Resolution Urging the Diocese and Parishes to Participate in Energy-Usage Study

Submitted by: the Diocese of Washington Creation Care Committee; Abbott McCartney; the Rev. Mary Sebold; the Rev. Melissa Sites; the Rev. Donna Stinchcomb; the Rev. Robert W. Fisher, Rector, St. John's, Lafayette Square; the Rev. Dr. Christopher I. Wilkins, Rector, St. Mark's, Fairland; the Rev. Ledlie Laughlin, Rector, St. Columba's; the Rev. Beth O'Callaghan, Rector, St. Nicholas'; the Rev. Patricia Phaneuf Alexander, Rector, St. Dunstan's; and the Rev. Meredith T. Heffner, Rector, St. James', Potomac.

RESOLVED, that the One Hundred Thirtieth Convention of the Diocese of Washington acknowledges that The Episcopal Church General Conventions for nearly 20 years have recognized that human-caused climate change is real and poses an immediate and serious global threat to all God's creation, a condition that is contrary to our Christian commitment to care for all God's creation, and those General Conventions have further recognized the need to reduce and ultimately eliminate our carbon footprint in response to the climate crises; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Convention acknowledges that the 2022 and 2024 General Conventions encouraged dioceses and their parishes to pursue their own goal to become carbon neutral by 2030 and that the 2022 General Convention expressly identified increasing energy efficiency in buildings as one clear step for dioceses and parishes to undertake to become carbon neutral by 2030; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Convention recognizes that the Diocese of Washington and its parishes own and manage buildings and have a responsibility, consistent with our Christian commitment to care for all God's creation, to ensure that those buildings are part of the solution to our climate crisis; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Convention urges the Diocese and its parishes to participate in a no-cost, Diocese-wide, benchmarking study of energy usage that will provide the Diocese and its parishes with personalized energy-usage profiles and energy-upgrade recommendations for each participating facility, leading to reduced energy usage and increased cost savings; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Convention urge the Diocese and its parishes to participate in this energy-usage study by entering 2024 monthly utility bills for electricity and heating fuel for each participating facility by July 1, 2025, into a web-based study program, known as the "Better Building Efficiency Targeting Tool," offered at no cost by the U.S. Department of Energy or suitable alternative tool; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Convention recognizes that the energy-usage study's full benefit to the Diocese and to its parishes depends upon the broadest possible participation among parishes throughout the Diocese; and be it further

RESOLVED, that knowing that not every parish may have the resources to collect and enter the energy-usage data, the Diocese of Washington Creation Care Committee be available to assist the Diocese and its parishes to collect and enter the monthly data into the Better Building Efficiency Targeting Tool or suitable alternative tool, and that the Creation Care Committee further be available to assist the Diocese and its parishes to interpret the personalized energy-usage profiles and to help identify possible energy-saving measures for each facility derived from the profiles.

EXPLANATION: This Resolution seeks to move the Diocese and its parishes to address the pressing environmental need to reduce our collective consumption of fossil fuels. The Resolution urges the Diocese and its parishes to take the first meaningful step by participating in a Diocese-wide benchmarking study that measures each church facility's energy usage and offers energy-upgrade recommendations. Once armed with this information, the Diocese and its parishes will be better able to plan how best to reduce their energy usage and to increase their cost savings.

The Episcopal Church has long recognized the threat posed by human-generated climate change and advocated for lowering carbon emissions. The 2006 General Convention, recognizing the Christian commitment to care for all God's creation, urged "moral transformation" to move toward "environmentally sustainable economic practices." *See* D055 (2006). The 2006 and 2009 General Conventions expressly pushed for reductions in fossil fuel consumption. *See* B002 (2006); D005 (2006); D031 (2009). The 2022 General Convention encouraged Episcopal institutions to set 2030 as their own goal to be carbon neutral. *See* A087 (2022). The 2024 Convention renewed that commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030. *See* D050 (2024).

The Diocese of Washington Creation Care Committee has found a useful, no-cost, web-based tool for measuring facility energy consumption known as the "Better Building Efficiency Targeting Tool" (https://better.lbl.gov), offered by the U.S. Department of Energy. Participation only requires entering monthly utility bill data into the web-based tool.

This Better Building Efficiency Targeting Tool would then furnish each participating facility with a personalized profile of its energy usage together with personalized energy-upgrade recommendations for the facility. This personalized information would enable parishes to compare the relative energy efficiency for each facility and to develop their own individual plan for energy conservation and cost savings based upon the energy-upgrade recommendation.

Knowing that not every parish may have the resources to collect and enter the energy-usage data, the Diocese of Washington Creation Care Committee, working with Interfaith Power and Light (DC, MD, NoVA) ("IPL-DMV"), will be available to assist the Diocese and parishes to enter the energy-usage data into this web-based program and will be further available to assist to interpret the results and to develop energy savings steps for the future. IPL-DMV is a non-profit organization that works with hundreds of congregations of all faiths across D.C., Maryland, and Northern Virginia to transition to clean energy, to learn to go green, to speak out for environmental justice, and to respond to climate change.

The Resolution notes that there is greater accuracy in the study results as the number of parishes participating increases. Thus, the Resolution urges as many parishes as practical to join the study and to enter the 12 months of utility bills into the web-based tool.

This Resolution does not impose any cost upon the Diocese or participating parishes beyond the cost of collecting and entering monthly utility bills into the web-based study tool.