# WSCC 2010 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

## ENVIRONMENT

### PRINCIPLES

The goods of the earth are a gift from God, and are for the benefit of everyone. Catholic teaching holds that we are stewards of creation, a stewardship that calls us to preserve our forests, maintain clean water sources, preserve species in the wild and maintain their natural habitats. Care of the earth requires each of us to thoughtfully engage in behaviors that minimize negative impacts on the environment around us.

*True stewardship requires changes in human actions - both in moral behavior and technical advancement. Our religious tradition has always urged restraint and moderation in the use of material goods, so we must not allow our desire to possess more material things to overtake our concern for the basic needs of people and the environment.*

Global Climate Change, a Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good, USCCB, 2001

**PESTICIDES:** Dangerous pesticides linked to cancer, birth defects, and other adverse health effects threaten the health of farm workers across the United States. These poisons disproportionately threaten the health of migrant and seasonal farm workers.

**PETROLEUM POLLUTION:** Petroleum pollution has damaged the environment and is difficult to escape because of its near universal use as an energy source. Any time petroleum is used as an energy source, it releases many different gases and particles in the air, including harmful carbon emissions. Petroleum is also the single largest contributor to storm water pollution. The federal Clean Water Act (CWA) sets a national goal to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters and to eliminate pollutant discharges into navigable waters. The Washington State Department of Ecology is the designated state agency that regulates water discharge. Advocates support legislation to establish a per barrel fee on petroleum products that contribute to storm water pollution. The funds would be deposited in the Water Pollution Account to assist clean water projects, including the cleanup of Washington State rivers, streams, and Puget Sound.

**BISPHENOL A:** Bisphenol A (BPA) is found primarily in plastics that have been used for more than 50 years. BPA is in the most common form of polycarbonate plastic, which is clear and nearly shatter-proof, and used to make a variety of common products including baby and water bottles, sports equipment, medical and dental products, eyeglass lenses, CDs and DVDs, and household electronics. A 2007 panel convened by the U.S. National Institutes of Health determined that there was "some concern" about BPA's effects on fetal and infant brain development and behavior. Advocates will work to pass legislation that bans the manufacture and sale of containers made with BPA designed to hold food and beverages used by children under the age of 3 and sports water bottles made with BPA beginning July 1, 2010.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**WSCC SUPPORTS:**

- Changing policies to protect farm workers and people in the surrounding environment from the harmful effects of pesticides
- Reducing petroleum pollution in Washington State rivers, streams, and Puget Sound
- Reducing the use of bisphenol A in plastic containers