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Area Jews to join climate march

By Martha Schick
Advocate staff

WASHINGTON — Scores of buses are reserved, congregations across the country are ready for action and “sister” marches are popping up from coast to coast. The People’s Climate March here on April 29 isn’t just a political statement; it’s a chance to celebrate Shabbat with like-minded Jews from across the country, according to national organizer Mirele Goldsmith.

“We’re hoping that this march will really be a turning point in Jewish action on this issue,” Goldsmith said. “Jews have always understood and supported climate action. It’s about caring for creation.”

The national team is working with 150 grassroots organizers around the country, many of whom are connected with specific congregations interested in joining the march, Goldsmith said.

The march and surrounding activities are intended to be welcoming for those who are *shomer Shabbat*. Goldsmith said the groups have organized a Shabbat dinner in Washington and reserved a block of hotel rooms, both within walking distance of the march.

Rabbi Katy Allen, co-founder and president of the Massachusetts-based Jewish Climate Action Network, is one of the organizers heading the climate change activities in



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— Rabbi Katy Allen
Jewish Climate Action Network

the Greater Boston area on the day of the march. She sees environmental consciousness as practically prescribed by Jewish holy texts.

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creation story,” Rabbi Allen said. “[Jews] have a particular responsibility to do what we can to preserve and protect it.”

Rabbi Allen also explained the inextricable linkage between irresponsible environmental practices and social justice issues. She used the example of creating incineration zones, which can cause severe health problems, in lower class neighborhoods predominantly inhabited by people of color. She said that individual changes in lifestyle can help, but action must be taken at a national level.

“Part of our job is to not only care for the world, but to care for the vulnerable and the poor and the hungry,” Rabbi Allen said. “The fact of the matter is that we really need action at the governmental level.”

“This is something that we, as citizens of our country, own,” she continued. “There are things that can only be done at [the national] level.”

Rabbi Allen said she is mobilizing people to travel to Washington, but also giving local options for in-

dividuals and congregations that want participate in the issue but cannot travel.

The local climate march, to be held on Boston Common, had thousands marked as “interested” and “attending” on Facebook at this writing. Rabbi Allen said there are materials available for congregations relating the week’s *parsha* to environmental issues, and some temples are even doing their own individual programming.

For example, on April 30, Temple Emunah of Lexington will hold a “decarbonizer” program, where members will share tips and personal stories on how they reduced their carbon footprints.

Goldsmith is thrilled by the widespread enthusiasm for the marches and this issue itself in Washington and in cities across the U.S.

“The reason that we’re having this march is because climate change is an extremely urgent issue,” Goldsmith said. “We need to mobilize people around [climate change], which is a moral and ethical issue.”

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