

A DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE

Preface

Events of recent decades have shown that the planet now faces an immense threat to its health and future as a life-sustaining celestial body. Evidence of global warming, destruction of the ozone layer, pollution of soils, air and water, deforestation of tropical and temperate forests - all derived from human activities - have provided this species with ample warnings to change its ways or risk the possible loss of the planet within the next hundred years. Our planet is an organism existing as a series of interdependencies and interpenetrations; what all people do now and in the coming years will determine the fate of the Earth.

We believe acceptable human behavior now and in the future should harmonize with the law of interdependence (which includes all living creatures), recognizing that what we do will come back to us or to our descendants, as well as to all other beings on the planet.

We believe all beings on this planet have a perfect, inherent, and natural right to clean Earth, Air, and Water; this right is sacred and inviolable.

These principles should be the working premises for any future human activities. We call for an ecological reconstruction involving community action in which every person contributes his or her part in maintaining ecological equilibrium in their location.

The Real Work

Military & Industry

We citizens, men and women, encourage Congresses of all nations to continue negotiation to end the arms race. We recognize the right of nations to self-defense, but conclude that true arms reductions, reconciliation between hostile nations, treaties and further development of economic connections between nations will result in less of a need for weapons and defense systems. As military resources are progressively freed from the labor of arms, Congresses can retrain persons currently serving in the armed forces. Some may serve as guardians, to maintain a vigilant watch over waste materials that at present cannot be disposed of; some may serve as corps of planters and nurturers, supervising urban and future wilderness areas. Military vendors and suppliers could serve as sources for research and development for cleaner technologies, for discovering commercial uses for recycled products, and for discovering how we might break down and recycle components of hazardous waste products.

This would maintain jobs for some of the people currently serving in armed forces, continue government involvement with companies whose business is connected with the military, and redirect R & D efforts away from harmful and wasteful expenditures toward an economy that benefits all beings.

Forests

We call for the cessation of all logging in ancient forests immediately.

We support diverse reforestation on public lands with all-age management and local varieties.

We call for a halt to federally subsidized grazing on public lands, or if this is impossible, for ranchers to pay royalties on profits from grazing on these lands.

Nations must find alternatives to clear-cutting, and to the wasteful practices now destroying the rainforests and temperate forests of the world.

Congressional Bill HR 4492 provides for the protection of the remaining ancient forests on the federal lands of the states of California, Oregon, and Washington, and is legislation worthy of support.

Clean Air

We support the Clean Air Act in its strongest possible form.

This includes:

- (1) Maintenance of the Clean Car Amendment, which promotes clean alternative fuels and extends warranties on pollution control equipment. The subsidy on alternative fuels should be equitable until we know which approach is best. Fuels should be tailored to individual airsheds.
- (2) Maintenance of the Toxic Accident Prevention Amendment, which creates stronger standards and an effective Chemical Safety Board to investigate toxic-releasing accidents;
- (3) Maintenance of the National Parks Protection Amendment.
- (4) Maintenance of the Stop Ozone Depletion Amendment, which phases out the production of ozone-depleting chemicals.

In states where there are retrofit standards for pollution control equipment, we request subsidies for poor people so they may comply with the new standards.

Other important Congressional legislation includes:

- (a) S 324, which establishes a national energy policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through conservation.
- (b) HR 3299 and S 1750, budget reconciliation bills which also levy an excise tax on ozone depleting chemicals.
- (c) S 1224, which requires new CAFE standards to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

Mining

We call for the abrogation of the Mining Law of 1872. There should be stricter regulation for mineral entry. Operating mines should pay royalties on profits made on public lands, and set aside trust funds for the restoration of these lands.

Farming

The Organic Farming Bills (HR 4156 and S 2108) are example^s of good farming legislation. These bills establish national standards for and promote and strengthen the organic and sustainable farming industries.

Solid Waste & Recycling

We support a massive effort on the part of government and industry to develop clean technologies and to solve the immense problems of waste cleanup.

This should include zero-discharge recycling systems. These systems should maintain greenbelt, restored lakes, and grazing land. The funds to develop them should not be used as an excuse to suburbanize rural areas around cities.

In addition, we announce our support for building a comprehensive recycling infrastructure, and for the passage of laws requiring individuals and corporations to comply. We support grants and tax incentives for responsible corporations, and laws that punish behaviors not in harmony with the principle of interdependence.

We request immediate action on the CSO city sewers issue; of 1200 CSO systems in the nation, EPA has documented the need to fix or replace 328 of them at an estimated cost of \$16.4 billion, with a total estimated cost for all 1200 being around \$80 billion. These aging systems spread countless gallons of waste and sewage into our streams every time it rains; they increase cleanup and purification costs and are harmful to the streams, lakes, oceans and their inhabitants; it is time that we begin to address the problem.

Biodiversity

We support the strengthening and strict enforcement of the protection provisions of the Endangered Species Act.

Specifically, we call for the protection of this nation's sky islands and unique gene pool areas. The Congress of the United States must protect the grizzlies of Yellowstone, the spotted owl of the Pacific Northwest, the Mount Graham red squirrel, the red cockaded woodpecker, and other threatened species. The ancient habitats that make their lives possible are equally important.

We acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of Starkist, Chicken-of-the-Sea, and Bumblebee Corporations for promising not to can tuna caught by methods that endanger dolphins.

We support Congressional Bill HR 1268, which establishes biodiversity as a national goal and begins the process of implementing this goal.

Population

We believe that the global carrying capacity - in terms of human numbers - has been reached. We support non-totalitarian encouragement of voluntary limitation of population growth. We support the right of abortion for women, seeing that this right is, in an ecological sense, truly pro-life.

Education

We urge a thorough course of environmental education for all grade levels to make new generations aware of their relationship with other beings on the planet.

Other Agenda

We support the continuation of the moratorium on the killing of whales, new oil spill legislation, wilderness designation, toxic cleanup and coastal marine bills, restoration of wetlands and the establishment of marine sanctuaries such as in the Florida Keys.

Conclusion

We signatories, men and women, use our skills as writers and thinkers to awaken and arouse ourselves to the common peril we and all other sentient beings on the planet face. We invite citizens and workers in all fields to join in the common endeavor; whatever our visions of the future, our democracy and the nations of Earth should be steadfast and fierce in the quest to establish sustainable culture on this planet.

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