



# National Climate Ethics Campaign

For Immediate Release  
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## **Climate Change: The Ethical Dimension**

New campaign focuses on moral responsibility to tackle global warming

([Click here](#) to read the full statements of all of the speakers at the event)

WASHINGTON (Nov. 30, 2011) – Citing the human and economic costs that the United States is already paying for its failure to act to curb climate changing emissions, the [Climate Ethics Campaign](#) today launched a campaign demanding that U.S. leadership recognize their moral and ethical obligation to aggressively respond to climate change. The campaign launch was timed to coincide with the first week of international climate talks now underway in Durban, South Africa.

“People from all walks of life across the U.S. are extremely concerned about global warming. But progress has stalled because our government keeps debating whether addressing the issue makes economic sense and whether the science is settled,” said Bob Doppelt, executive director of The Resource Innovation Group, and coordinator of the Climate Ethics Campaign.

“We believe it’s time to talk about our moral obligation to prevent the human suffering created by climate change, to safeguard the poor and most vulnerable communities from harm they did not create, and to protect the natural environment that is the source of all life,” Doppelt said. “We will honor our moral and ethical duties to others by cutting carbon emissions, preparing for climate change, and demanding policies to achieve both goals.”

The campaign was launched at an event in Washington, DC, featuring speakers including Representative Henry Waxman (D-Calif.); Senator Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.); Virginia State Senator Mary Margaret Whipple; Wood Turner, Vice President for Sustainability Innovation at Stonyfield Farm; Rev. Jim Ball, Vice President of the Evangelical Environmental Network; Hilary O. Shelton, Director of the NAACP Washington Bureau and Senior Vice President for Advocacy and Policy; Robert Pestronk, Executive Director of National Association of County and City Health Officials; and many others.

A statement released at the event features the [signatures](#) of more than 1200 current and former elected officials, as well as representatives from the business, labor, youth, conservation, academic, racial and social justice, physical and psychological health, development, and faith communities nationwide.

Below are excerpts from the prepared remarks of some of the event speakers and other supporters.

**Senator Barbara Boxer (D-California), Chairman of Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works**

“As Chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, I reaffirm my commitment to work as hard as I can to reduce the dangerous air pollution that causes climate change and harms the health and safety of people around the world. I pledge to do everything I can to stand up to climate change deniers, to shine a light on the truth, and to build support for taking common sense steps to address this critical global problem.”

**Representative Henry A. Waxman (D-California)**

“Climate change is a scientific issue; it is a policy and political issue; but above all, it is a moral issue. We have a moral obligation to protect our planet for future generations. This is why I fully support your call to action.”

**Senator Jeff Merkley (D-Oregon)**

“We all want to give our children the best future possible – not only because it will help our economy, but also because it is the right thing to do. When I think about the issues that threaten my own children’s future, climate change is right up there at the top of the list. We have a moral obligation to act now.”

**Representative Edward J. Markey (D-Massachusetts)**

“A moral response to addressing climate change should be judged on basis of what the actions are being undertaken in the time allowed. If we act, but wait too long, then we will have not done what is needed. If we quicken the pace of action, but our actions are not substantial enough, then our response fails to meet the test. Only by acting quickly and significantly will history judge our actions as moral. We have the clean energy tools to pass the climate change test, create good jobs and protect our children’s futures. It is now our moral obligation to put them to use.”

**Virginia State Senator Mary Margaret Whipple**

“Although climate change is a global problem, the impacts are strongly felt at the state and local levels. State legislators come from different faith backgrounds, different political parties, different regions, different educational, economic, and social backgrounds. And yet we have much in common: I know that there are many legislators across our fifty states who believe as I do that taking action to reduce climate change is the moral imperative of our time.”

**Gary Hirshberg, CEO and President, Stonyfield Farm**

“As a business person, I think we have an ethical imperative to do everything we can to ensure a solid and sustainable economy for our children and grandchildren.

That's why my company has invested heavily in climate protection -- boosting efficiency, helping grow markets for renewables, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and, as a result, seeing enhanced financial performance. Any other approach to doing business compromises our economic and environmental legacies."

**Hilary O. Shelton, Director of the NAACP Washington Bureau and Senior Vice President for Advocacy and Policy**

"In light of the NAACP's mandate of upholding civil and human rights for all, we view advancing the nation's moral obligation on climate change as vital. Climate change threatens all of us, and is particularly devastating to communities of color and low income communities in the US as well as in developing countries. It is critical that we all join together to find just solutions to mitigate climate change and provide adequate resources for adaptation, especially to the communities and countries that are already, and will increasingly continue to be, affected by the ravages of climate change including the increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events."

**Rev. Jim Ball, Vice President, Evangelical Environmental Network**

"It's time to be great again by overcoming global warming. America can rise to this challenge, because that's who we are: fair-minded, freedom-loving people who live to create a brighter future."

**Joe Uehlein, Board President, Labor Network for Sustainability**

"Making a living on a living planet is the moral imperative of our time. All working people have a stake in the climate debate, but not the old, tired jobs vs. environment debate you've heard before. Failure to deal with the climate crisis will wreak havoc on the economy at every level and will destroy jobs."

**Robert Pestronk, Executive Director, National Association of County and City Health Officials**

"Climate change has serious and far-reaching health implications for present and future generations. We're already seeing the effects of climate change on health, such as emerging tropical diseases in new areas, deaths from heat waves and floods, food shortages and increased allergies and asthma, and the costs of addressing these. Recognizing these threats, leaders at every level of government must take steps to prevent these impacts and protect their communities. Local health departments can help address these challenges – the life and health of all Americans depend on it."

**[See the statements made](#) from speakers at the release of the "Statement of Our Nation's Moral Obligation to Address Climate Change"**

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