

Testimony for PA Hearing on Methane 9/25/2014

Contact: Mary Elizabeth Clark, SSJ

Director, SSJ Earth Center at Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia, PA

cell 267-679-6364 Email mclark@ssjphila.org

For eighteen years I taught in Catholic elementary schools. Most of those years were spent with junior high students. I remember telling them that if they wanted to get ahead they had to excel. I also expounded on the social justice tradition of the Catholic Church and encouraged the students to get involved with service projects of feeding the hungry and donating clothes to collections for victims of fire and floods. That was the easy part. When I taught about social justice, at times, parents would complain that I was getting too involved in politics. However, I knew that I was not getting involved in partisan politics but the political process, which is the obligation of every citizen. While public policy issues are often complex, the Catholic Church has a substantial body of social and moral teaching that guides us in the formation of priorities and positions relative to public policy. These seven principles guide us in assessing public policies and in particular, issues related to the leakage of methane gas from pipes and wells in PA.

The Catholic Church teaches that we show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of God's creation. Care for the earth is a duty of our faith and a sign of our concern for all people. We should strive to live simply, to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. One of the key functions of government is to assist citizens in fulfilling their responsibilities to others in society and promoting the common good.

In a large and complex society, these responsibilities cannot be adequately carried out on a one-to-one basis, citizens need the help of government.

At this moment, we cannot ignore the rate of global climate change and especially its effects on those among us who are poor/impoverished. As Catholics, we have the leadership of Pope Francis who has called us to protect creation. One way we, in Pennsylvania, can make a difference is by strengthening the current emissions rule for the oil and gas industry. Data from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change suggest roughly 30 percent of the warming we will experience in the next 20 years will come from the methane emissions **this year alone**. Reducing methane emissions from the oil and gas sector will slow the rate of climate change we will experience in our lifetime and our children's lifetimes. As the fastest growing producer of natural gas, Pennsylvania has a significant role to play to secure a safer future. We must strengthen the current emissions rules for the oil and gas industry. Not to move forward on this issue is morally wrong! Let us raise our voices and call for just regulations on methane emissions from the DEP. In PA we are falling behind other states such as Ohio, Colorado and Wyoming in capturing and reducing methane leakage. We need comprehensive methane regulations now.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.



10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

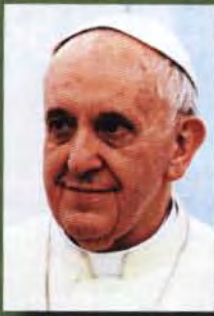
10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10

10/10/10



“Please, let us be protectors of creation, protectors of God’s plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment.”

— Pope Francis
March 19, 2013

<http://www.ssjearthcenter.com>



Celebrate—Educate—Practice—All is Sacred—Live in Harmony with Creation



Sisters of Saint Joseph of Philadelphia
Earth Center

Mission

The Sisters of Saint Joseph Earth Center is a sponsored work of the Sisters of Saint Joseph that fosters opportunities to educate, practice and celebrate the truth that all is sacred.

Vision

Sisters of Saint Joseph Earth Center is a nexus within the Wissahickon Watershed. Through the offering of educational opportunities, networking of resources and sharing of best practices it can assist in the process of increased awareness of the importance of sustainability from a faith perspective.

Purpose

The purpose of the Sisters of Saint Joseph Earth Center is to provide research, implementation and communication of best practices of planetary sustainability.

Goals

- An on-going relationship with Chestnut Hill College (CHC)
- Building working relationships with local institutions
- Creation of undergraduate and graduate interdisciplinary certificate programs in Earth sustainability and spirituality, social justice and environmental science.
- Outreach to individuals, communities, groups and organizations through courses and workshops offered independently from the College, whether on the CHC campus or other local sites
- Modeling sustainability best practices

Objectives

- Relationship with CHC
- Certificate program development (currently in progress)
- Developing specific curricula for classroom instruction and sustainable practices throughout the school physical environment (property management, utility evaluation and functions, air quality, water use, water reduction, local food and healthy nutrition, elimination of toxins, use of natural materials) creative re-use and re-purposing of existing physical materials, furniture, etc.
- Catholic Climate Change workshops offered independently from the College
 - Offering "Awakening the Dreamer" workshops for teachers at least twice each year
 - Symposia of local experts in various sustainability topics/themes
 - Step Away for a Day program
- EcoFilm Festival
- CHC Annual Urban Sustainability Conference for Colleges and Universities
- Modeling sustainability practices through such things as energy evaluations and green retrofitting of existing buildings, individual actions and the institution of new habits, organic gardening, nutrition education, cooking classes, CSA site
- Book and discussion groups around sustainability topics (recommended readings)
Earth rituals and celebrations that incorporate art, music, dance, theater and new media
Development of new media materials and use of social networks for dissemination of information