

### Legislative History:

January 2, 1996: Model resolution received from the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, which is coordinated by the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and NJCRAC.

February 7, 1996: MJCCR draft resolution prepared by Environmental Chair George Strick and Mordecai.

February 21, 1996: Forwarded by the Officers without recommendation to the Executive Committee.

March 13, 1996: Recommended by the Executive Committee.

May 15, 1996: Adopted by the Board of Directors.

### **POSITION STATEMENT ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

As members of the Board of Directors of the Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations representing various religious denominations, diverse organizations and different political perspectives, we are united in the deep concern that the quality of human life on the earth we inhabit is in great danger by increasing ecological threats. Among the most severe threats to our environment are:

- depletion of the ozone layer,
- global warming,
- massive deforestation,
- loss of bio-diversity,
- deposits of nuclear wastes, and
- chemical pollution of the air, land and water.

In Milwaukee and Wisconsin we face important environmental challenges. Local, national and global conditions necessitate that we respond in our personal and communal lives. We affirm our responsibility to address and act upon these planetary crises.

As Jews, we see environmental threats as religious and spiritual challenges. We are heirs to the tradition of stewardship of the earth and atmosphere as stated in the Book of Genesis. We have been commanded to be partners with God in the continuing work of creation. We must not, and cannot, accept or tolerate the escalating destruction of our environment with its impact on the health and survival of all living creatures. Where we are despoiling our air, land, and water, it is our sacred duty as Jews to acknowledge our God-given responsibility by acting within the scope of the law to end environmental degradation and the pain, suffering and economic losses it causes. By so acting, we re-affirm and bequeath this tradition requiring humankind to safeguard and protect our homes.

While the issues that confront us as Jews are many and diverse, the environmental crises impact all Jewish concerns. The

ecological threats are global, advancing and ultimately jeopardizing the ecological balance and our quality of life. Accordingly, it is imperative that environmental issues become an immediate, ongoing and pressing concern for the metropolitan Milwaukee Jewish community.

We pledge to carry to our homes, congregations, and work-places the urgent message that all living creatures are endangered because of the air, land and water pollution.

Therefore we pledge to actively support:

1. Environmental Practices: Becoming an environmentally responsible institution through energy efficiency, reduction and recycling of wastes, and other practices which promote environmental sustainability; and mobilizing our community towards these goals;

2. Education: Conducting education programs about environmental problems and how we might understand and respond to them as Jews using the timeless texts that speak to us of God's gifts and expectations; encouraging initiation of environmental education programs in settings where Jews gather to learn, particularly among young people.

3. Observances: Celebrating Tu B'Shvat, Sukkot and the Shabbat closest to Earth Day (April 22) in a manner that highlights our relationship to Creation and renews our commitment to embodying Jewish environmental ethics in our individual and collective lives.

4. Legislation: Pressing for appropriate environmental legislation at every level of government and in international forums; including protecting current environmental laws such as the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and Safe Drinking Water Act from efforts to weaken them.

5. Coalitions: Working with the civic, religious, scientific, educational and business communities to understand the ecological problems confronting American society and the world at-large by promoting efforts to improve and protect air, land and water resources.

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