

# THE REPUBLICAN REVERSAL

Research Documents

Primary Sources

Republican Party Platform

*August 18, 1976*

## **Energy**

In 1973, Americans were shocked to discover that a plentiful supply of energy could no longer be assumed. Unfortunately, the Democrat majority in Congress still has not responded to this clear and urgent warning. The United States is now consuming more imported oil than it was three years ago and our dependence on foreign sources has continued to increase to the point where we now import more than 40% of our oil.

One fact should now be clear: we must reduce sharply our dependence on other nations for energy and strive to achieve energy independence at the earliest possible date. We cannot allow the economic destiny and international policy of the United States to be dictated by the sovereign powers that control major portions of the world's petroleum supplies.

Our approach toward energy self-sufficiency must involve both expansion of energy supply and improvement of energy efficiency. It must include elements that insure increased conservation at all levels of our society. It must also provide incentive for the exploration and development of domestic gas, oil, coal and uranium, and for expanded research and development in the use of solar, geothermal, co-generation, solid waste, wind, water, and other sources of energy.

We must use our non-renewable resources wisely while we develop alternative supplies for the future. Our standard of living is directly tied to a continued supply of energy resources. Without an adequate supply of energy, our entire economy will crumble.

Unwise government intervention in the marketplace has caused shortage of supply, unrealistic prices and increased dependence on foreign sources. We must immediately eliminate price controls on oil and newly-discovered natural gas in order to increase supply, and to provide the capital that is needed to finance further exploration and development of domestic hydrocarbon reserves.

Fair and realistic market prices will encourage sensible conservation efforts and establish priorities in the use of our resources, which over the long run will provide a secure supply at reasonable prices for all.

The nation's clear and present need is for vast amounts of new capital to finance exploration, discovery, refining, and delivery of currently usable forms of energy, including the use of coal as well as discovery and development of new sources. At this critical time, the Democrats have characteristically resorted to political demagoguery seeking short-term political gain at the expense of the long-term national interest. They object to the petroleum industry making any profit. The petroleum industry is an important segment of our economy and is entitled to reasonable profits to permit further exploration and development.

At the height of the energy crisis, the Republican Administration proposed a strong, balanced energy package directed at both expansion of supply and conservation of energy. The response from the Democrats in Congress was to inhibit expanded production through artificially set price and allocation controls, thereby preventing market forces from working to make energy expansion economically feasible.

Now, the Democrats proposed to dismember the American oil industry. We vigorously oppose such divestiture of oil companies— a move which would surely result in higher energy costs, inefficiency and undercapitalization of the industry.

Democrats have also proposed that the federal government compete with industry in energy development by creating a national oil company. We totally oppose this expensive, inefficient and wasteful intrusion into an area which is best handled by private enterprise.

The Democrats are playing politics with energy. If they are permitted to continue, we will pay a heavy price in lost energy and lost jobs during the decades ahead.

Immediate removal of counter-productive bureaucratic red tape will eliminate hindrances to the exploration and development of hydrocarbons and other energy resources. We will accelerate development of oil shale reserves, Alaskan petroleum and the leasing of the Outer Continental Shelf, always within the context of preserving the fullest possible protection for the environment. We will reduce complexity and delays involved in siting, licensing and the regulatory procedures affecting power generation facilities and refineries.

Coal, America's most abundant energy resource, is of inestimable value to the American people. It can provide the energy needed to bridge the gap between oil and gas and nuclear and other sources of energy. The uncertainties of governmental regulation regarding the mining, transportation and use of coal must be removed and a policy established which will assure that governmental restraints, other than proper environmental controls, do not prevent the use of coal. Mined lands must be returned to beneficial use.

Uranium offers the best intermediate solution to America's energy crisis. We support accelerated use of nuclear energy through processes that have been proven safe. Government research on the use of nuclear energy will be expanded to include perfecting a long-term solution to the problems of nuclear waste.

Among alternative future energy sources, fusion, with its unique potential for supplying unlimited clean energy and the promise of new methods of natural resource recovery, warrants continued emphasis in our national energy research program, and we support measures to assure adequate capital investment in the development of new energy sources.

### **Environment and Natural Resources**

A clean and healthy natural environment is the rightful heritage of every American. In order to preserve this heritage, we will provide for proper development of resources, safeguards for clean air and water, and protection and enhancement of our recreation and scenic areas.

As our environmental sophistication grows, we must more clearly define the role of the federal government in environmental protection.

We believe that it is a national responsibility to support scientific and technological research and development to identify environmental problems and arrive at solutions.

We are in complete accord with the recent Supreme Court decision on air pollution that allows the level of government closest to the problem and the solution to establish and apply appropriate air quality standards.

We are proud of the progress that the current Republican Administration has made toward bringing pollution of water, land and air under control. We will meet the challenges that remain by stepping up efforts to perfect our understanding of pollutants and the means for reducing their effects. Moreover, as the nation develops new energy sources and technologies, we must insure that they meet safe environmental standards.

We renew our commitments to the development of additional water supplies by desalinization, and to the more efficient use and re-use of waters currently available.

We are determined to preserve land use planning as a unique responsibility of state and local government.

We take particular pride in the expanded use of the National Park system in recent years, and will provide for continued improvement of the national parks and historic sites.

We support establishment of a presidential panel, including representatives of environmental groups, industry, the scientific community and the public to assist in the development of national priorities on environmental and energy issues. This panel will hear and consider alternative policy recommendations set forth by all of the interested groups, and then develop solutions that represent the overall public interest on environmental and energy matters.

One of this nation's greatest assets has been our abundant natural resources which have made possible our strong economic and strategic role in the world. We still have a wealth of resources, but they are not of infinite quantity. We must recognize that our material blessings stem from what we grow in the soil, take from the sea, or extract from the ground. We have a responsibility to future generations to conserve our non-renew-able natural resources. Consistent with our needs, conservation should remain our national policy.

The vast land holdings of the federal government—approximately one—third of our nation's area—are the lands from which much of our future production of minerals must come. Public lands must be maintained for multiple use management where such uses are compatible. Public land areas should not be closed to exploration for minerals or for mining without an overriding national interest.

We believe Americans want their resources developed properly, their environment kept clean and their recreational and scenic areas kept intact. We support appropriate measures to achieve these goals.

We also believe that Americans are realistic and recognize that the emphasis on environmental concerns must be brought into balance with the needs for industrial and economic growth so that we can continue to provide jobs for an ever-growing work force.

The United States possesses the most productive softwood forests in the world, as well as extensive hardwood forests. Demands for housing, fuel, paper, chemicals and a multitude of

other such needs require that these renewable resources be managed wisely on both public and private forest lands—not only to meet these needs, but also to provide for soil conservation, wildlife habitats and recreation.

Recognizing that timber is a uniquely renewable resource, we will use all scientifically sound means to maximize sustained yield, including clear-cutting and replanting where appropriate. We urge the Congress to strengthen the National Forest Service so that it can realize its potential in becoming an effective participant in the reforestation program.

We will support broader use of resource recovery and recycling processes through removal of economic disincentives caused by unnecessary government regulation.

One of the important issues at stake in the United Nations Law of the Sea Conference is access to the mineral resources in and beneath the sea. Technology, developed by United States industry, is at hand which can unlock resources of petroleum, manganese, nickel, cobalt, copper and other minerals. We will safeguard the national interest in development and use of these resources.

### **Science and Technology**

Every aspect of our domestic economy and well-being, our international competitive position, and national security is related to our past and present leadership in basic and applied research and the development of our technology. But there can be no complacency about our continued commitment to maintain this leadership position.

In the past, most of these accomplishments have been achieved through a unique partnership between government and industry. This must continue and be expanded in the future.

Because our society is so dependent upon the advancement of science and the development of technology, it is one of the areas where there must be a central federal policy. We support a national science policy that will foster the public-private partnership to insure that we maintain our leadership role.

The national space program plays a pioneer role in exploring the mysteries of our universe and we support its expansion.

We recognize that only when our technology is fully distributed can it be assimilated and used to increase our productivity and our standard of living. We will continue to encourage young Americans to study science and engineering.

Finally, we support new initiatives to utilize better the recoverable commodities from solid waste materials. We can no longer afford the luxury of a throw-away world. Recycling offers environmental benefits, economic expansion, resource conservation and energy savings. We support a policy which will reward recycling and economic incentives which will encourage its expansion.

...

**Source:** Republican Party Platforms: "Republican Party Platform of 1976," August 18, 1976. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25843>.