



North Carolina Council of Churches

27 HORNE ST., RALEIGH, 27607 | 919.828.6501 | www.nccouncilofchurches.org

Press Conference
Atlantic Coast Pipeline
Fayetteville, NC
November 15, 2016

Roughly half the people in this country, give or take six hundred thousand, voted for a president who purports not to care about the environmental cares we have. Roughly half the people in North Carolina, give or take a hundred and seventy thousand, voted for a president who purports not to care about the environmental cares we have. The good news is, it's roughly half, not a whole, not three quarters, not two-thirds, not even five-eighths. It's barely a simple majority here in NC and it's not a majority when we consider the entire nation. My take away from the numbers is, there are an awful lot of people out there in the United States and right here in North Carolina who do care about the environment cares we have. That's where we start.

We start with the believers, the believers in climate change, the believers in renewable energy, the believers in environmental justice, the believers in responsible regulation. We work with these people to help us advocate with and educate on behalf of the other half. And for my part as the leader of the NC Council of Churches, representing 18 distinct denominations and over 6200 congregations, I start with people of faith.

As people of faith and in my case, the Christian faith, we have a God-given responsibility to care for creation. It is the single greatest gift of the creator to the creatures. Without it, we don't exist. Without respecting and maintaining the precarious and tender balance that allows life on this planet, we won't survive. Make no mistake, the creation would be far better off without humans running other creatures into extinction well before their time and devouring plant life at a record pace. Studies have shown the environment will do just fine without us.

So, my appeal for us today is selfish in some ways. I want humans to survive, which means we've got to take care of the gift of creation we've been given. If we don't, God and the creation will go on without us. This is a fact, my friends, and we need to start telling people this truth.

I'm a firm believer in the truth. But if I don't know the truth, then I'm not really choosing between right and wrong, good and bad; I'm just doing what I do without knowing the moral implications of my actions. In blissful ignorance, I continue supporting the disastrous use of fossil fuels by my habits, my investments, and my commitments. But when people know the truth, really know it, then they have to make a choice. When I know that methane—the element that leaks from natural gas pipelines—is 84 times more detrimental to the atmosphere than carbon dioxide, I must make a choice. When I know that fracking—the method used to obtain the natural gas that will flow through this pipeline—causes irreparable damage to drinking water and creates seismic instability, I must make a choice. When I know that pipelines cut through pristine landscapes and across tribal lands, I must make a choice. I can keep doing what I'm doing, for sure, but now I know that what I am doing is an affront to creation, a violation of the gift of creation. Now I know that what I'm doing is a sin.

We need to tell people this truth. We need to know the truth about the choices we make. May God empower us all to choose life, now and forever more. Thank you.

Jennifer E. Copeland, Ph.D.
Executive Director
North Carolina Council of Churches
<http://www.ncchurches.org>
[\(919\) 828-6501](tel:9198286501)