D.C. DAY OF ACTION

May 10, 2023
Power for Purpose

The Reform Movement’s 2023 Campaign for CLIMATE JUSTICE

RAC.org/P4P
D.C. Day of Action
May 10-11, 2023

RABBI DAVID SPINRAD (HE/HIM)
Beth El Hebrew Congregation,
Alexandria, VA

SUSAN FRIEDBERG KALSON (SHE/HER)
Chair, Commission on Social Action
of Reform Judaism
Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam,
shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.
GOALS OF THE DAY OF ACTION

• Put pressure on the White House and Congress to take urgent action to combat climate change.

• Demonstrate the power of our Movement to ourselves and our elected officials.

• Kick off a Movement-wide Power for Purpose Campaign to combat climate change that will continue when we go back to our home communities.
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Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
JOY FRIEDMAN (SHE/HER)
Director of Organizing, RAC
D.C. DAY OF ACTION
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▪ Missouri
▪ Washington State
▪ New Mexico
▪ Oklahoma
▪ Ohio
▪ Michigan
▪ Maine
▪ Texas
▪ North Carolina
▪ Washington D.C.
▪ Georgia
▪ Florida
▪ Massachusetts
▪ California
▪ Illinois
▪ Connecticut
▪ Maryland
▪ Pennsylvania
▪ New York
▪ Virginia
▪ New Jersey
RABBI JONAH DOV PESNER (HE/HIM)
Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism & Senior Vice President, Union for Reform Judaism

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Reform Jews, black groups aim to protect voting rights

Starting in North Carolina, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism will educate and encourage voters

By JTA
April 18, 2023, 8:20 am | BE 3

JTA
'We march today because it’s what we have to do to sleep tonight': Jewish students on the March for Our Lives

Jewish students leading the Reform Movement to the March for Our Lives in Washington, D.C., March 24, 2018. (Hector Emanuel for the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism)

Opinions
I’m a rabbi. Here’s why my congregation offers sanctuary to undocumented immigrants.

By Jonathan Roos
April 14, 2017

Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
D.C. DAY OF ACTION
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The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Consultation on
Conscience

URJ
DEFINING THE PATH TOGETHER
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REFORM JEWS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

POWER FOR PURPOSE
RABBI HARA PERSON (SHE/HER)
Chief Executive,
Central Conference of American Rabbis

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RABBI JONAH DOV PESNER (HE/HIM)
Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism & Senior Vice President, Union for Reform Judaism

LATOSHA BROWN (SHE/HER)
Co-founder of Black Voters Matter

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Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
Climate Change as a Social Justice and Religious Issue
RAC D.C. Day of Action
Rabbi Rick Jacobs
May 10, 2023 - 19 Iyar 5783
Cherry picking a proof text or uncovering a core value?

כִּי לְיָהֳרָעָת
Ki lee ha’aretz
The earth belongs to Me
Leviticus 25:23
Behar

יהוה spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai:
Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: When you enter the land that I assign to you, the land shall observe a sabbath of the Eternal. Six years you may sow your field and six years you may prune your vineyard and gather in the yield. But in the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath of complete rest.

Leviticus 25:1-7

Every seventh year you shall practice remission of debts. This shall be the nature of the remission: all creditors shall remit the due that they claim from their fellow [Israelites]; they shall not dun their fellow [Israelites] or kin, for the remission proclaimed is of .יהוה

Deuteronomy 15:1-2

“The Sabbatical year comes to correct the situation of inequality and societal rifts, by removing a major source of power of the elite: debts owed to them........What the Sabbath achieves for the individual, the Shmita achieves with regard to the nation as a whole.”

Rav Kook, the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi in British Palestine, wrote of the shmita year of 1909-1910.
“Like the sinking of the Titanic, catastrophes are not democratic...a much higher fraction of passengers from the cheaper decks were lost. On the Titanic, most of the people in the third-class cabin could not get out, and 75% of them drowned. The first-class cabin fared better, as only 40% died.”

Henry I. Miller, Stanford University, NYT April 1, 2007

We’re already seeing the same phenomenon with climate change.
Day of Action or Day of Study?

Kiddushin 40b:8
Rabbi Tarfon and the Elders were once reclining in the upper story of Nithza's house, in Lydda, when this question was raised before them: Is study greater, or practice? Rabbi Tarfon answered, saying: "Practice is greater." Rabbi Akiva answered saying: "Study is great, for it leads to practice." Then they all answered and said: "Study is greater, for it leads to action."

“I prayed for twenty years but received no answer until I prayed with my legs.”
Frederick Douglass 1818 – 1895

1. What do these texts teach us about the hierarchy and efficacy of religious action?
2. Which is a greater danger:
   a. that study won't lead to effective actions or
   b. effective actions won't be grounded in thoughtful learning?
3. Which is the most essential spiritual practice we are required to perform and why:
   1. study  2. prayer  3. acts of healing/repair
4. Can our lobbying visits tomorrow be considered a primary religious act equal to prayer and study?
Blessings or Curses: Our Actions or God’s

If you follow My laws and faithfully observe My commandments, I will grant your rains in their season, so that the earth shall yield its produce and the trees of the field their fruit.

Your threshing shall overtake the vintage, and your vintage shall overtake the sowing; you shall eat your fill of bread and dwell securely in your land.

I will grant peace in the land, and you shall lie down untroubled by anyone; I will give the land respite from vicious beasts, and no sword shall cross your land.

Leviticus 26:3-6

Questions:

1. What is the connection between observing Mitzvot-commandments and environmental health or disaster?
2. How might human action or inaction trigger Divine responses bringing environmental blessings or curses?
3. Is the Torah text telling us that the future of our planet depends on us?

Leviticus 26:14-15,31-32
The Ner Tamid, Eternal light, of Westchester Reform Temple is a solar powered eternal light. There is no candle to rekindle every seven days or a bulb to replace every year. That means that the light will be eternal only as long the sun and the earth are in good shape. No part of this religion will mean very much if the world as we know it comes to an end. It’s a rather sobering thought.
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RAC.org/P4P
JORDAN BERG POWERS (HE/HIM)
Consultant, RAC
Ben Jealous (He/Him)
Executive Director, Sierra Club
Power for Purpose

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RAC.org/P4P
RABBI EMILY LOSBEN-OSTROV
(SHE/HER)
CAROLINA PEÑA-ALARCÓN (SHE/HER)

Project Manager, EcoMadres Program
Moms Clean Air Force
What Our Campaign Seeks to Win: 
Tactics to Achieve Stronger Environmental Protections 
May 10, 2023

DC Day of Action - Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

CAROLINA PEÑA 
ECOMADRES, PROGRAM MANAGER 
MOMS CLEAN AIR FORCE
EcoMadres is the Latino engagement program of Moms Clean Air Force, a national community of more than 1.5 million parents and caregivers united to protect children from air pollution and climate change.
EcoMadres Goals

• **PROVIDE** reliable and culturally appropriate information and educational resources
• **AMPLIFY** storytelling and empower members to the decision-making process.
• **ENGAGE** decision-makers at the local, state, and federal levels to advocate for just and equitable climate change solutions, environmental justice and health equity.
• **ENHANCE** language access and funding opportunities to our communities through education and outreach in states across the country.
Air Pollution and Latino Communities

- Nearly **36%** of Americans—119.6 million people—still live in places with **failing grades** for unhealthy levels of ozone or particle pollution.

- People of color are **64% more likely** than white people to live in a county with a failing grade.

- Over **23 million Latinos** in the US live in counties where the air doesn’t meet public health standards for smog.
Engagement on Rulemakings for Strong Health Protections

Engaging in EPA’s public comment periods and public hearings offers an opportunity to make your voice heard—and to influence the environmental standards.

Protect the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the soil we grow our food in.
Mercury is a highly toxic heavy metal. In the US, the biggest source of mercury pollution is coal-fired power plants. The mercury spewed falls on waterways and enters the food chain. Certain fish can have dangerous amounts of mercury in their bodies, and when people eat the fish, we get it in our bodies too.

In adults, high level mercury exposure can harm the brain, heart, kidneys, lungs, and immune system. Mercury exposure can cause brain damage in infants. And it can affect children’s ability to walk, talk, read, and learn.

2020 Mercury Emissions from the Most Polluting Coal Plants (in pounds)

Note: Emissions associated with EGUs with scheduled retirements through 2025 are excluded.
Mercury and other air toxics disproportionately harm vulnerable populations.

- Native American populations where fishing is a vital part of culture
- Black communities living below the poverty line in the Southeast who rely on fish they catch for food
- Latino communities because of a combination of cultural, economic and linguistic factors
Building Political Power

Meetings with elected officials, government agencies, administrative agencies and officials, to ensure our community’s concerns are heard, and are central to the policy making process.
Increasing Public Awareness: Informational Webinars

EcoMadres hosted a bilingual Cafecito series to discuss air quality monitoring in Colorado.

Several Colorado communities and groups received grant funding, including Cultivando, funded by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the American Rescue Plan.
Cafecitos and EcoCharlas

- To make connections; build trust
- Learn how to take actions that promote environmental health equity within your community
- Connect people to their power
EcoMusica
Music educates, inspires hope, moves people to act
What We Aim to Win

Stronger protections are needed to protect the health of families across the country.

It is critical for policymakers to recognize the unique vulnerabilities our communities face and prioritize solutions that help clean up the air we breathe.

We must demand that our leaders take action to reduce health hazards – for Latinos, and for the nation as a whole.
Take Action For Clean Air & Environmental Justice

CONTACT US!

ecomadres@momscleanairforce.org

@ecomadres_

@ecomadres_

facebook.com/EcoMadresUSA

Join EcoMadres and Moms Clean Air Force in telling your elected officials to why clean air and environmental justice is important to you!
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OUR ASKS OF THE WHITE HOUSE

End of 2023: enact carbon rules to put power plants on track to 80% clean energy

End of 2023: enact strong standards on soot, smog, and mercury

At the end of the Summer: Join a follow-up meeting with us
OUR ASKS OF CONGRESS

Support for Regulations

Encourage the Biden administration to propose and /or finalize strong standards to limit climate pollution. Please speak out publicly, including on social media and in the press.

Support increased funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Please fulfill President Biden's budget request for $12.083 billion in Fiscal Year 2024 and fully fund the Clean Air and Climate program.

EPA Funding

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ACTING IN OUR OWN COMMUNITIES

• Mobilizing individuals to submit comments.
• Collecting comments from local green business owners and local elected officials.
Take Action Now: Submit a Comment to Limit Climate Pollution from the burning of Fossil Fuels.
Scan the code or visit RAC.org/P4PAction
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