



Oklahoma Conference of Churches

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African
Methodist
Episcopal

African
Methodist
Episcopal Zion

Christian
Church
(Disciples of
Christ)

Christian
Methodist
Episcopal

Cooperating
Baptist
Fellowship of
Oklahoma

Cumberland
Presbyterian

Episcopal

Evangelical
Lutheran
Church in
America

Mennonites

Presbyterian
Church USA

Progressive
Oklahoma
Baptist State
Convention

Reformed
Church
in America

Roman Catholic

Society of
Friends

United Church
of Christ

United
Methodist

April 6, 2011

Dear Senator:

I am writing you on behalf of the Oklahoma Conference of Churches (OCC) IMPACT Committee. Our main purpose is to review, and advocate regarding, pending legislation from a unified Christian perspective. God's will, as revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is our goal. The OCC has adopted theological statements covering the 5 different areas we currently monitor; these theological statements help guide our discernment.

My particular area on IMPACT is the Environment. A copy of our theological statement on that area is enclosed. In light of that statement and after responsible deliberation we are writing to ask your opposition to one bill.

HB 1957 attempts to change the required setbacks large swine feeding operations must maintain from camps and recreation sites owned by non-profits. *This would include church camp and retreat centers, scout camps, Y-camps, etc.* The current setback is 3 miles and the bill, as substituted in committee, narrows that to 1 mile for non-profit camps with annual attendance of less than 2,000. Hardly anyone is against pork production, but why must they be so close to and spoil our treasured natural places of spiritual nurture and recreation? Oklahoma is a big state and we must protect the places where present and future Oklahomans retreat in God's creation. Water resources in (and under) these camp and recreation sites might also be in jeopardy with these operations.

Our OCC Environment statement emphasizes that we are stewards of God's creation. According to it, care for the earth and our environment is not only a moral and faith issue, but "a sign of our concern for all people." The statement specifically seeks to support measures "designed to maintain...natural ecosystems." We hope you will join us in opposing HB 1957.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Kirt E. Moelling

Unified to offer love, justice and hope to each other and God's world.