



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE/ELECTRIC VEHICLES

PREPARING TO TALK TO/WRITE TO YOUR LEGISLATORS

In thinking through what you want to share with your legislators, try to include these 4 parts:

1. **Why this issue is important for our state.** Pick 2-4 facts or statistics that help explain the issue and why we must take action.
 - Nearly 45% of greenhouse gas emissions in New Jersey come from the transportation sector, primarily from cars and vans.
 - Every travelled mile converted to electric is **70% cleaner** than a gas-powered mile!
 - Widespread use of electric vehicles will improve air quality, lower greenhouse gas emissions, reduce vehicle operation costs, and reduce respiratory health risks in urban areas.
 - Creating infrastructure of charging stations is crucial step in making EVs a viable option for private and public use. A2819/2252 lays out a structure that will assure drivers of ability to charge up as needed.
 - Financial incentives for purchasing EVs is essential for making the transition more affordable and fair, and will help NJ meet existing state air pollution and energy goals.
 - Transition to EV public vehicles, including busses, will be crucial to improving air quality and costs will be repaid in lower maintenance and fuel costs, as well as health costs in impoverished environmental justice (EJ) communities.
 - To take the bill further in supporting EJ communities, we support amendments that will

- ensure representation of these communities on the working group that will determine where charging stations are placed, and
- identify strategies and programs to ensure job creation in low-income and EJ communities

2. **Why this issue is important to you as a Reform Jew.** *Pick one or two Jewish values and connect them to the issue you are addressing.*

- “The human being was placed in the Garden of Eden to till it and to tend it.” (Genesis 2:15) The rabbis tell a story about the Garden of Eden: When God created the first human beings, God led them around the Garden and said: Look at my works! See how beautiful they are, how excellent! For your sake I created them all. Take care not to spoil or destroy My world, for if you do, there will be no one to repair it after you. (Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13)
- Jewish tradition teaches us that human domain over nature does not include a license to abuse the environment. The Talmudic concept *bal tashchit*, "do not destroy," was developed by the rabbis into a universal doctrine that dramatically asserted God’s ownership of the land. Psalm 24 notes, "The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof." From this basic concept it follows that any act of destruction is an offense against the property of God.
- For more than forty years the Reform Movement has advocated in defense of our environment and all those species — from the smallest creatures to humankind itself — that rely on our shared natural habitat and resources for survival. Since our 1965 Resolution on Conservation and Development of Natural Resources, we have spoken out for cleaner air, water, and land by decrying toxic waste, fighting pollution, and calling on our synagogues and congregants to make wise use of limited natural resources in our personal and communal lives... We have long understood the need for comprehensive and progressive energy policies that protect all people and increase our national security and that of our allies. “The priorities of a national energy policy should be the conservation and development of renewable alternative resources” and that “a comprehensive national energy program must be spearheaded by appropriate and responsible government policy...” (Excerpts from Climate Change and Energy – URJ Resolution 2009)

- Climate change is fundamentally a social justice issue that marries our mandate to be good stewards of the earth with our call to care for the least among us....We must also ensure that low- and moderate-income individuals and families, minority communities, and other populations particularly vulnerable to both environmental degradation and volatile energy prices and economic transitions, do not bear a disproportionate burden from either the effects of climate change or the effects of policies designed to shape energy choices. (Excerpts from Climate Change and Energy – URJ Resolution 2009)
3. **Why this issue is important to you as an individual.** If possible, share a personal story that demonstrates your connection/passion for the issue.
 4. **What you want the legislator to do (“The Ask”).** Ask the legislator to vote for/against/cosponsor a piece of legislation (make sure to include the bill number). It is helpful to know legislator’s past positions/role in this bill, which you can explore in njleg.gov.

OUR LEGISLATIVE ASK FOR TODAY:

Support Electric Vehicle Infrastructure bill (**A4819/S2252**), which establishes goals, initiatives, and programs to encourage and support use of plug-in electric vehicles. Vote yes, cosponsor, and support equity amendments.

Also support full funding of NJ Transit in this year’s budget.

Take a deep breath and enjoy connecting and making your voice heard!