ecoAmerica would like to thank the following partners for their collaboration and support, both intellectually and financially, for the 2019 American Climate Leadership Summit.

**HOSTS**
- The Kresge Foundation
- EDF
- United Church of Christ
- AGU 100

**PARTNERS**
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Trust for Public Land
- Environmental Defense Fund
- African Methodist Episcopal Church
- National Environmental Health Association
- Climate Central
- The George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health
- Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health
- Sachamama
- Land Trust Alliance
- The United Methodist General Board of Church and Society
- Greenopia
- American Psychological Association
- American Geophysical Union
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- American Baptist Churches USA
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- Bonwood Social Investments
- The Nature Conservancy
- American Baptist Churches USA
- Creation Justice Ministries

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- Erin Hesket, Land Trust Alliance
- John Hill, The United Methodist General Board of Church and Society
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- Lexi Shultz, American Geophysical Union
- Meighen Speiser, ecoAmerica
- Derek Walker, Environmental Defense Fund
- Elizabeth Ward, Land Trust Alliance
- James R. Whitehead, American College of Sports Medicine

**Special Note:** ecoAmerica takes no position on specific climate policies, however we do have a vision, set of principles, and commitment for climate advocacy and action, located online at ecoAmerica.org/about

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**THANK YOU TO OUR EMCEES**
- Vanessa Hauc, Correspondent, Noticias Telemundo
- Meighen Speiser, Executive Director, ecoAmerica
- Shantha Alonso, Executive Director, Creation Justice Ministries

**OPENING PRAYER + MEDITATION**
- Rev. Dr. Gerald Durley, Pastor Emeritus, Providence Missionary Baptist Church of Atlanta, Georgia
Dear Climate Leaders,

Thank you for joining us at the American Climate Leadership Summit (ACLS19) to share and collaborate on breakthroughs to expand public support and political will for climate solutions.

Over two days, we learned the latest on climate from experts in their fields, and participated in working sessions to collaborate on strategies to transform climate action into a true national priority.

Important discussions were had, issues raised, and ideas seeded. We must now bring our ideas out of the room and keep them moving forward to catalyze more diverse and effective climate action.

We learned a great deal, and hope you did too. Now is the time for us all to bring the ideas generated at ACLS19 forward to reality.

In this spirit, we provide you this Recommendations Report, complete with speaker summaries and working session outputs. We ask that you join us in incorporating these learnings into your go-forward plans, and to connect and collaborate with us and each other for leverage, scale, and speed.

We know we can still solve the problem — the technology, policies, and finances are at hand. To be successful, we need strong public support and political will, and to diversify our movement to be more inclusive, just, and equitable. We can implement these ideas and change our trajectory. The time for breakthrough is now.

ecoAmerica would like to thank our Summit co-hosts: African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, American Geophysical Union, The Episcopal Church, The Environmental Defense Fund, The Kresge Foundation, Milken Institute School of Public Health at The George Washington University, The Trust for Public Land, United Church of Christ, and William K. Bowes, Jr. Foundation, as well as our generous partners, who contributed their intellectual and financial support to bring the Summit to life.

Thank you for the many ways you lead on climate. We look forward to collaborating with you, and to seeing you at an even more dynamic and inclusive ACLS 2020.

Sincerely,

Bob Perkowitz
President
ecoAmerica

Meighen Speiser
Executive Director
ecoAmerica

For most of us, things seem to be going quite well. Our families, careers, economy, and life immediately around us are fairly fine. But if you look a bit more broadly, things aren’t going so well. We’re amidst what we call “the new normal.” Our climate is changing. Record wildfires, flooding, storms and temperatures abound through the U.S. and world. In the 1980s there were about 250 major environmental disasters a year. Now there are 750 a year and growing. What we thought was queued up for 2100 is here today.

Right now, there’s a third more carbon in the atmosphere than there has been at any time in the last 800,000 years, when the world was a very different place.

We need to dramatically and immediately begin reducing our emissions. We are here to achieve breakthroughs that will cause this to happen.

We have had a bunch of breakthroughs already. In particular the cost of wind and solar have come down to a small fraction of what they were. The cost of lithium ion batteries has fallen by 86% in the past five years, 30% last year alone.

In America, five states, and more than 100 cities have committed to 100% clean energy. The entire continent of Europe, 28 countries, have a plan to go to zero net emissions by 2050. That’s what we all need to do. And, America should be leading.

We can turn this whole thing around. We have to build resilience in our personalities and in our communities. We can actually restore our climate and have a healthier, more beautiful, and cleaner planet. The breakthrough we need is really a breakthrough for each of us personally. We need to amplify our actions and effectiveness and shift our organizations, communities, country, and the planet to a clean energy future, now.

“We need to dramatically and immediately begin reducing our emissions. We are here to achieve breakthroughs that will cause this to happen.”
Recent IPCC and NCA reports indicate we need a rapid transition to climate solutions. America’s climate experts shared information on how breakthroughs on solutions are accessible and accelerating. Session Video HERE

Moderated by Frank Loy
ecoAmerica Board Member, Former Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs, United States Department of State

We need a broader array of Americans who care about climate, and are willing to support political, personal, and corporate action. We also need a sense of urgency. We can’t assume a regular path of effort and technological discovery, because that regular path, in terms of time, is not going to cut it. Climate solutions must work for all of our citizenry. We must recognize the issue of environmental justice. And, we must work in a way that can gain the support of both political parties which we do not have today.

Ellen R. Stofan, PhD
Director, Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum
Former Chief Scientist, NASA
If you can measure it, you can manage it. More than 16 satellites look at the earth every day in different ways, and that information can create pathways to solutions. Earth observation data is powerful, actionable information that we can use to understand better the planet and its geology, biology, and oceans. Breakthroughs in earth observation data will drive the breakthroughs we need to address climate change. On this 50th anniversary of humans on the Moon, let’s make climate solutions our next “moon shot.”

Ken Kimmell
President, Union of Concerned Scientists
There are two climate goals to keep in mind. The first is getting to net zero by mid-century to prevent runaway climate change. The second is to reduce greenhouse gases as early as we can. We have the technologies now (efficiency, renewables, electrification, land sinks), but they need to be fueled by more ambitious policies. We need to expand political will to move these forward. We also need a breakthrough in our own thinking, to consider technologies that may not be our personal favorites, and approach solutions with openness.

Jay Faison
Founder, ClearPath
We are a representative democracy. What we say drives up through the chain and our politics. Politics drive the policy. Policy drives industry and solutions. We need policy! And, we have made progress. The DOE’s budget on clean energy R&D has increased over the past 3 years, including 15% in 2018. Appropriations like 45Q allow carbon capture to be “in the money.” Getting carbon capture technology off the ground, and scaling it up to bring the costs down gives us a shot at one of the thorniest problems that we have in climate change.

Brad Palmer
Chairman, Project Drawdown
We can solve global warming. Even with the most conservative assumptions we can drawdown carbon in the next 30 years. Project Drawdown has outlined 100 solutions. Some are surprising! The single most impactful solution, for instance, is properly managing and disposing of HFC used in refrigerators and air conditioners. Securing the rights of women and girls can also have a positive impact on the atmosphere. When you add up giving girls education and doctors, it actually is the number one solution to climate change.
BREAKTHROUGHS: CLEAN ENERGY, EFFICIENCY, STORAGE

National clean energy, efficiency and storage experts will share the good news on breakthroughs in accessibility, reliability, and cost competitiveness, and discuss the personal benefits for Americans and our nation.

Session Video HERE

Moderated by Phil Sharp
ecoAmerica Board Chair, Former President, Resources for the Future

It is imperative that we begin to act on climate as a nation and with other nations. A lot is happening to address the serious challenge in front of us, by governments around the world, corporations, and many organizations. Our federal government is starting to talk about fueling technological innovation, building on the progress of clean energy and electrification in other countries. But we must exercise our first amendment rights to pressure policymakers to advance solutions we can implement now, and on new innovations to protect our children and grandchildren.

Tom Kiernan
President + CEO, American Wind and Energy Association

We have more wind under construction in this country than ever before. Wind turbine and solar technicians have either been the fastest or second fastest growing profession in this country, so if you're a young person looking for a job, get into wind or solar. Wind capacity has more than tripled since 2008, and can power over 30 million homes. While it can be variable, it is reliable. Wind is the cheapest source of new electricity unsubsidized. It's doggone affordable and Americans want it! But we need more transmission, and a price on carbon.

Bret Kugelmass
Managing Director, Energy Impact Center

How can we reverse climate change rather than just attempt to slow it down? The energy inside of an atom is 1 million times more powerful than burning fossil fuels. That incredible power is probably the reason we are so wary of it now. If we are going to tackle climate change, a problem 1,000 times harder than anything we've ever encountered before, it would be nice to have a tool 1 million times more powerful. We need powerful energy to undo 100 years of previous energy emissions.

Christine McEntee
Executive Director + CEO, American Geophysical Union

AGU is a community of 110,000 scientists in 168 countries who study all aspects of earth, oceans, atmosphere, space, and the sun — science for the benefit of humanity. Our Thriving Earth Exchange connects our scientists with communities, and nearly 100 projects currently benefit over 10 million people. We can help you find a scientist to assist you with local solutions, ranging from convincing your city, county, or state government to do really impactful policy to helping you develop a monitoring or applied solution.

Derek Walker
Vice President for U.S. Climate, Environmental Defense Fund

There is no future path to prosperity without strong climate solutions. Solving methane emissions is the biggest thing we can do to slow down the pace of warming. EDF is partnering with local government and organizations in Puerto Rico to develop renewable energy and a micro-grid system. This will provide clean power, and the system can be unplugged from the main grid. This will allow communities, especially in rural areas, to have access to critical services even after a disaster, which is good for safety, reliability, and energy access.
There is an array of land management practices where nature can play a key role in taking carbon pollution out of the air. We can better manage our forests across the country, reforest places like Louisiana, restore grasslands in Montana, and encourage low-till and no-till farming in Iowa. Our coastal ecosystems, like tidal marshes and mangroves can also help remove carbon from the atmosphere. Every part of the country has a meaningful role to play, and has ecosystems that can contribute to solving the problem. But we must protect them accordingly.

Jason Albritton
Director of U.S. Energy Policy, The Nature Conservancy

We know that it’s important to engage the real economy of cities, states, universities, faith-based groups, and businesses. World Wildlife Fund has built partnerships around the world with some of the world’s largest businesses, and the results are encouraging. The business community has begun to create a nonpartisan community of actors that have committed to working together on climate change. And they are now beginning to experiment with new trade associations and ways of engaging governments that could unlock the key to moving on the issue in both energy and land use.

Carter Roberts
President + CEO, World Wildlife Fund

Our natural systems clean our air, store carbon, protect us from heat, provide us sustenance, and make our communities more beautiful and resilient. National conservation and environmental leaders shared breakthroughs on how nature provides powerful climate solutions. Session Video HERE

Moderated by Lisa Renstrom
ecoAmerica Board Member, Trustee / Former President Bonwood Social Investments / Sierra Club

When America begins entrepreneurially, energetically, and enthusiastically solving the climate dilemma, nature will be on our side. We understand nature’s power when it manifests as a hurricane, wildfire, or flood, and we can be amazed at its daily power to sequester carbon. As every crop, tree, flower, and blade of grass grows, it sequesters carbon, as do our oceans and wetlands. But, all of us need to empower nature to do its thing, and we need to diversity the movement to ensure we meet this goal equitably.

Andrew Bowman
President, Land Trust Alliance

The Nature Conservancy did a study last year showing that a fifth of U.S. emissions can be prevented or sequestered by natural climate solutions. To get reforestation and improved agricultural practices to scale, we need to get revenue streams to the owners of working lands. If we find a way that moves dollars to rural landowners across the country on a regular basis, whether through regulatory processes or federal programs for subsidies and incentives, it could change the political calculus around climate policy.

Robert Bonnie
Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, U.S. Department of Agriculture

There’s great alignment for the types of practices to reduce emissions, and the things that landowners, farmers, ranchers, and forest owners already want to do to make their operations more profitable and sustainable. Conservation tillage, cover crops, and nutrient management can benefit the climate and improve landowners’ bottom lines. And we can improve forest health (by thinning, introducing natural and prescribed fires), which will improve the ability of ecosystems to store carbon and make them more resilient to climate impacts.

Carter Roberts
President + CEO, World Wildlife Fund

We know that it’s important to engage the real economy of cities, states, universities, faith-based groups, and businesses. World Wildlife Fund has built partnerships around the world with some of the world’s largest businesses, and the results are encouraging. The business community has begun to create a nonpartisan community of actors that have committed to working together on climate change. And they are now beginning to experiment with new trade associations and ways of engaging governments that could unlock the key to moving on the issue in both energy and land use.
The Green New Deal and “Fee and Dividend” have joined Cap-and-Trade, Fee-and-Invest, and Price and Block Grant in the competitive world for climate policy solutions in the U.S. Economist Bob Litterman and Sunrise Movement Co-Founder Evan Weber joined ecoAmerica President Bob Perkowitz for a discussion to bring clarity to these options.

Litterman, a board member of the Climate Leadership Council championed the “Fee and Dividend” approach, an increasing tax on GHG emissions coupled with border adjustments, with the funds distributed on a per capita basis to all Americans.

Weber advocated for the Green New Deal (GND), a broader approach that would guarantee good paying jobs, quality health care, housing, and a clean and thriving natural world while achieving net zero emissions by 2030.

Both recognized the need for rapid, extreme reductions in carbon pollution. Litterman recognized the risks of proceeding without adequate action, economic advantages of a price on carbon, equity in distributing revenues on a per capita basis to all citizens, and the need to bring in business and conservatives with a practical solution. Weber spoke of the need for political and social solutions appropriate for the scale of the problem, and the popularity of the GND amongst progressives and younger Americans. Perkowitz probed the weaknesses of each option, and sought to find common ground between the solutions to achieve the highest possibility for success in the 2020 elections and next congress.
We need everyone working together and included in climate action. Climate solutions need to be just and equitable. Diverse national leaders will share ideas for true breakthroughs on climate justice, inclusion, just transition, and intergenerational equity.

**Session Video HERE**

Moderated by Dr. Jalonne White-Newsome
Senior Program Officer, The Kresge Foundation

As an environmental justice advocate I realized that community members were valued and respected by agencies and policymakers because they had important experience and expertise. Inclusion is important. For example, I was working with low income seniors in Detroit to figure out how we were going to protect them from extreme heat. I made sure that the folks who were most impacted (these seniors) were part of the solution. We all acknowledged that the city services and infrastructure weren’t enough and that real change was needed. The seniors were critical in achieving this goal.

**Evan Weber**
Co-Founder, Sunrise Movement

The Sunrise Movement includes Americans of all walks of life. We’re from the mountains, coasts and plains, of many colors and creeds, and we find strength and unite across our differences to protect our shared home. We stand with other movements who share our values to unite and win political power. We know that climate change requires government action at every level of our society. We’ve been intentional about uplifting diverse voices, and that’s been helpful as people from diverse backgrounds flock to our movement.

**Carlos Zegarra**
Executive Director, Sachamama

My organization focuses on engaging with communities on the ground. We create safe spaces for people to understand the cultural relevance of climate change. We support them to come forward with their stories, concerns, interests, and challenges. For the last four years the response has been amazing. Latinx communities care about the environment, conservation, and are ready and willing to support a clean energy economy. Our job is to make sure we provide the tools, information, and ecosystem for those communities to rise up.

**Danielle Deane-Ryan**
Director, Inclusive Clean Economy, Trust for America’s Health

We fund work on climate solutions and economy, plus efforts for full inclusion in our democracy. We support organizations on the ground that help ensure the jobs and wealth building opportunities from clean energy policies get to the people that need them most. We care about building a strong movement that is designing good policy without any blind spots, so we ensure our board is diverse. We also listen to people that are closest to the problem. Our environmental justice leaders remind us, “nothing about us, without us.”

**Heidi Binko**
Executive Director + Co-Founder, Just Transition Fund

The Just Transition Fund helps communities transition off coal and to a new energy economy. It’s critical for us as a country to realize that if we’re not investing in solutions or helping these communities create a viable economic future beyond coal, we’re building a significant amount of political resistance to clean energy solutions. Frontline communities have to be at the center of climate solutions. Coal communities in particular have powered our country for over 100 years. They’ve sacrificed and we cannot leave them behind as we rethink this next new clean energy economy.
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Polls show Americans are concerned about climate change, and want Dems and Reps to partner on solutions. But, we need to move past partisan politics and rhetoric. Social science, communications, and campaign experts shared breakthrough ideas to move the public from climate reticence to political will. Session Video HERE

Moderated by Bob Perkowitz
President, ecoAmerica

Polls indicate that progressive Democrats now rank climate change as their #1 or #2 issue, while conservative Republicans rank it dead last. In between are millions of Americans who are getting more concerned, but remain inactive on the issue. ecoAmerica reaches these people by empowering trusted institutions in the faith, health, and local community sectors to visibly lead, act and advocate on climate change. This strategy brings the leverage, scale, and credibility needed to make climate change a winning political issue in 2020.

Celinda Lake
President, Lake Research Partners

The public is ahead of the political dialogue on climate. They want to get going on solutions and see the health and economic benefits. Green New Deal tested well early on, but half of America has no idea what it is. The opposition has dampened its popularity, but when you describe the components of the platform, each is very popular. Removing carbon pollution from the air, job training to transition to a clean economy, and speeding up the transition to clean renewable energy all have majority support.

Karen Florini
Vice President for Programs, Climate Central

We help Americans understand climate change with localized and visual information. One way we provide this information is to meteorologists. We also have an online tool that allows you to get information on flooding for any coastal location in the United States. And we just released a research brief about how sea level rise will impact houses of worship in coastal communities around America. By making it real and local, we make it personal, and that’s the way climate becomes a priority.

Joe Romm, PhD
Founding Editor, ThinkProgress.org

All the world’s greatest stories have been about intense engagement. The basis for engagement is getting people to remember what you said, and how you made them feel. When you tell stories, you need to use the narrative structure that creates emotional engagement. First the set-up second, the conflict, and third the resolution or personal change. In short, the hero’s journey. We need to connect emotionally with Americans on climate, and the Green New Deal could be a powerful metaphor to do so.

Matthew C. Nisbet, PhD
Professor of Communication, Policy, + Urban Affairs, Northeastern University

We need to stop the degradation of how we relate to each other and instead talk about climate change. Almost every policy debate has become a competition between two intensely hostile teams in which partisans engage in relentless stereotyping, prejudice, and emotional volatility. The more we become angry the less likely we are to treat our opponents as human beings or be able to find common ground. When you listen to your neighbor you see that deep down we’re the same, and you hunger to deepen that connection. Conversation about climate change should start with shared identities, ideals, and beliefs to establish the context in which a more thoughtful conversation can take place.
All ACLS19 participants were invited to collaborate on breakthrough ways to build public support and political will for climate solutions in areas of society that are well-positioned to accelerate action on the issue. Their ideas are summarized below, with intention to bring these to life in 2020.

1. **Youth:** Connect students with opportunities to take ownership in the climate movement. Make a database of local or regional environmental nonprofits to share with school environmental clubs, youth groups, and sports teams that use public parks. Provide resources, promotional materials, and networking assistance to student leaders, to affirm and support their climate leadership.

2. **Millennials:** Take advantage of political and civic engagement tools in social media to get out the vote. Tell personal stories and share why you support climate action on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to reach them where they are. Authenticity is critical.

3. **Diverse Constituencies:** Expand diversity efforts within the climate movement by working to ensure equitable funding opportunities for minority groups. Recognize institutional racism in both top-down and bottom-up approaches to the issue. Center racial and ethnic diversity in all programs and efforts from the beginning of planning.

4. **Conservatives:** Support bipartisan omnibus bills and invite everyone in Congress to submit their proposed solutions as a wish list. Start off with carbon pricing, R&D on advanced energy technologies, soil carbon capture incentives, and climate resilient jobs programs. Campaign for them with a focus on Americans in the political center and center-right.

5. **Rural:** Build trust within rural communities by having them drive decisions about where to allocate federal and state investments. Democratize the distribution of funding from block grants, emissions trading revenues, and disaster relief programs so they reach areas that can least cope with rising costs and damages.

6. **Local Communities:** Design disaster recovery and resilience programs with cross-discipline community feedback at all levels. Include household, business, institutional, and local government representatives in the planning process to proactively prepare for climate disasters before they happen. Support legislation that incentivizes regenerative agricultural practices and incorporates social vulnerability in both mitigation and adaptation. Develop methods to increase political accountability, like climate report cards for elected officials.

7. **Health Professionals:** Bring climate information to the local level where healthcare providers and public health professionals can personalize messages. Focus on social determinants of health to ensure that climate solutions are not just equitable but also comprehensive and sustainable. Establish a large movement across the different health disciplines and career stages that trains health professionals on both impacts and solutions.

8. **Faith:** Provide resources for the educational programs of faith traditions that highlight the environmental parts of scripture and position statements. Cultivate a sense of hope and enthusiasm about creation care and building a just, sustainable world. Set up concrete actions for newly motivated people to take afterward, like energy audits and advocacy trainings.

9. **Parents:** Create sound bites of climate information, with suggestions for activities that make the most of their limited time, like getting the kids to recycle. Work through PTAs and pediatricians using hands-on learning wherever possible. Parents are busy, but not too busy to care.

10. **Older Adults:** Hold educational events, incorporating messages that emphasize their values, particularly around their sense of duty to their families, communities, and desire to contribute to solutions. Help them listen to younger voices and become good mentors.
Hon. Sheldon Whitehouse  
Senator (D-RI)  
United States Senate  

My job is to give you the field report on climate change. It’s not exactly what you think. I have had private conversations with Republican colleagues who want a solution to climate change and are embarrassed at the position of their party but don’t feel that they have a safe place to come out on climate without suffering enormous political retribution.

Something happened in January 2010 that stopped bipartisanship like a heart attack. The Supreme Court, at the request of the fossil fuel industry said big special interests can spend unlimited amounts of money in American politics. What Citizens United did was allow special interest to spend unlimited amounts of money in politics anonymously behind shell corporations, front groups, and donor advised trusts. There’s a whole apparatus of obscuring whose hand it is that operates now. Then these guys did something very clever. They focused it entirely on the Republican Party. They said we are going to take over this party. We are going to extinguish in this party any bipartisanship on climate change. It also masked what is going on as partisanship. The brute in my ecosystem is the US Chamber of Commerce. They are my most inveterate enemy in getting anything done on climate change. They don’t reveal their funding but I suspect that the fossil fuel industry has just poured immense amount of money into the US Chamber of Commerce, allowing them to become the political powerhouse that they are. But the price of that is climate denial and obstruction. That’s the problem.

And I’ll tell you what, it’s starting to work. They’re starting to feel the pressure. Just the other day the head of the Chamber of Commerce did a scripted interview with a reporter to say that they’re not going to be so mean and partisan anymore. It happens to coincide with the House moving into Democratic hands. We need to put pressure on the companies who support these organizations to get them to knock it off. I know in my heart that if my Republican colleagues woke up one day and the Chamber of Commerce was sincerely saying “OK, game over” that would change everything in Washington.  

We as a country can make it socially and commercially unacceptable to belong to these climate denier organizations.  

Lisa Jackson  
Vice President, Environment, Policy+ Social Initiatives  
Apple  

It’s important that we recommit ourselves to stopping the pollution that impacts our health today and threatens to rob our children’s future. We know that 16 percent of premature deaths across the world are the result of exposure to pollution. That’s 9 million human beings, three times more than those who die from tuberculosis, malaria, and AIDS combined. We are exposing our youngest children to the worst hazards. One in four kids under the age of five are dying because of causes related to an unhealthy environment. Four million kids each year develop asthma simply as a result of the unfortunate instance that their families live near major highways. No child should struggle to breathe and no mother should face their child not being able to breathe because of the problems associated with where they live because of air pollution. It’s time to stop talking and it’s time to act. If we think about actions to fight climate change as opportunities to invest in public health we will make our world healthier and more just. Every one of you has the opportunity to speak to get people to understand that it’s not about polar bears, and it’s not about glaciers, it’s about them, it’s about their children, their grandchildren.

Keynote video shared with in-person attendees.
Health leaders discussed climate solutions as tools to breakthroug on health equity and environmental justice, and innovative ways for health professionals to support cross-sector efforts. Session Video HERE

Leyla McCurdy, MPhil
Chair, Climate for Health Leadership Circle

Climate change is the greatest public health threat. As climate leaders, we understand that addressing climate change will improve health, especially for the most vulnerable. We can use our trusted voices to promote health, justice, and equity through climate solutions. That’s exactly what the Climate for Health initiative strives to do. Climate for Health is a national initiative led by a diverse network of health leaders. We offer tools and resources to health leaders to inspire and empower them to take action for climate solutions. A breakthrough will take all of us working together. Thank you for your commitment and leadership.

Moderated by Georges C. Benjamin, MD
Executive Director, American Public Health Association

We announced last fall that we are establishing a new Center for Climate, Health, and Equity. The science is clear that climate change is impacting our health now, and is preventable. If you leave today with no other message, you must understand that this is not an issue for the future; it is today’s issue. Some mitigation and adaptation efforts we are undertaking have health co-benefits, but the real truth is that it’s all about our health. Health is not a secondary issue, it is a primary issue.

Gail Christopher, DN
Chair of the Board, Trust for America’s Health

The people suffering from climate change are disproportionately communities of color. My breakthrough was connecting our work to overcome society’s belief in a hierarchy of human value and the work to move our country to act on climate. We must come together as one community and jettison our belief that some people have more value than others. We also need to calculate the health costs of asthma, chronic disease, and stress-related diseases and mental health consequences of climate. The scale of costs will make sense to the greatest skeptics.

David T. Dyjack, Dr. PH, CIH
Executive Director, National Environmental Health Association

If we want breakthroughs in health, all health professional credentialing needs to include climate and health criteria. But, we should not confuse expertise and leadership. Let’s focus on influence and be dynamic followers, especially of the great citizen science work happening. We also need to change ourselves before we ask other people to change. NEHA is committed to decoupling itself from fossil fuels; offering carbon offsets for conferences and walkable meetings, for instance. NEHA wants to mold our profession so that it is more productive, useful, and reasonable in the future.

Alonzo L. Plough, PhD, MPH, MA
Chief Science Officer and Vice President for Research-Evaluation-Learning, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

We work to build a culture where everybody in America has a fair and just opportunity for health and well-being. Addressing climate change is a critical way to address health inequities and build health equities. Climate and health solutions lie in comprehensive community health and a cross-sector approach. We can follow the environmental justice community who has been linking lived experience and inequity, politically and economically. We can organize around issues of inequity and climate change to holistically address systemic inequities that permeate our society.
Faith leaders shared how faith communities are breaking through on climate solutions through interfaith climate leadership and growth in congregational awareness, community involvement, and advocacy across America. Introduced by Anita Fête Crews. Session Video HERE

Moderated by Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker
Founding President / Chair, Social Action Committee, Ward Economic Development Corporation / AME Church
As faith communities, we find ourselves dealing with a number of challenges, but we know that we have the answer in our faith walk. It is about being faithful to the task we have all been given as human beings to steward this earth. We believe that today we start anew. Today we unmute ourselves in a very special way. The conversations we have with others about climate change will be the breakthrough solution we need to address it in our congregations and in our communities.

Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer
General Minister + President, United Church of Christ
Our call to be stewards over creation was turned into a mandate to be dominions over creation. In 2013, the United Church of Christ named this truth and became the first religious body in the world to call for divestment from fossil fuels. Many faith institutions have now done the same. Breakthrough solutions happen when we stand firm, and publicly tell the stories of embodying our commitment to stewardship. The power of our narratives generates not just enthusiasm for, but commitments to, global justice.

Melody Zhang
Climate Justice Campaign Coordinator / Co-Chair, Sojourners / Young Evangelicals for Climate Action
In the U.S., the energy and creativity for bold climate action is coming from young people and, most often, young women. The vast majority of young people tell us that they see climate change as the issue of our time. Convicted by our faith to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to keep and protect our earth, we act. We do not, cannot, give up, and it is that leadership by our faithful youth which is leading us to breakthrough solutions on the climate crisis.

Huda Alkaff
Founder + Director, Wisconsin Green Muslims
At this time of environmental and climate injustices it is important for us to do everything we can. Since 2005, we have worked on justice issues related to climate change, clean air, pure water, healthy foods, solar energy, energy efficiency, waste reduction and transit equity. We designate a single theme for each month. This diverse approach, grounded in our collective common values, enables us to break through, connect, partner and collaborate with a variety of constituents who join our open circle at the point of entry that matches their interest.

Rabbi Jonah Pesner
Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
The whole family of God’s creation calls to us at this moment, bringing us here. With the tens of millions of people in our churches, mosques, synagogues, and other houses of worship who vote, we can have a really powerful alignment on climate. The faith community has an incredible impact, so we must partner with one another and across lines of difference, as one family. Only then we can then make the institutional breakthrough we need to pass federal, state and local legislation addressing the climate crisis.

Faith and Climate Change Breakthroughs:

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General Minister + President, United Church of Christ

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Cities are where the rubber meets the road for climate impacts and solutions. Local leaders discussed breaking down silos and engaging residents to work collaboratively on climate breakthroughs. Session Video HERE

Moderated by Jonathan Prafrey
Executive Director, Climate Resolve

L.A. has tremendous challenges with its freeways and sprawl, but it has made great strides. With the help of the ecoAmerica partnership, the city engaged its citizens, passed a major transit tax, and pledged to be 80% carbon free by 2030 and 100% carbon free by 2050. It initiated a cool roofs policy and a cool streets plan, using reflective materials to reduce urban heat. It is developing a resilience plan, and Mayor Garcetti just announced an L.A. Green New Deal. It also is part of a regional climate collaborative.

Brendan Shane
Climate Director, The Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land cares about open space. Parks and green spaces absorb flood waters, reduce urban heat, and provide resilient buffers for climate impacts. Parks also bring people together, and build community by providing safe gathering spaces. At one Philadelphia school there was an asphalt lot with surface temperatures of 115°F in the summer, which is not ideal for kids. The school changed this into a water smart playground, that also cools the area, and captures storm water, resulting in a better playground and quality of life.

Lori Tremmel Freeman
Chief Executive Officer, National Association of County and City Health Officials

3,000 local health departments across the US address risks and impacts of local climate change, including vector borne diseases, respiratory illness from air pollution, urban heat islands, and food shortages. Other public health issues include displacement and mental health. Each of us faces impacts of climate, but there are disproportionate impacts on the elderly, young, disabled, pregnant women, and immigrants. Up to 200 million climate refugees might be displaced by 2050. We need to engage underrepresented communities in the design and implementation plans for solutions.

Jennifer Watson Roberts
58th Mayor / Director, Path to Positive Communities, Charlotte, NC / ecoAmerica

Climate impacts last beyond the storms and disasters. In North Carolina (NC), Hurricane Florence left one third of the counties as disaster areas. Schools still need $2 billion in repairs, FEMA money has been slow, and some towns may cease to exist because of the costs. While NC received $11 million in mental health assistance because families are traumatized it isn’t enough. The biggest challenge in communities is the need to break down silos in governance and funding.

Hon. Hattie Portis-Jones
Councilmember, City of Fairburn, GA

I got involved in climate action when I saw trees being torn down in my town. It’s a climate and a quality of life issue: trees add shade, beauty, and a higher real estate value. Citizens need to speak up and let elected officials know what they care about. More voices — advocacy with a broad coalition — can move policy. Take a pledge, then take implementation one step at a time. Something visible and real can motivate people to do even more.
CROSS-SECTOR CLIMATE ADVOCACY

West Coast
We need a national, visible movement like a bicycle tour across the nation, working with state-level coalitions such as healthcare groups, environmental justice groups, and tribal organizations in which organizers from the community are paid. Tangible, legislative solutions, such as carbon pricing (proposed in WA) could move the region and nation forward on climate. Native American tribes and health associations can come together and demand climate action, supported by training and funding. We would intentionally connect and make room for people of color to be in positions of power. We could partner further on a joint policy statement on climate and health, including equity and mental health.

Southern Great Plains
While respecting that livelihoods are deeply connected to oil and gas in this region, we must educate people about climate realities and efforts to create a just transition to wind and solar energy. Using Houston as a case study, we can work toward climate resilience despite deep, generations-long investment in oil and gas. Frontline communities affected by environmental pollution must mobilize and share their stories, as should working-class individuals (whose lives may be dependent on oil and gas) to help both sides understand and foster compassion. This brings balance to climate progress in economies tied to fossil fuels.

Southeast Region & Puerto Rico
We can build climate ambassadors who are lifelong learners, using non-polarizing language focused on flooding, storm preparations, pollution, clean energy, and a just transition. States can lead peer-to-peer education to promote energy efficiency, planting trees and building up forests. We must identify those most impacted, create a safe space for them to share their stories, and help them advocate in ways in which their voices will be heard. We must let go of social hierarchies and welcome everyone, starting where people are, discussing climate in terms of what matters to them, and making it personal and powerful. We should help people to learn to navigate political systems and self-advocate, especially in 2020.

Northeast & Mid-Atlantic
More can be done to fuel RPS, solar, electric vehicles, public transit, and climate preparedness. We can form a collaboration to unify states on GHG goals, like RGGI, that are locally implemented. Goals must include resilient, efficient, transit-oriented housing (with improvements in construction, equity, transit, job markets, and affordability to prevent displacement), and getting (equitable and accessible) transportation, manufacturing and PA into RGGI. We can redesign the Green Infrastructure Fund and Healthy Climate Initiative for state competition to achieve regional goals. We can follow an inclusive stakeholder planning process with capacity building and micro-grants for inclusive innovation, shifting power toward hyper-local community leaders. We can help youth, universities, hospitals and faith institutions to collaborate on projects and showcase ideas. We can issue “strange bedfellows” Op-Eds, tell people’s stories, and help people see what a post-coal economy looks like (with the benefits it brings).

Midwest
Commitment to renewable energy needs to be more aggressive. We can invigorate the Midwest Climate Network multi-sector state tables, and invite the Indigenous Environmental Network, REAMP.org, Catalyst Network for Schools and Midwest Governors to partner. We need to listen, ask people to tell their personal story, foster compassion between “opposing” groups, and ensure that clean energy is cheaper, safer, and faster so that everyone benefits. Sustainability commissions can be established to help towns establish a sustainability officer. And we can get FEMA to shift funding to resilience planning and flood mitigation block grants.

WORKING SESSION RECOMMENDATIONS: CROSS-SECTOR CLIMATE ADVOCACY

All ACLS19 attendees were invited to join table discussions by region, to collaborate on ways to catalyze local and national breakthroughs on climate action. The goal was to intentionally connect leaders, and stimulate actionable local climate advocacy collaboration in 2019 and beyond.

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The 2019 American Climate Leadership Summit, with generous support from The Kresge Foundation, was pleased to offer 23 scholarships to rising leaders in the climate movement. These impressive individuals joined us from 9 states and Puerto Rico. Eighteen of the recipients were under age 45, over half were female, and all came from a diversity of cultures, regions, and backgrounds.

### 2019 CLIMATE SCHOLARS

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**Gerald Wagner**
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CLIMATE LEADERSHIP AWARDS

As health, faith, and community professionals, we recognize climate change as the greatest human challenge today. We are compelled to act because carbon pollution is warming our planet and profoundly impacting America and the world. The cost of increasing droughts, floods, wildfires, extreme weather, and rising sea levels can be measured in lost lives, higher food prices, poorer health, and hundreds of billions of dollars in disaster relief. Human activity contributes to these threats and humans can solve this challenge. We have a moral obligation to act today on climate change and build a sustainable future for our children. We can choose clean energy and use it efficiently. American leadership can help the world meet these challenges with innovative solutions. We must start with mitigating our own climate impact.

decoAmerica is pleased to present the inaugural American Climate Leadership Award to the following organizations, in recognition of their public commitments to work towards 100% clean energy use by 2030.

- African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church-Western Episcopal District
- Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
- American Public Health Association
- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Climate Resolve
- National Environmental Health Association
- Physicians for Social Responsibility
- United Church of Christ
- Park City, Salt Lake City, Summit County, Utah Climate Action Network, + Utah Clean Energy

“Clean, safe, renewable energy helps assure that we have clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. Clean energy is also essential for protecting us from the health emergency posed by climate change. In other words, our energy choices really are health choices.”
— Barbara Gottlieb, Physicians for Social Responsibility

“As stewards who are entrusted with and granted dominion over God’s magnificent and majestic creation, we are duty bound to be vigilant in our responsibility for its care and maintenance. We must take seriously this divine mandate and fulfill our obligation to respect, preserve, protect and provide for its sanctity and sacredness.”
— Bishop Staccato Powell, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

“Although climate change is a global phenomenon, climate impacts are experienced locally, in our neighborhoods and cities. Climate Resolve is helping Los Angeles, and surrounding cities, prepare for climate change as well as reduce our contribution to atmospheric pollution.”
— Jonathan Parfrey, Climate Resolve
THANK YOU TO ALL ATTENDEES