B023

TOPIC: ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Justice

PROPOSER

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ENDORSED BY

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HOUSE OF INITIAL ACTION / LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

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RESOLUTION TEXT

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, That the 77th General Convention of The Episcopal Church stands in solidarity with those communities who bear the greatest burdens of global climate change: indigenous peoples, subsistence communities, communities of color, and persons living in deprivation around the world; and be it further

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention calls on congregations, institutions, dioceses, and the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of The Episcopal Church to support policies that provide tangible benefits to overburdened "frontline" communities (those already experiencing the impacts of climate change) and "fence-line" communities (those suffering in body and spirit for their proximity to the extraction and processing of fossil fuels); and be it further

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention calls on congregations, institutions, dioceses, and the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of The Episcopal Church, to work for the just transformation of the world's energy beyond and away from fossil fuels (including all forms of oil, coal, and natural gas) and toward safe, sustainable, renewable, community controlled energy, and that fossil fuel workers and their families be supported during the transition to a "post-carbon" society; and be it further

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention calls on congregations, institutions, dioceses, and the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of The Episcopal Church to resist the development and expansion of ever more unconventional, dangerous, and environmentally destructive sources of fossil fuel and move toward conversion to more sustainable sources; and be it further

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention calls on congregations, institutions, dioceses and the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of The Episcopal Church to support the self-determined aspirations of communities around the world, who, like the Iñupiaq Community of Kivalina, Alaska, having emitted minimal amounts of carbon and having received negligible material benefit from fossil fuel consumption, nevertheless bear the brunt of climate-change impacts; and be it further

31 *Resolved*, That the 77th General Convention calls on congregations, institutions,
32 dioceses and the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of The Episcopal
33 Church, including Episcopal Relief and Development, to support the
34 implementation of grassroots, community-based solutions to climate change,
35 including, but not limited to, adaptations to improve local resilience, to build
36 local food sovereignty, to support ecological restoration and economic re-
37 localization.

EXPLANATION

Especially since 2004, the Iñupiaq community of Kivalina has been ever-increasingly at-risk because of global climate change. Loss of sea ice has led to increased coastal erosion, land failure, and unreliable, if not perilous, conditions for the practice of subsistence hunting. Climate change is the latest of environmentally mediated "historical traumas" to descend upon Kivalina in the name of progress and development—these include the ongoing water and fish pollution from the worlds largest zinc mine (the Red Dog Mine), and the community's near annihilation through a narrowly defeated project of nuclear hubris, known as "Project Chariot". In July 2012, Shell Oil is slated to begin oil exploration of the Chukchi Sea—the deepest source of Iñupiaq food, cultural identity and spirituality alike. Recognizing that Kivalina is but one community which exposes the violence of climate change, the Kivalina Epiphany Church, through this resolution of its Mission Committee, cries out for "climate justice" for all God's People and for all God's Creation.

We affirm past efforts and commitments of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church (2006-B002 Response to Global Warming, 2009-D035 Repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery, 2009-D014 Environmental Justice, 2009-C070 Memorializing the Genesis Covenant, 2009-C064 Endorsement of the Earth Charter, 2009-C012 Scientific Integrity and Environmental Policy, 2009-C011 Governmental Policies for Environmental Stewardship, 2009-A155 Alleviation of Domestic Poverty). We especially take heart in the Bishops' Pastoral Teaching on the Environment, adopted in Quito in September of 2011 (page 52-54 in "the Blue Book"), which calls on the Church "to work toward climate justice"; we submit this resolution in faithfulness to their pastoral leadership.

As indigenous followers of Jesus, we are emboldened by the 76th General Convention's repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery and regard new and continued fossil fuel exploration and extraction as a contemporary manifestation of that evil Doctrine, abiding by the very same logic of "manifest destiny." Such practices add insult to injury when they are carried out in proximity to already vulnerable populations, like Shell's oil exploration in our Chukchi Sea. We recognize that we are but one of the many climate-vulnerable communities around the world. It is clear to us that the dominant global culture is in need of a dramatic overhaul—the scope of which may be difficult for those who "hold authority" to imagine, let alone enact—yet as Christians we are called not simply to imagine but to make God's Kingdom incarnate.

We recognize and affirm the urgent aspirations of environmentally vulnerable communities around the world. To such communities the Episcopal Church has a duty of solidarity and Christian love. We believe that such networks of compassion and support within the Body of Christ may be our last best chance at survival. We call upon the Episcopal Church at every level to live into its prophetic voice for climate justice as part and parcel of our baptismal commitment to "justice and peace among all people" and to "respect the dignity of every human being."