Faith in Action
The Regeneration Project’s Interfaith Power & Light Campaign
2012 Annual Report
President’s Message

The climate and energy challenge is getting more and more complex, but there is some good news and 2012 was a turning point. Greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. are trending downward for the first time. We have been putting pressure on elected officials at both state and federal levels to regulate carbon pollution and to support energy efficiency. We have been defending the California Global Warming Solutions Act and renewable energy standards across the country. We have actively engaged hundreds of faith leaders to champion these important laws, and we are winning. Nationally Interfaith Power & Light is reaching 14,000 congregations with five million members. Congregations are taking action by greening their facilities, and their members are adopting energy saving measures at home. The result is a ripple effect that is astounding and powerful.

This effort gives me hope for Creation. When religious people put their faith into action, we can be the agents of change that will transform society. But we can’t do it alone, and I always say religion would not have a prayer without the scientists who partner with us. Last November, The Regeneration Project hosted an evening with climate scientist and Evangelical Christian Katharine Hayhoe, who captured our attention with the way Evangelicals have become involved in climate protection. Earlier in the fall, we hosted Bob Inglis, a former Republican Congressman from South Carolina, who spoke about bringing conservative politicians into the climate protection dialogue.

It was an action packed and productive year for IPL, and to top it off, I humbly accepted the National Audubon Society’s Rachel Carson Award. Without your support these hopeful and powerful steps forward would not have been possible. Thank you.

Sally G. Bingham
President & Founder

Mission

The mission of Interfaith Power & Light is to be faithful stewards of Creation by responding to global warming through the promotion of energy conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy. This campaign intends to protect the earth’s ecosystems, safeguard the health of all Creation, and ensure sufficient, sustainable energy for all. IPL has over a decade of experience helping congregations address global warming by being better stewards of energy. The campaign has a track record of tangible results: shrinking carbon footprints and educating hundreds of thousands of people in the pews about the important role of people of faith in this challenging issue.

FUNDER TESTIMONIAL...

“The Hewlett Foundation was a new funder in 2012, supporting IPL’s work modeling, promoting, and advocating for renewable energy. Hewlett believes in building a broad base of support for clean energy and climate action, and IPL reaches an influential sector - faith communities. We are excited about supporting IPL in their efforts to empower people of faith and religious leaders to become climate advocates.”
— Erin Rogers, Hewlett Foundation Environmental Program Officer

Cover photo: Rev. Jered Weber-Johnson blesses new solar energy system, St Alban’s Parish, Washington D.C. Photo credit: Carlo La Porta
At the federal level, 2012 saw the proposal of the first ever limits on carbon pollution from new power plants. When this new safeguard is finalized by the EPA, it will set standards that will modernize the nation’s fleet of power plants, create jobs, and make renewable energy more competitive. IPL collected thousands of comments from the faith community in support of the proposal; the environmental coalition as a whole collected a record breaking 3 million supportive comments.

Support for the EPA’s climate action was a major focus of IPL’s Washington Lobby Day in May, when state leaders met with over 120 Congressional offices. Power plants are responsible for almost 40% of the country’s global warming pollution, so addressing this sector is critical.

At the state level there was significant progress in the Northeast and in California where carbon pollution trended downward as a result of policies that placed caps on greenhouse gas emissions and increased renewable energy standards. Our northeastern states and California IPLs have been advocates and champions for these laws. California held its first auction in the carbon market, generating hundreds of millions of dollars for the state’s energy goals. As a result of these and other efforts, California is well on the way to reaching the 1990 emissions level by 2020, as mandated in AB 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act.

Renewable Energy Standards for electricity are in place in 29 states now, and becoming a major driver of renewable energy to the grid. IPL affiliates around the country worked to champion these important policies, strengthening them where possible, and defending them from special interest attacks.
National Programs

PREACH-IN ON GLOBAL WARMING

The annual Preach-in on Global Warming is IPL’s program to engage and support clergy who speak from the pulpit on climate change. Scheduled for the weekend closest to Valentine’s Day, it focuses on love for Creation and for our neighbors in the developing world who are on the front lines of climate change. IPL provides sample sermons, films, prayers, bulletin inserts, and “Love Creation” valentines to send to senators. The Preach-In enjoyed an impressive growth of 60% in 2012, with 1,000 registered congregations. The program reached nearly half-a-million people nationally, and generated 37,000 valentines that were delivered to Capitol Hill urging support for the EPA’s climate action.

COOL HARVEST

About 20% of climate change pollution comes from the food industry. That’s more than from all transportation sources combined. Historically, faith communities have fed the less fortunate by organizing food pantries, soup kitchens, and other programs to combat hunger. With Cool Harvest, Interfaith Power & Light builds on those successful programs to connect faith and climate change. IPL’s Cool Harvest program added a spring planting guide in 2012, and increased distribution of the kits by 35%. Around 600 congregations registered to use either the spring planting kit or the fall dinner and movie kit featuring the film, Nourish. The purpose of the program is to empower people of faith to make the food, faith, and climate connection in their own lives.

COOL CONGREGATIONS CHALLENGE—SPOTLIGHT ON ENGAGING CONGREGANTS AND COMMUNITIES WINNER

First Universalist Church, Rockland, ME

The Cool Congregations Challenge is our annual national contest to recognize houses of worship that are becoming energy efficient and sustainable role models within their communities. The number of congregations participating doubled in 2012, to one hundred and sixty entering the contest in one of four categories: Energy Efficiency and Conservation, Renewable Energy, Grounds and Water Conservation, and Engaging Congregants and Communities.

High heating bills that resulted from significant heat loss through windows prompted the First Universalist Church of Rockland, ME to build thermal window inserts that form an insulating barrier to save heat. Church members built and installed 26 of these window inserts. That action, combined with other changes such as adding ceiling fans and a shade for one window, saved First Universalist 25 percent in heating costs in the winter of 2010-2011.

"In thinking about these very serious problems, I came to an epiphany: We can’t wait to change our fate! We can’t wait for the actions of distant governmental agencies to do it for us. We have to take a more hands-on and direct role in saving the environment. We needed to take action, but had no ideas on what or how. Fortunately I heard about Cool Congregations.
— Frank Mundo, First Universalist Church, Rockland, ME
The project spread to church members who wanted the window inserts for their homes, and then to low-income families in the area who received the inserts free of charge. Over the past year, First Universalist has teamed up with multiple community building projects with the town of Liberty, Peoples United Methodist of South Thomaston, and Oceanside High School, where students provided the labor as a community service.

Volunteers in the effort became known as “window dressers” and the Window Dresser Project is now a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation. First Universalist has reached out to Quakers, Methodists, Baptists and other denominations to expand this work into a truly interfaith effort. The Window Dressers are an innovative example of faith communities working together to care for Creation and help their neighbors. In its 2012 Cool Congregations Challenge entry, the church reported that it had produced 1,350 window inserts for more than 105 homes.

Carbon Covenant

Deforestation is responsible for 20% of the carbon dioxide emissions that are warming the planet. It’s also taking a grave toll on the local communities living in or near the forests. IPL’s Carbon Covenant Program links faith communities in the Global North and South in a commitment to curb global warming and help mitigate its impact on vulnerable people. Since 2010, IPL has raised funds and supported faith community-led projects in four developing countries: Cameroon, Tanzania, Cambodia and Ghana.

In Ghana, forests are disappearing, leading to the loss of biodiversity and fertile soils. Rainfalls are more erratic, streams are drying up, and poverty is deepening throughout the region. To address these problems, IPL is partnering with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC), headquartered in the tropical mountainous Volta region of Ghana. Through their central offices, churches, and parochial schools, they are working to address forest loss in a number of ways: educating locals on the ecological risks involved with cutting down trees, introducing sustainable livelihoods, and regenerating degraded areas by replanting.

With the leadership of Charles Agboklu, the agency’s climate change awareness and reforestation program manager, the EPC has plans to reduce brushfires by 50%, and regenerate 30% of forest cover. With IPL’s help, Charles and the EPC planted over 26,000 seedlings in 2012! These seedlings range from hardwoods like teak, mahogany, afram, to the faster growing acacia and moraga trees. What makes Charles’ contribution to the Carbon Covenant project so important is not only his commitment to planting trees, but also teaching the community about the impacts of climate change and deforestation. Trees planted on church grounds provide shade and are used as an example to teach congregations about the importance of afforestation and the preservation of Ghana’s natural resources. The EPC also works with schools in planting seedlings and encouraging the formation of “eco-clubs” that care for the trees. With the ongoing support of IPL, Charles and the EPC will continue the important work of reforesting this beautiful region in West Africa. Please visit www.co2covenant.org to find out more.
In 2012, TRP’s total operating budget was $1.8 million, a 20% increase from 2011. The vast majority supported state and national programming, and about 13% covered development and administration. In total, $802,158 was granted out to state affiliates, partners and congregations; another $156,504 supported the California Interfaith Power & Light program, and $629,837 funded national programs and campaigns. Individual donations provided 20% of total funds raised. We are grateful to all of our donors for their generosity, which made this work possible.

Cumulative net assets at the end of 2012 were $911,794. Of this $425,000 is allocated for re-grants to state affiliates in 2013.
Thank You To Our 2012 Donors

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