

**Remarks of Rev. Fred Small
MAICCA Legislative Action
November 10, 2015**

Welcome, Introduction, and Prayer

Good morning! On behalf of the Massachusetts Interfaith Coalition for Climate Action, I welcome you to the State House!

My name is Fred Small. Last month I quit my job as Senior Minister of First Parish in Cambridge to work full-time for climate justice. I'm here today representing the Unitarian Universalist Association. Minister Mariama White-Hammond and I will be emceeding this morning. We promise to finish in less than an hour so you can visit your legislators.

We want to acknowledge and thank those of you who came all the way from western Massachusetts to say no to opening up legally protected conservation land in Otis State Forest to make way for a fracked-gas pipeline.

We are here this morning as people of many faiths united by a single vision: that Massachusetts will lead the way into a clean and just energy future—a future that honors creation, defends communities, safeguards our children, and protects the most vulnerable among us.

Heeding the call of Pope Francis, today we take our prayers for creation, our prayers for justice, out of our churches and temples and mosques and into the corridors of power!

Just yesterday the World Bank issued a report predicting that climate change will drive 100 million people into extreme poverty—extreme poverty—in the next 15 years alone.

Moses said to the Israelites, “I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live.”

Fossil fuels are inherently dangerous to extract, dangerous to refine, dangerous to transport, dangerous to combust, dangerous to breathe. They are inherently fatal to human beings and fatal to the climate on which human life depends.

Renewable energy, solar energy, wind energy—these are the way of life. They sustain health. They sustain communities. They heal the climate.

In the brave movement to stop the Keystone XL pipeline, we chose life. It took seven years of struggle, and most of those years we were told the struggle was hopeless, but we chose life. And last Friday, the president of the United States chose life.

And now we say to our Massachusetts senators and representatives: Do not lead us down the way of death. Choose life—so that we are and our descendants may live!

Please join me in the spirit of prayer:

Spirit of Life, Holy One, God of many names and one abundant love,
We give thanks for the gifts of creation, of community, of life on this precious earth.
Open our minds to possibility and our hearts to compassion.
Instill in us the courage to change.
Companion and guide our leaders to protect the vulnerable, heal the climate,
and bend the arc of the moral universe toward justice.
Amen, Aché, and Blessed Be.

Call to Action

Too long have people of faith hung back from political engagement to defend creation, future generations, and the most vulnerable of our neighbors.

Politics is complicated, it's messy, and it's a lot of work. But it is holy work. It is necessary work. Today we embrace it in the name of love.

There are powerful interests invested in the status quo. They are not evil people, but they are captive to an energy system that is deadly to life on earth.

They know how to lobby. They know how to influence. They know how to press the levers of power.

But we, too, are learning.

If the voices of people of faith and impacted communities are not heard when policy decisions are made, fossil fuels win.

Today we lift our voices—the voices of people of faith, the voices of neighborhoods, the voices of our descendants yet to come, the voices of all God's creatures.

And we shall be heard!