

TO: The Joint Meeting of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Joint Interim Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Rita Sloan, Coordinator for the Life, Peace & Justice Committee of the Catholic Diocese of Reno, NV and Board Member for Faith In Action Nevada

RE: Public Comment on Meeting #814 6977 2189 scheduled in Carson City on June 16, 2022

As the two joint interim committees meet on the very important topics of natural resources and Health and Human Services, I want to add my voice to those already calling for true environmental and humane justice for all people. It seems to me that it becomes increasingly clear that the dire condition of our planet cannot be separated from the dire condition in which many vulnerable people in our communities find themselves. Every decision we make, personally and politically, must keep one primary goal in mind: the Common Good. Decisions cannot be based on what is good for many, or for the hard-working, or for the deserving, or for anything less than the Common Good, that which is truly good for all of us. Adequate clean water, clean air, good health and access to good health care, safe shelter and nourishing food and whatever else we humans need to not just survive, but rather to thrive, all must be pursued for each and everyone of us. We must consider the Common Good in everything we do.

Therefore, as issues of anticipated excessive heat, possible wildfire smoke and other air pollutants, and the relationship between increased climate change issues and human physical and mental health are considered, the guiding factor must be the Common Good. If all people have the safety nets of access to clean water, respite from excessive heat, adequate shelter and food, and health care when needed, it is good for everyone. I am safer and happier and more neighborly when I live in a healthy, thriving, equitable community.

Here are a few suggestions for lawmakers from a recent environmental action coalition report:

1. Center equity at the beginning of planning, and throughout plans
2. Use environmental justice screening tools, informed by public input, to identify targeted neighborhoods for clean energy investments
3. Break down all barriers that leave behind low-income households, communities of color, renters, undocumented folks, and other impacted populations
4. Acknowledge that for decades, polluters and developers have placed highways, bus depots, industrial centers, waste systems and other sources of pollution next to our neighborhoods
5. Work with climate justice advocates organizing for a Nevada where we can all breathe free

I end with this quote from the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the [Catholic] Church*: "A society that wishes and intends to remain at the service of the human being at every level is a society that has the common good – the good of all people and of the whole person – as its primary goal. The human person cannot find fulfillment in himself, that is, apart from the fact that he exists 'with' other and 'for' others."