

POLICY PLATFORM

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

PROGRESSIVE VALUE

We support urgent climate action and environmental justice, protecting vulnerable communities by reducing fossil fuel use, restoring habitats, preserving public lands, preventing pollution, and prioritizing those most impacted by climate crises.

ROOTED IN JUDAISM

Over and over the Torah talks about protecting the Earth. In the Midrash, Ecclesiastes 7:13, it says that Adonai said to Adam, upon bringing Adam into the Garden of Eden, "Look at My works, how beautiful and praiseworthy they are! And all that I have created, it was for you that I created it. Pay attention that you do not corrupt and destroy My world: if you corrupt it, there is no one to repair it after you."

Our tradition is also full of reminders to live in harmony with our planet, and ensure that we are preserving it for the future, from the holiday of Tu B'shevat to the shmita, the sabbatical year when fields lie fallow.

There is no question about whether or not we are commanded to partake in environmentalism or preservation of the Earth, including through climate activism, in Jewish text. But the text does not just call on us to care for the Earth for the Earth's sake. The Mishnah declares that to destroy the life of one person is akin to destroying the entire world. Thus we are directed to protect the life and well being of all people.

Judaism specifically teaches that we should protect the well being of those with the most need –the poor, orphans, widows, or those who have the least amongst us. We are commanded to do so over and over again in the Torah and the teachings of the sages.

We know that environmental damages affect some communities more than others. Often communities least able to advocate for change see the highest impacts.

REFLECTED IN ZIONISM

We acknowledge that the land most Jews live on does not belong to us. Over 50% of Jews in the world (all those in the diaspora, outside of Israel) are not indigenous to the places they reside. The land belongs to others and we are visitors, just as we are all merely visitors to G-d's Earth.

As a Jewish movement of emancipation which succeeded only three years after the worst atrocities committed in the history of humankind against the Jewish people, Zionism demands a focus on future generations, and whether we are leaving them a secure existence. Security is not just about self-governance and freedom from discrimination and hate crimes—though those are integral to a secure existence. We must also work to make the world a more secure place, something we cannot guarantee our children unless we stem the tide of climate change and environmental degradation.

The call of environmental justice movements to return land to a state that is healthy for the people and other creatures living on it echoes the Zionist call to return Indigenous people to their homeland.

Just as we ask our allies to follow our lead as we have fought for our right to return home, we will follow the lead of communities who are fighting for their basic needs: safe air, water, clean land, and healthy spaces.

POSITION STATEMENTS

- **We support energy policies which decrease our use of fossil fuels and phasing out the use of chemicals, pollutants, and energy sources that contribute to climate change, at as fast a pace as we have the technology to move.**
- We support efforts to restore habitat and natural spaces, and preserve natural spaces alongside and in balance with human development.
- **We support any and all environmental movements rooted in maintaining the health of the earth for the next generation.**
- We oppose actions which degrade the planet we have been given, including deforestation, decreased biodiversity, and the pollution of our air, land, and waterways.
- **We support the protection of public lands which provide access to natural spaces for everyone.**
- We will fight for environmental justice, letting people most impacted lead us in advocating for their communities' needs. Environmental injustice comes in many forms including direct pollution, loss of life-sustaining and economy-supporting natural resources, and adverse health outcomes due to climate crises, to name just a few. We are committed to engaging on all of these injustices.