

October 4, 2017

Senator Bob Casey
Senator Patrick Toomey
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Casey and Senator Toomey:

Faith communities have a profound call to be guardians of God's creation and our communities' health. In particular, we are called to voice our concern about toxic pollution. As leaders in the religious community—across a broad spectrum of denominations and organizations—we are writing to convey our common conviction that protecting vulnerable people from toxic pollution sites is a priority. Superfund sites are of particular concern.

The Judeo-Christian traditions teach us that we are judged by how we care for those who are most vulnerable. This includes children, older adults, people with low-incomes, and communities of color. It also includes threatened and endangered species. Toxic pollution sites pose a particular risk to the air, soil and water of fenceline and neighboring communities. According to the Toxic Waste and Race study by the United Church of Christ¹, people of color are more likely than any other demographic to bear disproportionate and unjust health burdens of toxic pollution.

Pennsylvania ranks third in the US for the number of Superfund sites—with 95 toxic sites located in both rural and urban areas. These sites, managed by the Environmental Protection, require long-term response to clean up hazardous material contaminations.

To administer the Superfund Clean Up Program, the Environmental Protection Agency needs the necessary staff and funding resources to implement. The EPA's Superfund program is responsible for cleaning up some of the nation's most contaminated land and responding to environmental emergencies, oil spills and disasters. To protect God's creation and human health, it is vital that this important program be provided robust funding.

Across our community and across the country, religious leaders and people of faith have embraced the work of safeguarding ecological systems, so that the diversity of life can thrive—both human, and nonhuman.

In the coming days and months, as you help to shape key budget decisions regarding environmental issues – particularly clean air and water, as well as land protections – we urge you

¹ Toxic Waste and Race at 20. United Church of Christ. Retrieved on September 7 at http://www.ucc.org/environmental-ministries_toxic-waste-20

to be guided by a moral framework that includes responsible stewardship of God's creation, and meeting our moral obligations to protect vulnerable communities today, and future generations.

Sincerely,
Ms. Phyllis Terwilliger
United Methodist Women
Clarks Summit, PA

Rev. Andrew Edwards
St John Lutheran Church
Fairview, PA

Ann Pinca
St. James Lutheran Church
Lebanon, PA

Mrs. Kathleen Schmick
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Pastor Paul Metzloff
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Rev. Sandra Strauss
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