ENVIRONMENT
Briefing Paper
Catholic Advocacy Day, 2010

Care for the earth and for the environment is a moral issue. Protecting the land, water, and air we share is a religious duty of stewardship and reflects our responsibility to born and unborn children, who are most vulnerable to environmental assault. Effective initiatives are required for energy conservation and the development of alternate, renewable, and clean-energy resources. Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, USCCB 2007

BISPHENOL A: Bisphenol A (BPA) was developed as a synthetic sex hormone, but is now found primarily in plastics. BPA is in the most common form of polycarbonate plastic, which is clear and nearly shatter-proof. It is used to make a variety of common products including baby and water bottles, sports equipment, medical and dental products, CDs, 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. This year, 2010, the Food and Drug Administration reversed its opinion on the safety of BPA, and announced that it is now concerned about the hormone-disrupting chemicals used in baby bottles and other food and beverage containers.

SSB 6248 and 2SHB 1180 ban the manufacture and sale of containers made with bisphenol A designed to hold food and beverages used by children under the age of three. 2SHB 1180, which has passed the House, also bans sports water bottles with bisphenol A. SSB 6248 has passed the Senate, but it does not ban BPA in sports water bottles.

ACTION: Thank your Representatives for passing 2SHB 1180, and thank your Senator for passing SSB 6248. Ask Legislators to deliver a bill to the Governor's desk for her signature.

WORKING FOR CLEAN WATER: Contaminated storm water runoff is the number one water pollution problem. Local governments need to be able to complete required infrastructure and retrofit projects in order to achieve a cleaner Puget Sound and cleaner rivers. Washington voters approved a tax on hazardous substances to clean up toxic pollution over 20 years ago. It is levied on substances that are the most significant storm water pollutants: petroleum, pesticides, and toxic chemicals. The working for clean water bills (which as of this writing have not been introduced) are a balanced solution for Washington's families, local communities and the environment. Legislation would create jobs, provide support to the state's basic services, and address the biggest water pollution problem in the state.

The legislation will increase the Hazardous Substance tax from 7/10 of 1% to 2%. Raising the tax would generate about $225 million per year. Recognizing these difficult economic times and the significant cuts to social services, the bill would for the next three years allocate 80% of the taxes to the general fund, and 20% to assist storm water pollution cleanup.

ACTION: Ask your Senator to support SB _____ and your Representatives to support HB _____ to fund social services, and to assist clean water projects, including the cleanup of Washington State's rivers, streams and Puget Sound.

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