

**AMERICAN BAPTIST
RESOLUTION ON CLEAN AIR**

Genesis 1 assigns dominion over creation to humanity and Psalm 8 confirms that responsibility. Humanity, however, has often acted as exploiter rather than steward. We have violated the interrelatedness of creation.

Psalm 24 asserts that the earth belongs to God. Scripture affirms God's ongoing interest in the created order and that we are called to work toward the wholeness of God's creation.

Air pollution comes from many sources: chemical plants pump thousand of tons of toxic pollutants into the air each year causing cancer, birth defects and other diseases; acid rain affects monuments, forests, lakes, streams and wildlife as well as human health; electric power plants, "smoke-stack" industries and motor vehicles contribute to lung disease, asthma and other health problems by emission of sulfur dioxide and other pollutants.

Governmental costs each year for damage and illness are estimated by the governmental accounting office at \$7 billion. Some estimates place the societal costs (industry, business, individuals) for damage to crops, forests, infrastructure and health run as high as \$100 billion annually.

The United States Congress, reflecting awareness of the many problems created by environmental degradation, needs to consider legislation that continuously addresses these issues. The complexity of the situation and high costs of action mean that regions are pitted against one another, industries are fighting to protect profits, workers fear job losses and public officials try to balance competing interests.

In light of these realities, we:

- 1) express our support for a strong clean air act that would
 - (a) maintain a strict standard on toxic air pollutants,
 - (b) mandate significant reductions in automobile emissions,
 - (c) cut sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions significantly,
 - (d) phase out ozone-destroying chemicals,
 - (e) require polluter to pay for cleanup,
 - (f) encourage and permit states and Puerto Rico to set higher standards than federal,
 - (g) maintain a federal role in protecting public health when states fail to provide adequate measures, and
 - (h) provide needed support for persons adversely affected by these actions.

- 2) urge all American Baptists to advocate for the principles set forth in this resolution.

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145 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention

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POLICY BASE

American Baptist Policy Statement on Human Rights

As American Baptists we declare the following rights to be basic human rights, and we will support programs and measures to assure these rights:

4. The right to a secure and healthy environment, clean air, pure water and an earth that can nurture and support present and future generations;

American Baptist Policy Statement on Ecology

Our task is nothing less than to join God in preserving, renewing and fulfilling the creation. It is to relate to nature in ways that sustain life on the planet, provide for the essential material and physical needs of all humankind, and increase justice and well-being for all life in a peaceful world.

As Christians and faithful stewards, we bear the responsibility to affirm and support programs, legislation, research and organizations that protect and restore the vulnerable and the oppressed, the earth as well as the poor. This responsibility for a habitable environment is not just for human life, but for all life.

Therefore, we call on all of the members of the American Baptist Churches of the USA to:

6. Exert our influence in shaping public policy and insisting that industries, businesses, farmers and consumers relate to the environment in ways that are sensible, healthy and protective of its integrity.

SUPPORTING POSITION

American Baptist Resolution on Environmental Concerns

In furtherance of our Christian commitment, we call upon the American Baptist churches and denominational units to implement the spirit and intent of this resolution by immediately undertaking to:

2. Support strong legislation and administrative action, both state and federal, to clean up pollution of air, land and water; to establish strict controls to prevent pollution; and insist that adequate funding be provided and that action take place now.