

THE REPUBLICAN REVERSAL

Research Documents

Primary Sources

1988 Republican Party Platform

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Energy for the Future

To make real their vision for the future, the American people need adequate, safe, and reliable supplies of energy. Both the security of our nation and the prosperity of our households will depend upon clean and affordable power to light the way ahead and speed a daring society toward its goals. We recognize that energy is a security issue as well as an economic issue. We cannot have a strong nation if we are not energy independent.

We are part way there. In 1981, Republican leadership replaced the Democrats' energy crisis with energy consensus. We rejected scarcity, fostered growth, and set course for an expansive future. We left behind the days of gasoline lines, building-temperature controls, the multi-billion dollar boondoggle of the Synfuels Corporation, and the cancellation of night baseball games. The Carter-Mondale years of crippling regulation and exorbitant costs are a thing of the past. We returned the country to policies that encourage rather than discourage domestic production of energy. With a free, more competitive system of producing and marketing energy, American consumers gained a wider range of energy choices at lower prices.

Cumulative Strategic Petroleum Reserve Oil Fill

During the Reagan-Bush years, we loosened OPEC's hold on the world's petroleum markets. The United States built up its Strategic Petroleum Reserve and persuaded its allies to increase their emergency petroleum stocks as both a deterrent and a cushion against supply disruptions. When President Reagan and Vice President Bush took office, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve held only 79 million barrels. Now it contains almost 550 million, a three-month cushion in the event of a crisis.

Conservation and energy efficiency, stimulated by the oil shocks of the 1970s, made impressive gains. The nation now consumes less oil, and no more energy in total, than it did in 1977, even with the remarkable growth in our economy under the Reagan-Bush Administration.

Despite these gains, much hard work remains. A strong energy policy is required to assure that the needs of our society are met. Because of low prices, domestic oil and gas production has declined significantly. New initiatives will be required to halt the erosion of the domestic oil reserve base, to restore the vitality of the domestic oil and gas industry, to slow the rise in oil imports, and to prevent a return to the vulnerabilities of the 1970s. We must maintain the progress made in conservation and rely more heavily on secure American fuels: domestic oil, natural gas, coal, nuclear energy, alternative sources and renewables.

Oil

The United States is heavily dependent on oil, which represents 40 percent of our total energy consumption. We must have a healthy domestic industry to assure the availability of this fuel to meet our needs. The decline in oil prices has brought exploratory drilling in the country to a virtual standstill, and continuing low prices threaten the hundreds of thousands of small wells that make up the most of U.S. production.

We will set an energy policy for the United States to maintain a viable core industry and to ensure greater energy self-sufficiency through private initiatives. We will adopt forceful initiatives to reverse the decline of our domestic oil production. Republicans support:

- Repeal of the counterproductive Windfall Profits Tax.
- Maintenance of our schedule for filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to reach 750 million barrels by 1993 and encouragement of our allies to maintain similar reserves.
- Tax incentives to save marginal wells, to encourage exploration for new oil, and to improve the recovery of oil still in place.
- Repeal of the Transfer Rule prohibiting independent producers from using certain tax provisions on acquired properties.
- Elimination of 80 percent of intangible drilling costs as an alternative minimum tax preference item.
- Exploration and development in promising areas, including federal lands and waters, particularly in the Arctic, in a manner that is protective of our environment and is in the best national interest.

Such continued exploration and development of new domestic oil and gas reserves are essential to keep our nation from becoming more dependent on foreign energy sources. Indeed, tax incentives can make our investment in U.S. oil and gas exploration competitive with other countries. They can stimulate drilling, put people back to work, and help maintain our leadership in oil field technology and services. Incentives and opportunities for increased domestic exploration can also help limit the rise in imports, discourage oil price shocks, and enhance energy security.

Natural Gas

Natural gas is a clean, abundant, and reasonably priced fuel secure within the borders of the nation. Increased reliance on natural gas can have significant national security and environmental benefits. While U.S. gas resources are plentiful and recoverable at competitive prices, regulatory burdens and price controls still impede development.

More progress must be made in deregulation of natural gas:

- We support fully decontrolling prices and providing more open access to transportation.
- We also support the flexible use of natural gas to fuel automobiles and boilers.

Over the longer term, natural gas as an alternative fuel could significantly reduce overdependence on imported oil, while also improving air quality. We should support cost effective development and greater use of this fuel.

Coal

The United States enjoys a rich national endowment of enormous supplies of coal which can provide a secure source of energy for hundreds of years.

- We should aggressively pursue the clean-coal technology initiative successfully launched by the Reagan-Bush Administration as part of the solution to coal's environmental problems.
- A major effort should be made to encourage coal exports, which could improve the trade balance, put Americans to work, and provide reliable energy supplies to our allies.

Nuclear Power

We must preserve nuclear power as a safe and economic option to meet future electricity needs. It generates 20 percent of our electricity, and we anticipate the continued expansion of renewable energy and environmentally safe nuclear power. We will promote the adoption of standardized, cost-effective, and environmentally safe nuclear plant designs. We should enhance our efforts to manage nuclear waste and will insist on the highest standards of safety.

Technology, Alternatives, Conservation, and Regulation

Technology is America's competitive edge, and it should be encouraged in finding new solutions to our energy problems. Energy efficiency improvements such as more efficient cars, better insulated homes, and more efficient industrial processes, have resulted in substantial savings, making the U.S. economy more competitive.

- We support funding for research and development, particularly where current market economics preclude private initiative.
- We will set priorities and, where cost effective, support research and development for alternative fuels such as ethanol, methanol, and compressed natural gas, particularly for use in transportation.
- We will also support research and development for energy efficiency, conservation, renewables, fusion and superconductivity.
- We encourage the improvements of our national electricity transportation network, to achieve the economic and environmental efficiencies and reliability of linking electricity-exporting regions with importers.

Substantial progress has been made in eliminating the intrusive and costly regulatory functions of the Department of Energy and should be continued. Efforts should be made to streamline the department's functions and evaluate its long-term institutional role in setting national energy policy, in discouraging a return to regulation, and in promoting long-term scientific research. We believe continued economic progress requires an adequate and secure supply of electricity from every possible source in addition to energy conservation. Conservation alone cannot meet the energy needs of a growing economy. Witness the case of Massachusetts, where the State government's energy policy of stopping construction of any significant electric generating plants of all kinds has caused a dangerous shortage.

Preserving and Protecting the Environment

The Republican Party has a long and honored tradition of preserving our nation's natural resources and environment. We recognize that the preservation, conservation, and protection of our environment contribute to our health and well-being and that, as citizens, we all share in the responsibility to safeguard our God-given resources. A great Republican President, Teddy Roosevelt, once characterized our environmental challenge as "the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us." Satisfying this imperative requires dedication and a commitment both to the protection of our environment and to the development of economic opportunities for all through a growing economy.

Republicans have led the efforts to protect the environment.

- We have dramatically reduced airborne lead contamination. This reduction has been perhaps the most important contribution to the health of Americans living in urban areas.
- By almost any measure, the air is vastly improved from the 1970s. Carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, nitrogen dioxide, and other emissions have declined substantially.
- We brought record numbers of enforcement cases against toxic polluters based on the principle that polluters should pay for the damages they cause.
- We pioneered an international accord for the protection of the stratospheric ozone layer, the first such international agreement.
- Dramatic progress has been made in protecting coastal barrier islands, in reducing coastal erosion, and in protecting estuaries.
- We have led the fight to clean up our Great Lakes and the Chesapeake and Narragansett Bays, some of the most unique and productive ecosystems on earth.
- We encouraged agricultural conservation, enhanced our wetlands, and preserved and restored our National Parks, which had suffered tragic neglect in the years preceding the Reagan-Bush Administration.
- Under Republican leadership, the most important soil conservation measure of the last half-century became law as the Conservation Title of the 1985 Farm Bill.
- We established 34 national wildlife refuges in 21 States and territories.
- We reformed U.S. and international aid programs to assist developing nations to assure environmental protection.

Republicans look to the environmental future with confidence in the American people and with a renewed commitment to world leadership in environmental protection. We recognize the necessary role of the federal government only in matters that cannot be managed by regional cooperation or by levels of government closer to the people. Cooperative action by all is needed to advance the nation's agenda for a cleaner, safer environment.

The toughest challenges lie ahead of us. Republicans propose the following program for the environment in the 1990s:

- We will work for further reductions in air and water pollution and effective actions against the threats posed by acid rain. These goals can and must be achieved without harmful economic dislocation.

- We are committed to minimizing the release of toxins into the environment.
- We will continue to lead the effort to develop new clean-coal technologies and to remove the barriers that prevent cleaner, alternative fuels from being used.
- We support a comprehensive plan of action to fight coastal erosion and to protect and restore the nation's beaches, coral reefs, bodies of water, wetlands and estuaries such as the Louisiana coast, Chesapeake Bay, the Great Lakes, San Francisco Bay, Puget Sound, Narragansett Bay, and other environmentally sensitive areas. The restoration of these areas will continue to be a priority.
- A top priority of our country must be the continued improvement of our National Parks and wildlife areas. We must upgrade our recreation, fisheries, and wildlife programs in parks, wildlife refuges, forests, and other public lands. We support efforts, including innovative public-private partnerships, to restore declining waterfowl populations and enhance recreational fisheries.
- We will fight to protect endangered species and to sustain biological diversity worldwide.
- We support federal, State, and local policies, including tax code provisions, which lead to the renewal and revitalization of our environment through restoration and which encourage scenic easements designed to preserve farmland and open spaces.
- We believe public lands should not be transferred to any special group in a manner inconsistent with current Reagan-Bush Administration policy. To the extent possible, consistent with current policy, we should keep public lands open and accessible.
- We will protect the productive capacity of our lands by minimizing erosion.
- We are committed to the historic preservation of our American heritage, including our architectural, archeological, and maritime resources.
- We support strong enforcement of our environmental laws and will accelerate the pace of our national effort to clean up hazardous waste sites and to protect our groundwater. We will promote proper use of fertilizers and pesticides to minimize pollution of groundwater.
- Republicans recognize that toxic and hazardous waste production is increasing. Therefore, we will utilize the nation's scientific community to develop solutions to this waste disposal dilemma as an alternative to the continued burying, exporting, and ocean dumping of these dangerous substances, as they are no more than stop-gap measures with extremely tragic potential.
- We are committed to solving our country's increasing problem of waste disposal. By 1995, half of our existing landfills will be closed, and municipalities will have increased difficulty finding new sites. This is an issue which will require the dedication and resolve of our local communities, the private sector, and all of us as citizens. Resource recovery, recycling, and waste minimization are critical elements of our solution, and we will work to ensure that innovative approaches to the problem are encouraged.
- We are determined to prevent dumping off our coasts and in international waters. Ocean dumping poses a hazard not only to marine life, but also to those who live along our coasts and to those who use them for recreation. Where federal laws have been violated, we will prosecute

polluters to the full extent of the law, including adherence to the 1991 federal ban on ocean dumping of sewage sludge. Where laws need to be strengthened, we will work at the federal, State, and local levels to do so.

- We will support all serious efforts to cope with the special problems of illegal dumping of hospital and medical waste. We pledge close cooperation by the Environmental Protection Agency with States and industry groups to develop new approaches to the most cost-effective means for the safe disposal by responsible medical facilities. Those who continue to dump illegally threaten the very life and health of our communities, and we call for enactment by the States of tough new felony laws that will permit swift prosecution of these criminals.
- We will require that federal departments and agencies meet or exceed the environmental standards set for citizens in the private sector.

Many of the most serious environmental problems that will confront us in the years ahead are global in scope. For example, degradation of the stratospheric ozone layer poses a health hazard not only to Americans, but to all peoples around the globe. The Reagan-Bush Administration successfully pioneered an agreement to attack this problem through world-wide action. In addition, we will continue to lead this effort by promoting private sector initiatives to develop new technologies and adopt processes which protect the ozone layer. A similar ability to develop international agreements to solve complex global problems such as tropical forest destruction, ocean dumping, climate change, and earthquakes will be increasingly vital in the years ahead. All of these efforts will require strong and experienced leadership to lead the other nations of the world in a common effort to combat ecological dangers that threaten all peoples. The Republican Party believes that, toward this end, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration should be joined with the Environmental Protection Agency.

We all have a stake in maintaining the environmental balance and ecological health of our planet and our country. As Republicans, we hold that it is of critical importance to preserve our national heritage. We must assure that programs for economic growth and opportunity sustain the natural abundance of our land and waters and protect the health and well-being of our citizens. As a nation, we should take pride in our accomplishments and look forward to fulfilling our obligation of leaving this land an even better place for our children and future generations.

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