewards of the environment.
- Participate in U.S. Department of Agriculture programs

Madison Christian Community: Ecumenical Garden

<http://www.madisonchristiancommunity.org>

Madison Christian Community Ecumenical Garden is a ministry that scatters seeds of hope for incarcerated people. Madison Christian Community, an ecumenical partnership between Advent Lutheran Church (a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and Community of Hope (a congregation of the United Church of Christ) in Madison, Wisconsin, works with a nearby correctional facility to offer a restorative justice-based horticulture program in its 6,000-square foot garden. The two congregations share a building, staff, and a piece of land that includes a restored prairie, a rain garden, a memorial garden, and the 6,000-square foot vegetable garden that fosters so many connections. "The garden ministry is one way to bridge the racial, economic, and social barriers that exist between people today," according to Rev. Jeff Wild, Pastor of Advent Lutheran Church.

The church facility and garden ministry are connected by water. Rainwater from the roof of the sanctuary fills four 300-gallon tanks. Water flows through underground tubing to the garden, where slow-drip irrigation hoses are placed among the vegetation.

The purpose of the Madison Christian Community Ecumenical Garden is to:

- Cultivate restorative justice through gardening.

The program is carried out in the following way:

- Inmates are part of a horticulture class in which they sow the seeds for the garden and tend them as they grow into seedlings.
- When the seedlings are ready for planting, the inmates in the class take a field trip to Madison Christian Community, where they spend a day tending the garden where their seedlings will be planted. Members from the church welcome them with homemade baked goods as well as shade grown, fair trade coffee.
- Money for the cost of seeds and other garden supplies is raised through the sale of Father Dom's Duck Doo, a locally produced compost consisting of duck doo, cranberries, and other good stuff, according to Wild.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Religious communities and other nonprofits have a special concern for the well-being of the poor, including programs to help the poor here and abroad cope with the consequences that climate change will bring. It is in the common interest for the Federal Government to work with religious communities and other nonprofits in the areas of both domestic and international adaptation.

Several of these recommendations echo those from the Global Poverty Taskforce report because the need for international adaptation is consistent with and essential to achieving sustainable development. In fact, the Council believes that all U.S. foreign assistance should take climate adaptation and mitigation into consideration. At a minimum, programs should not lead to mal-adaptation. Instead, foreign assistance should seek to amplify and enhance the effectiveness of adaptation and mitigation efforts.

The new Federal funding and programs for adaptation represent an opportunity for Federal officials to work with religious community and other nonprofit representatives so that the programs are designed from the beginning to foster inclusion, cooperation, and ease of participation. This mutually beneficial partnership will enhance the successful delivery of adaptation services.

Recommendation 7: Provide the opportunity for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) to apply for funds to implement international adaptation objectives.

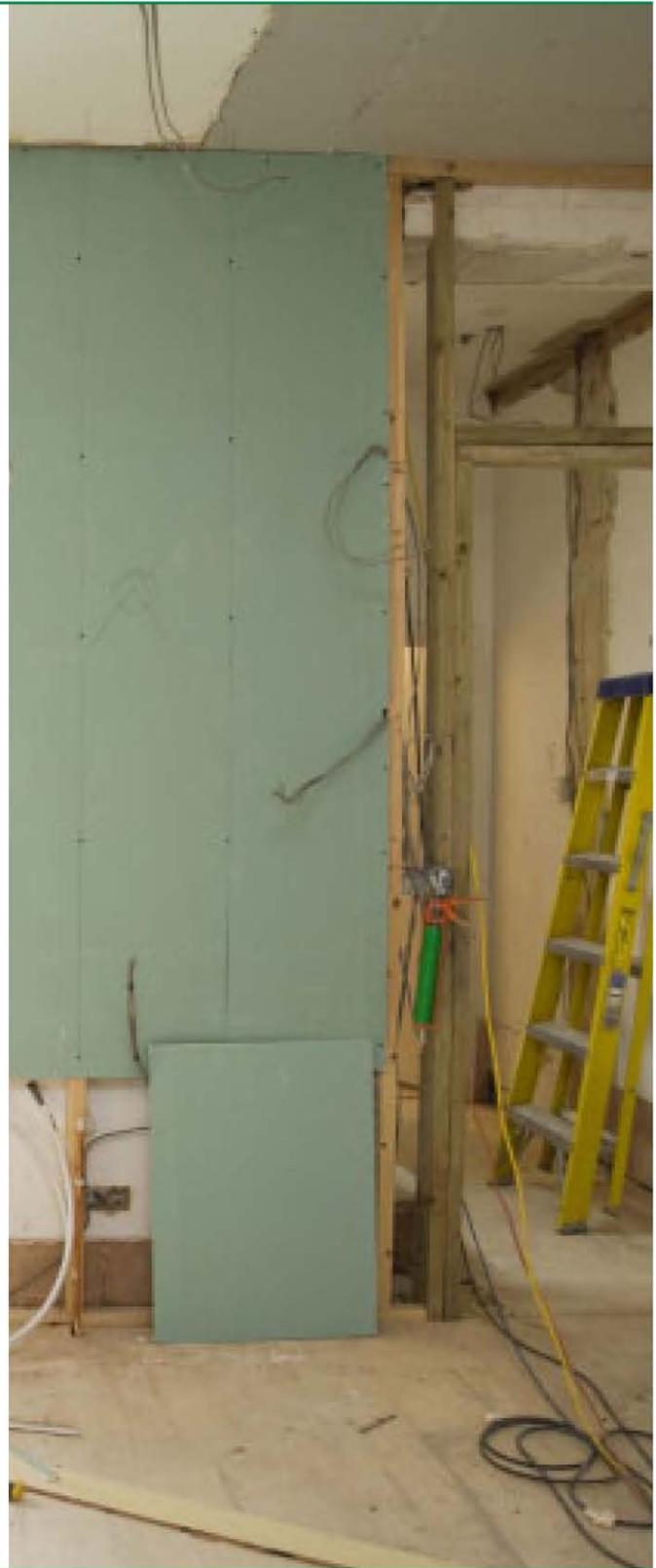
Current climate change legislation proposes to set up an International Climate Change Adaptation Program, with USAID as the lead agency. This new program would potentially target funds to international adaptation objectives. As funds are allocated for international adaptation efforts, and agencies are tasked with administration of these funds, the U.S. Government should ensure that there are opportunities for non-profits and PVOs to apply to partner with government in implementation of adaptation programs.³

U.S. funding for international adaptation should strike a balance between multilateral and bilateral assistance, with opportunity provided for NGOs and PVOs to receive grants to implement international adaptation programs and objectives consistent with local community participation.

Funding for international adaptation will be new and additional to current levels of overseas development assistance, as stipulated by the Bali Action Plan. Therefore such funding represents an opportunity to create, from the beginning, programs and procedures for full engagement and participation of international development NGOs and PVOs.

Recommendation 8: Encourage the Administration to set up a taskforce to study how emission offsets can maximize climate-resilient development and the participation of PVOs in such efforts.

Proposed climate change legislation includes the opportunity for U.S. emitters to offset some of their emissions through the implementation of emissions reduction projects in developing countries. Such projects will enhance climate-resilient development and could be designed to enhance targeted adaptation efforts. However, additional study is



³ The Waxman-Markey American Clean Energy and Security Act, HR 2454, in Title IV, Subtitle E, Part 2, Sections 491-495 (pp. 1365f) sets up an International Climate Change Adaptation Program, with USAID as the lead agency. Section 495 (p. 1375f) describes how USAID could provide funds to NGOs/PVOs to help poor communities in developing countries adapt. We concur with the selection of USAID to be the administrative agency. If this program were to become law, we request that USAID work with NGOs/PVOs as it establishes the procedures for receiving funding to help ensure ease of participation and successful implementation



required to understand how this plan can be most effectively and efficiently accomplished, as well as how PVOs could participate in offset opportunities.

Recommendation 9: Active engagement of the NGO sector in the review and design of domestic and international adaptation strategies.

As the White House Council on Environmental Quality, the Department of State, and other Federal agencies begin to coordinate interagency action on domestic and international adaptation, we recommend that faith- and community-based organizations be engaged and consulted in decisions about funding, program design, and implementation of domestic and international adaptation strategies. In addition, faith- and community-based organizations can play an important role in helping to facilitate inclusive, collaborative planning processes—at all levels of government—that will address climate change impacts, especially on low-income and vulnerable populations.

Faith- and community-based groups, both at home and around the world, have firsthand experience and knowledge of the most vulnerable populations and the struggles they are facing because of climate change. They have capacity, knowledge, and networks that can be activated as valuable partners in climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. The U.S. Government should utilize this vast knowledge to help shape public policy, program design, funding decisions, and delivery mechanisms.