



**Interreligious Eco-Justice Network**  
8 Doolittle Road  
Preston, CT 06365



[www.irejn.org](http://www.irejn.org)  
[info@irejn.org](mailto:info@irejn.org)



860.595-2321

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **Officers**

Rev. Edward Horstmann  
*Chair*  
Peter Festa  
*Vice-Chair*  
Millie Legenhausen  
*Treasurer*

### **Directors at Large**

Rev. Nancy Leckerling  
Letitia Naigles, PhD  
Father Bob Washabaugh

## **ADVISORY COUNCIL**

A. Karim Ahmed, PhD  
Leticia Colon de Mejias  
Rev. Thomas Carr  
Father Sam Fuller, OFM Cap  
Lynn Fulkerson  
Rabbi Joshua Hammerman  
Anne Hulick  
Aida Mansoor  
Deacon Arthur Miller  
Bernard Pelletier  
Merle Potchinsky  
Alex Rodriguez  
Peterson Toscano

## **STAFF**

**Director**  
Terri Eickel

## **SB 6926, An Act Concerning Funding for the Residential Energy Preparation Services Program**

Dear Senator Needleman, Representative Steinberg, Sen Fazio, Representative Marra, Representative Sanchez, Senator Maroney, and esteemed members of the Energy and Technology Committee,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to HB 6926, An Act Concerning Funding for the Residential Energy Preparation Services Program.

The Interreligious Eco-Justice Network is a faith-based environmental organization that works with religious communities across Connecticut on environmental issues, such as climate change, toxic pollution, and species loss. Hundreds of congregations in Connecticut have implemented a variety of protocols to reduce their energy use and their greenhouse gas emissions, and to increase their use of clean energy.

Houses of worship are on the frontlines when it comes to addressing needs in their communities. Many people who are struggling turn to religious communities for assistance and houses of worship remain trusted sources of information. IREJN has been working to help houses of worship run home weatherization campaigns to assist their members in improving energy efficiency.

For religious communities, helping people in need is a moral imperative and utility costs are a huge source of financial pain for CT's poorest residents. CT has one of the highest income disparities in the country and thirty-one percent of CT's residents are considered extremely low-income. They also have an energy burden, which is defined as the amount of income needed to pay energy costs, that is three times higher than wealthy people. Ironically, wealthier households use 25% more energy than low-income households, but they have more income to pay for it. Low-income people use less energy, but struggle to pay for the energy they use, and they are more

likely to live in inefficient housing that is also plagued with health hazards like mold, lead, and asbestos.

These health hazards also create barriers to the very energy efficiency programs that could help them reduce their energy costs, improve their quality of life, and improve their health outcomes. When these barriers are present, energy efficiency vendors are unable to proceed. The resident is left with both the health hazard *and* inefficient housing. For religious communities, this is a moral failing that society should dress.

Two years ago, CT funded the Residential Energy Preparation Services program, which was a \$10M pilot program to remove those barriers from the homes of income-eligible people, so that they could then participate in the energy efficiency programs. The program has been successful, but is now out of money. This is very unfortunate, because every \$1 spend on energy efficiency yields \$4.20 in additional clean energy savings<sup>1</sup> and \$2.35 in lifetime benefits, which means that residents have to rely less on ratepayer-funded hardship and other state assistance programs.

HB 6926 would fund the program with an additional \$8M, allowing these much-needed services to be provided to CT's most vulnerable people. We urge you to vote to pass HB 6926, An Act Concerning Funding for the Residential Energy Preparation Services program.

Very best regards,

Terri Eickel, Executive Director

---

<sup>1</sup> [ALR 2023 FINAL.pdf](#)