

# THE REPUBLICAN REVERSAL

Research Documents

Primary Sources

## 1972 Republican Platform on the Environment and Natural Resources and Energy

### **Environment**

In January 1969, we found the Federal Government woefully unprepared to deal with the rapidly advancing environmental crisis. Our response was swift and substantial.

First, new decision-making organizations were set in place—the first Council on Environmental Quality, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. We also proposed a new Department of Natural Resources, but Congress has failed to act. We also created a National Industrial Pollution Control Council to enlist the private sector more actively against environmental decay, and Presidential Federal Property Review Board was appointed to ferret out Federal property for transfer to local park and recreational uses.

Second, we gave top priority in the Federal Budget to environmental improvements. This fiscal year approximately \$2.4 billion will be expended for major environmental programs—three times more than was being spent when President Nixon took office.

Third, sweeping environment messages were sent to Congress in 1970, 1971 and 1972 covering air quality, water quality, toxic waste substances, ocean dumping, noise, solid waste management, land use, parklands and many other environmental concerns. Almost all of these proposals still languish in the opposition Congress.

Although the President cannot move until and unless Congress passes laws in many of these areas, he nevertheless can act—and has acted—forcefully on many fronts: He has directed the Federal Government to practice ecological leadership by using low-lead gasoline and recycled paper. He has cracked down on flagrant polluters, greatly increasing prosecutions and making the first use of Federal authority to shut down major industries during an air pollution crisis. The fragile and unique Everglades were saved from a jetport. Pesticide abuses were curtailed.

Strict new clean air standards were set, and in many urban centers the air is improving. Regulations were issued to make one grade of lead-free and phosphorous-free gasoline available throughout the Nation by July 1, 1974, and a phased reduction was required in the lead content of regular and premium gasoline. Automakers were required to design air pollution control systems to assure that vehicles comply with Federal emission standards throughout their usual life.

Additionally, the President launched the Legacy of Parks program to convert underutilized Federal properties to park and recreational use, with special emphasis on new parks in or near urban areas. More than 140 areas have already been made available

to States, counties and municipalities for such use, including priceless stretches of ocean beach. Moreover, nearly two million acres of land have been purchased by Federal, State and local governments for recreation and for historical and natural preservation purposes. A system of recreational trails for hiking, bicycling and horseback riding will help meet the pressing recreational needs of our increasingly urbanized society. Many State, county and municipal governments are developing bicycle, hiking, and horseback trails with our active assistance through various Federal programs. We pledge our continued commitment to seeking out practical ways for more and safer bicycling opportunities within our cities and metropolitan areas.

We have also provided effective leadership in international environmental activity. The President has negotiated the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement with Canada and a Cooperative Agreement on Environmental Protection with the Soviet Union. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm adopted our government's initiatives for the creation of an international fund for the environment, a continuing United Nations agency for environmental problems, and the control of ocean dumping. Our President has led the effort for a ten-year moratorium on commercial whaling everywhere in the world.

We call upon the Congress to act promptly on the President's environmental proposals still stalled there more than 20 in all. These include:

Legislation to control, and in some cases prohibits, the dumping of wastes into the oceans, estuaries and the Great Lakes;

A Federal Noise Control Act to reduce and regulate unwanted sound from aircraft, construction and transportation equipment;

Authority to control hundreds of chemical substances newly marketed each year;

Legislation to encourage the States to step up to pressing decisions on how best to use land. Both environmentally critical areas such as wetlands and growth-inducing developments such as airports would have particular scrutiny;

A proposal to provide for early identification and protection of endangered wildlife species. This would, for the first time, make the taking of endangered species a Federal offense; Establishment of recreational areas near metropolitan centers such as the Gateway National Recreational Area in New York and New Jersey and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in and around San Francisco Bay.

The nostalgic notion of turning the clock back to a simpler time may be appealing but is neither practical nor desirable. We are not going to abandon the automobile, but we are going to have a clean burning engine.

We are not going to give up electric lighting and modern industry, but we do expect cleanly produced electric power to run them.

We are not going to be able to do without containers for our foods and materials, but we can improve them and make them reusable or biodegradable.

We pledge a workable balance between a growing economy and environmental protection. We will resolve the conflicts sensibly within that framework.

We commit ourselves to comprehensive pollution control laws, vigorous implementation of those laws and rigorous research into the technological problems of pollution control.

The beginnings we have made in these first years of the 1970's are evidence of our determination to follow through. We intend to leave the children of America a legacy of clean air, clean water, vast open spaces and easily accessible parks.

### **Natural Resources and Energy**

Wilderness areas, forests, fish and wildlife are precious natural resources. We have proposed 36 new wilderness areas, adding another 3.6 million acres to the National Wilderness Preservation System. We have made tough new proposals to protect endangered species of wildlife.

Public lands provide us with natural beauty, wilderness and great recreational opportunities as well as minerals, timber, food and fiber. We pledge to develop and manage these lands in a balanced way, both to protect the irreplaceable environment and to maximize the benefits of their use to our society. We will continue these conservation efforts in the years ahead. We recognize and commend the humane societies and the animal welfare societies in their work to protect animals.

Water supplies are not a boundless resource. The Republican Party is committed to developing additional water supplies by desalinization, the discovery of new groundwater stocks, recycling and wiser and more efficient use of the waters we have.

We will continue the development of flood control, navigation improvement and reclamation projects based on valid cost-benefit estimates, including full consideration of environmental concerns.

No modern nation can thrive without meeting its energy needs, and our needs are vast and growing. Last year we proposed a broad range of actions to facilitate research and development for clean energy, provide energy resources on Federal lands, assure a timely supply of nuclear fuels, use energy more efficiently, balance environmental and energy needs and better organize Federal efforts.

The National Minerals Policy Act of 1970 encourages development of domestic resources by private enterprise. A program to tap our vast shale resources has been initiated consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

We need a Department of Natural Resources to continue to develop a national, integrated energy policy and to administer and implement that policy as the United States approaches the 21st Century. Energy sources so vitally important to the welfare of our Nation are becoming increasingly interchangeable. There is nothing inherently incompatible between an adequate energy supply and a healthy environment.

Indeed, vast quantities of energy are needed to do the work necessary to clean up our air and streams. Without sufficient supplies of power we will not be able to attain our goals of reducing unemployment and poverty and enhancing the American standard of living.

Responsible government must consider both the short-term and the long-term aspects of our energy supplies. Avoidance of brown-outs and power disruptions now and in the future call for sound policies supporting incentives that will encourage the exploration for, and development of, our fossil fuels. Such policies will buy us time to develop the sophisticated and complex technologies needed to utilize the exotic energy sources of the future.

National security and the importance of a favorable balance of trade and balance of payments dictate that we must not permit our Nation to become overly dependent on foreign sources of energy. Since more than half our Nation's domestic fossil resources now lie under Federal lands, high priority must be given to the governmental steps necessary to the development of these resources by private industry.

A liquid metal fast breeder reactor demonstration plant will be built with the financial support of the Atomic Energy Commission, the electric power industry and the Tennessee Valley Authority.

We will accelerate research on harnessing thermo-nuclear energy and continue to provide leadership in the production of energy from the sun and geothermal steam. We recognize the serious problem of assuring adequate electric generating capacity in the Nation, and pledge to meet this need without doing violence to our environment.

*Source:* Republican Party Platforms: "Republican Party Platform of 1972," August 21, 1972. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25842>.