

Excerpts from the Franciscan Climate Change Statement:

- A 2007 study in Scientific American indicates that the southwest region of the U.S. could provide 69% of U.S. electricity and 35% of the country's total energy needs by 2050.³³ A Stanford University study of global wind capacity estimates that harnessing 20% of the available wind on the planet would provide seven times more electricity than the world uses now.³⁴ Furthermore, in the U.S., the geothermal energy within two miles of the Earth's surface could provide for America's needs for 30,000 years.³⁵
- According to research done by the Rockefeller Foundation, upgrading and replacing energy-consuming equipment in buildings could make a huge impact. Buildings consume approximately half of all energy used in the United States. Increased building retrofits could reduce energy consumption in buildings by up to 30%, creating more than 3.3 million jobs in the United States economy and yielding more than \$1 trillion of energy savings over 10 years. ³⁶
- There is a growing realization that strong public policy that tackles global climate change is good for the environment, good for people's health, and good for the economy and job growth. Catholics and Evangelical Christians have been working to phase out the use of the dirty fossil fuels and put an end to the release of cancer-causing chemicals. Expanding their pro-life agenda, they have come to see that a sound public policy curbing the emission of greenhouse gases would prevent millions of cases of cancer and other diseases, and stave off countless pre-mature deaths. Furthermore, despite the propaganda war waged by the some of the fossil fuel industries, diverse segments of our society have recognized the deceptiveness of claims that suggest delaying action on climate change is supposedly necessary to strengthen the economy and spur job growth. According to the International Energy Agency, for every \$1 of investment avoided in the power sector before 2020, an additional \$4.3 would need to be spent after 2020 to compensate for the increased emissions.³⁷
- Likewise, more and more people are beginning to comprehend that the services of ecological systems and the natural capital stocks that produce them are critical to the functioning of a healthy economy; in essence, that there is an economic value to nature and to preserving nature's ability to perform its traditional functions. It is estimated that the current economic value of the entire biosphere (most of which is outside the conventional market) is in the range of US\$16–54 trillion, with the global gross national product total being around US\$18 trillion per year.³⁸
- There is a growing realization that a \$5 trillion global clean energy market is emerging. At the present moment, China and Germany are its top competitors with the U.S. lagging much further behind. However, harnessing the ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit of the American people could help pull our country out of the deadly grip of the fossil fuel industry and strengthen our democracy.
- Social movements involving youth, such as 350.org and the Energy Action Coalition's Power Shift, have been able to mobilize hundreds of thousands of young people around the world, harnessing their idealism and creativity, and igniting their passion for climate justice. It is a great sign of hope to see them involved in grassroots community actions, using the power of social media to affect change.
- Dealing with global climate change has become one of the JPIC priorities of Holy Name Province (HNP). An increasing number of HNP ministries are getting involved in care for creation efforts at the local level, working to reduce their carbon footprint, and integrating concerns for environmental justice into their preaching and teaching.
- Recently, the Franciscan Order has launched the Amazon Project, which includes a strong commitment to preserving the rich biodiversity of that region, and supports the indigenous people whose traditional cultures, wisdom and way of life are being wiped out.