

THE REPUBLICAN REVERSAL

Research Documents

Primary Sources

1980 Republican Party Platform

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Energy

Energy is the lifeblood of our economy. Without adequate energy supplies now and in the future, the jobs of American men and women, the security of their lives, and their ability to provide for their families will be threatened and their standard of living will be lowered. Every American is painfully aware that our national energy situation has deteriorated badly over the past four years of Democratic control. Gasoline prices have more than doubled. Our oil import bill has risen 96 percent. Our energy supplies have become increasingly vulnerable because U.S. oil production outside of Alaska is now 28 percent below 1973 levels. The threat of sudden shortages, curtailments, and gas lines has become a recurring reality.

This steady deterioration has not only compounded our economic problems of inflation, recession, and dollar weakness, but even more importantly, it has infected our confidence as a nation. Energy shortages, spiralling costs, and increasing insecurity are beginning to darken our basic hopes and expectations for the future.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has very accurately focused on the effects that a no-growth energy policy will have on the opportunities of America's black people and other minorities. The NAACP said that "a pessimistic attitude toward energy supplies for the future...cannot satisfy the fundamental requirement of a society of expanding economic opportunity."

In commenting on the Carter energy proposals, the Association said, "We cannot accept the notion that our people are best served by a policy based upon the inevitability of energy shortage and the need for government to allocate an ever diminishing supply among competing interests... (The plan) reflects the absence of a black perspective in its development."

Three and one-half years ago, President Carter declared energy the "moral equivalent of war" and sent Congress 109 recommendations for action, including the creation of a new Department of Energy. Since then, the federal budget for government's energy bureaucracy has grown to about \$10 billion per year and more than 20,000 pages of new energy regulations and guidelines have been issued. But these have not fostered the production of a single extra unit of energy. The Democratic Congress has joined in the stampede, taking action on 304 energy bills since 1977. As a result, the federal bureaucracy is busy from coast to coast allocating gasoline, setting building temperatures, printing rationing coupons, and readying standby plans to ban weekend boating, close factories, and pass out "no drive day" stickers to American motorists—all the time saying, "We must make do with less." Never before in the history of American government has so much been done at such great expense with such dismal results.

Republicans believe this disappointing cycle of shrinking energy prospects and expanding government regulation and meddling is wholly unnecessary. We believe that the proven American values of individual enterprise can solve our energy problems. This optimism stands in stark contrast to the grim predictions of the Democrats who have controlled Congress for the last 25 years.

They seem to believe not only that we are a nation without resources, but also that we have lost our resourcefulness. Republicans believe in the common sense of the American people rather than a complex web of government controls and interventions that threaten America's ability to grow. We are committed to an alternative strategy of aggressively boosting the nation's energy supplies; stimulating new energy technology and more efficient energy use; restoring maximum feasible choice and freedom in the marketplace for energy consumers and producers alike; and eliminating energy shortages and disruptions, which are a roadblock to renewed national economic growth, rising living standards, and a reawakening of the hopes and dreams of the American people for a better and more abundant future.

We believe the United States must proceed on a steady and orderly path toward energy self-sufficiency. But in the interim, our pressing need for insurance against supply disruption should not be made hostage to the whims of foreign governments, as is presently the case under the Carter Administration. We believe it is necessary to resume rapid filling of strategic oil reserves to planned levels of 500 million barrels in the short-term and ultimately to the one billion barrel level and to ensure that non-contiguous areas of the United States have their fair share of emergency oil reserves stored within their respective boundaries, as authorized by the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975.

In order to increase domestic production of energy, Republicans advocate the decontrol of the price at the well head of oil and gas. We believe that the so-called windfall profits tax (which is unrelated to profit) should be repealed as it applies to small volume royalty owners, new oil, stripper wells, tertiary-recovery, and heavy crude oil, and that the phase-out of the tax on old oil should be accelerated. This tax legislation should be amended to include a plowback provision. We will seek decontrol of prices on all oil products and an end to government authority to allocate petroleum supplies except in national emergency. We also believe that market restrictions on the use of natural gas should be eliminated.

Coal, our most abundant energy resource, can bridge the gap between our other present energy sources and the renewable energy sources of the future. The coal industry has been virtually ignored by the Carter Administration and the Democratic Congress. In 1977, President Carter promised to double coal production by 1985. Instead, because of obstructionist actions of the Administration, coal production has increased by only 11 percent to date and future prospects are dim. Today, thousands of coal miners are out of work and without hope for the future.

Republicans support a comprehensive program of regulatory reform, improved incentives, and revision of cumbersome and overly stringent Clean Air Act regulations. This program will speed conversion of utility, industrial, and large commercial oil-burning boilers to coal to the greatest

extent feasible, thus substantially cutting our dependence on foreign oil. This program must begin immediately on a priority basis and be completed at the earliest date possible.

To effectively utilize this vast resource, our coal transportation systems must be up-graded and the government controls on them relaxed. Government regulation regarding the mining and use of coal must be simplified. We will propose a policy which will assure that governmental restraints, other than necessary and reasonable environmental controls, do not prevent the use of coal. We also reaffirm that mined lands must be returned to beneficial use and that states, in accordance with past Congressional mandate, have the primary responsibility to implement rules concerning the mining of coal which are adapted to the states' unique characteristics.

Coal, gas, and nuclear fission offer the best intermediate solutions to America's energy needs. We support accelerated use of nuclear energy through technologies that have been proven efficient and safe. The safe operation, as well as design, of nuclear generating plants will have our highest priority to assure the continued availability of this important energy source. The design and operation of these plants can be guaranteed in less than the 10 to 12 year lead time now required to license and build them. We believe that the licensing process can and should be streamlined through consolidation of the present process and the use of standardized reactor designs.

The Three Mile Island incident suggests the need for certain reforms, such as in the area of operator training, but illustrates that properly designed and operated nuclear plants do not endanger public health or safety. We further encourage the research, development, and demonstration of the breeder reactor, with its potential for safely contributing to our nation's future energy supplies.

Nuclear power development requires sound plans for nuclear waste disposal and storage and reprocessing of spent fuel. Technical solutions to these problems exist, and decisive federal action to choose and implement solutions is essential. The Democratic-controlled Congress and Administration have failed to address the spent fuel problem. A Republican Congress and Administration will immediately begin to implement plans for regional away-from-reactor storage of spent fuel with the goal of implementation of a program no later than 1984.

Republicans are committed to the rapid development of permanent storage facilities for nuclear wastes. Since waste disposal is a national responsibility, no state should bear an unacceptable share of this responsibility.

Republicans will also move toward reprocessing of spent fuel.

Republicans will continue to support the development of new technologies to develop liquid, gaseous, and solid hydrocarbons which can be derived from coal, oil shale, and tar sands. The decontrol of oil and gas prices will eliminate any necessity for government support for a synthetic fuel industry except possibly for limited demonstration projects. Clean air, water, waste disposal, mine reclamation, and leasing rules must be made rational and final to accelerate private investment.

Gasohol is an important, immediately available source of energy that is helping to extend our petroleum reserves. We encourage development of a domestic gasohol industry.

We also believe the government must continue supporting productive research to speed the development of renewable energy technologies, including solar energy, geothermal, wind, nuclear fusion, alcohol synthesis, and biomass, to provide the next generation of energy sources. Conservation clearly plays a vital role in the consideration and formulation of national energy policy. Republicans reject, however, the position of the Democrats which is to conserve through government fiat, Republicans understand that free markets based on the collective priorities and judgments of individual consumers will efficiently allocate the energy supplies to their most highly valued uses. We also believe that the role of government is best performed by structuring creative cost-effective incentives to achieve energy efficiency and conservation.

We reject unequivocally punitive gasoline and other energy taxes designed to artificially suppress energy consumption.

Much inefficient energy use results from government subsidization of imported oil and holding the price of natural gas substantially below its market value. When the price of energy is held artificially low, there is no incentive for conservation. This kind of energy consumption stems not from the excesses of the public, but the foolish policy distortions of government. Every BTU of genuine energy "waste" in our economy would rapidly disappear if we immediately and completely dismantle all remaining energy price controls and subsidies.

A Republican policy of decontrol, development of our domestic energy resources, and incentives for new supply and conservation technologies will substantially reduce our dependence on imported oil. We reject the Carter Administration's incessant excuse that the high price of imported oil and OPEC are the primary cause of inflation and recession at home and a weak dollar and declining balance of payments abroad. The fastest way to bring international oil prices under control is to stop printing so recklessly the dollars in which those prices are denominated. Fully 60 percent of the world oil price increase since 1973 represents the depreciation of our dollars rather than an increase in the real price of oil.

Virtually all major environmental legislation in the past decade reflected a bipartisan concern over the need to maintain a clean and healthful environment. While the new environmental policies have resulted in improving air quality, cleaner waters, and more careful analysis of toxic chemicals, the price paid has far exceeded the direct and necessary cost of designing and installing new control technology. In the energy area, the increased complexity of regulations, together with continual changes in the standards imposed, have brought about tremendous delays in the planning and construction of new facilities ranging from electric power plants to oil refineries, pipelines, and synthetic fuel plants.

Republicans believe that an effective balance between energy and environmental goals can be achieved. We can ensure that government requirements are firmly grounded on the best scientific evidence available, that they are enforced evenhandedly and predictably, and that the process of their development and enforcement has finality.

Republicans condemn the Democrats' withdrawal of a massive amount of the most promising federal lands from prospective energy development, including the rich potential of our Outer Continental shelf. It has been estimated that by the end of the 1980s resources from government-

controlled acreage could yield over two million barrels of oil per day and four trillion cubic feet of gas per year, the equivalent of nearly all of our imports from OPEC countries. It is clear that restrictive leasing policies have driven us further to depend on OPEC by severely impairing the exploration for, and development of, domestic oil, gas, and coal resources, thereby aggravating our balance of trade deficit and making our country less secure. Republicans will move toward making available all suitable federal lands for multiple use purposes including exploration and production of energy resources.

Republicans believe that in order to address our energy problem we must maximize our domestic energy production capability. In the short term, therefore, the nation must move forward on all fronts simultaneously, including oil and gas, coal, and nuclear. In the longer term, renewable resources must be brought significantly on line to replace conventional sources. Finally, in conjunction with this all-out production initiative, we must strive to maximize conservation and the efficient use of energy.

The return to the traditions that gave vitality and strength to this nation is urgent.

The free world—indeed western civilization—needs a strong United States. That strength requires a prospering economy. That economy will be secure with a vigorous domestic energy industry. That vigor can only be achieved in an atmosphere of freedom—one that encourages individual initiatives and personal resourcefulness.

Environment

The Republican Party reaffirms its long-standing commitment to the conservation and wise management of America's renewable natural resources.

We believe that a healthy environment is essential to the present and future well-being of our people, and to sustainable national growth.

The nature of environmental pollution is such that a government role is necessary to ensure its control and the proper protection of public health. Much progress has been made in achieving the goals of clean air, clean water, and control of toxic wastes. At the same time, we believe that it is imperative that environmental laws and regulations be reviewed and, where necessary, reformed to ensure that the benefits achieved justify the costs imposed. Too often, current regulations are so rigid and narrow that even individual innovations that improve the environment cannot be implemented. We believe, in particular, that regulatory procedures must be reformed to expedite decisionmaking. Endless delay harms both the environment and the economy.

We strongly affirm that environmental protection must not become a cover for a "no-growth" policy and a shrinking economy. Our economy can continue to grow in an acceptable environment.

We believe that agricultural policy should give emphasis to the stewardship of the nation's soil and water resources. The permanent loss of productive farm land is a growing problem and we encourage states and local communities to adopt policies that help maintain and protect productive agricultural land as a national asset.

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