

THE REPUBLICAN REVERSAL

Research Documents

Primary Sources

1984 Republican Party Platform

Proposed by the Committee on Resolutions

Republican National Convention

August 20, 1984

Environment

It is part of the Republican philosophy to preserve the best of our heritage, including our natural resources. The environment is not just a scientific or technological issue; it is a human one. Republicans put the needs of people at the center of environmental concerns. We assert the people's stewardship of our God-given natural resources. We pledge to meet the challenges of environmental protection, economic growth, regulatory reform, enhancement of our scenic and recreational areas, conservation of our non-renewable resources, and preservation of our irreplaceable natural heritage.

Americans were environmentalists long before it became fashionable. Our farmers cared for the earth and made it the world's most bountiful. Our families cared for their neighborhoods as an investment in our children's future. We pioneered the conservation that replenished our forests, preserved our wildlife, and created our national park system.

The American people have joined together in a great national effort to protect the promise of our future by conserving the rich beauty and bounty of our heritage. As a result, by almost any measure, the air is cleaner than it was 10 years ago, and fish are returning to rivers where they had not been seen for generations.

Within the last four years, dramatic progress has been made in protecting coastal barrier islands, and we began the Park Preservation and Restoration Program to restore the most celebrated symbols of our heritage. We support programs to restore and protect the nation's estuaries, wetland resources, and beaches.

The Republican Party endorses a strong effort to control and clean up toxic wastes. We have already tripled funding to clean up hazardous waste dumps, quadrupled funding for acid rain research, and launched the rebirth of the Chesapeake Bay.

The environmental policy of our nation originated with the Republican Party under the inspiration of Theodore Roosevelt. We hold it a privilege to build upon the foundation we have laid. The Republican Party supports the continued commitment to clean air and clean water. This support includes the implementation of meaningful clean air and clean water acts. We will continue to offer leadership to reduce the threat to our environment and our economy from acid rain, while at the same time preventing economic dislocation.

Even as many environmental problems have been brought under control, new ones have been detected. And all the while, the growth and shifts of population and economic expansion, as well

as the development of new industries, will further intensify the competing demands on our national resources.

Continued progress will be much more difficult. The environmental challenges of the 1980s are much more complex than the ones we tried to address in the 1970s, and they will not yield quickly to our efforts. As the science and administration of environmental protection have become more sophisticated, we have learned of many subtle and potentially more dangerous threats to public health and the environment.

In setting out to find solutions to the environmental issues of the 1980s and 1990s, we start with a healthy appreciation of the difficulties involved. Detecting contamination, assessing the threat, correcting the damage, and setting up preventive measures, all raise questions of science, technology, and public policy that are as difficult as they are important. However, the health and well being of our citizens must be a high priority.

The number of people served by waste water treatment systems has nearly doubled just since 1970. The federal government should offer assistance to State and local governments in planning for the disposal of solid and liquid wastes. A top priority nationwide should be to eliminate the dumping of raw sewage.

We encourage recycling of materials and support programs which will allow our economic system to reward resource conservation.

We also commit ourselves to the development of renewable and efficient energy sources and to the protection of endangered or threatened species of plants and wildlife.

We will be responsible to future generations, but at the same time, we must remember that quality of life means more than protection and preservation. As Teddy Roosevelt put it, "Conservation means development as much as it does protection." Quality of life also means a good job, a decent place to live, accommodation for a growing population, and the continued economic and technological development essential to our standard of living, which is the envy of the whole world.

Source: Republican Party Platforms: "Republican Party Platform of 1984," August 20, 1984. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25845>