



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH All of God's Creation

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, May 5, 2024

Celebrate the Good News

Caring for our earth and God's creation is an ongoing effort of prayer and action. Sometimes the work seems overwhelming and often it is. That is why it is important to take time out periodically to celebrate the good news which can inspire us for the journey ahead. Here are some recent **Actions for Hope**.

All remaining **oil and gas leases in the Arctic Refuge were cancelled** in September 2023. "This victory was the culmination of decades of work by the Gwich'in peoples, the Sierra Club, and its broader movement to protect the landscape...."

The Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind project—the largest proposed **offshore wind project** in the country was approved. And in December the first offshore wind project in New York went online. These wind farms will reduce air pollution from carbon dioxide, decrease dependence on fossil fuel infrastructure, protect public health, and provide family-sustaining, quality jobs." (*Sierra Club*, 12/16/23)

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized stronger **standards for harmful soot pollution**, significantly increasing health and clean air protections for families, workers, and communities. According to the EPA, these stronger limits will prevent up to 4,500 premature deaths and 800,000 cases of asthma symptoms every single year. (*Environment America*, 2/7/24)

The proliferation of toxic pesticides is decimating bee populations. Recently, "the U.S. Geological Survey announced that it will resume an important **pesticide tracking program**...which documents and quantifies pesticide use across the nation and is critical to demonstrating where bees are most under threat and need our support." (*Environmental Action*, 3/20/24)

In a landmark ruling, the EPA finalized federal **standards to strengthen tailpipe emissions requirements** for passenger cars and trucks. "These new car pollution standards will have an enormous positive impact on public health, dramatically reducing the air pollution that causes increased health risks" (*Sierra Club*, 3/20/24). More than 15% of U.S. climate pollution comes from cars, SUVs, and light trucks.

On April 18th, "the Interior Department finalized a new rule for a **balanced management of America's public lands** ... which prioritizes the health of the lands and waters the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management oversees.... The new rule calls for protection of the land, restoration of the places that have been harmed in the past, and a promise to make informed decisions about future use based on science, data, and Indigenous knowledge." (Heather Cox Richardson, *Letters from an American*, 4/22/24)

The **American Climate Corps**, a groundbreaking initiative modeled after FDR's Civilian Conservation Corps, "will put more than 20,000 young Americans to work fighting the impacts of climate change today while gaining the skills they need to join the growing clean energy and climate-resilience workforce of tomorrow" (*The White House Office of Public Engagement Newsletter*, 4/23/24).

The first-ever national PFAS [forever chemicals] **drinking water standards** were established to reduce people's exposure to serious health risks and prevent thousands of premature deaths. (*Earthjustice*, 4/27/24)

"For a world struggling with the effects of climate change, we need both hope and courage. Humanity possesses the wherewithal to effect this change, which calls for a genuine conversion, individual as well as communitarian, and a decisive will to set out on this path." Pope Francis, *America Media*, 12/31/22)

Comments on this column may be directed to the Social Justice Committee at socialjustice@holycrossphl.org.