

THE REPUBLICAN REVERSAL

Research Documents

Primary Sources

1992 Republican Party Platform

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Our Land, Food, and Resources

We hold the resources of our country in stewardship. Our heritage from the past must be our legacy to generations to come. Our people have always known that, as they cherished their land and turned earth and rock into food, fiber, and power. In the process, they built the world's most formidable economy, sustained by its raw materials, driven by its energy resources. They brought comfort to the home, transformed the Nation, and fed the world.

Agriculture and energy remain building blocks of modern life. Their vitality is crucial to the Nation's growth. Indeed, to its survival. While supporting conservation, we reject the notion that there are limits to growth. Human ingenuity is the ultimate resource, and it knows no limits. The true measure of America's economic success is not whether austerity can be shared by many, but whether prosperity can be achieved for all.

We advocate privatizing those government agencies and assets that would be more productive and better maintained in private ownership. We support efforts to decentralize government monopolies that poorly serve the public and waste taxpayers' dollars.

Agriculture. The Republican Party is the home of the farmer, rancher, and forester. We have long championed their right to pursue growth, efficiency, and competitiveness through market incentives, diversification, and personal ingenuity. And for good reason. Their industry provides consumers with the highest quality food and fiber for the smallest percentage of disposable income of any nation in the history of the world.

They have been pioneer environmentalists. They have turned over to their children and grandchildren land that has been nurtured to expand its productivity while conserving this vital resource. Even more important, they have cultivated in their homes strong family life and moral virtues. We endorse American Samoa's time-honored land tenure system which fosters self-reliance and strong extended family values. When we lose farmers, we lose much more than agriculture. We are committed to bringing our farm families the full benefit of a growing and diversified rural economy.

Our rural families also deserve to be brought into the mainstream of health care, with tax policies that provide all who are self-employed full deductibility of their health insurance premiums.

We stand with farmers against attempts by liberal Democrats to repeal the laws of economics by dictating price levels and restricting production. We stand with them against agricultural embargoes. We reject the notion that elected officials and bureaucrats make better farm managers than farmers themselves.

We remain strong in our support of livestock agriculture. We believe in the humane treatment of animals, but we oppose attempts by animal rights extremists to impose excessive restrictions on animal husbandry practices.

Our Omnibus Farm Bills of 1985 and 1990 gave farmers greater flexibility in decisions concerning management of their farms and marketing of their commodities. We have reduced government control and ownership of commodity inventories. Export sales and profitability have improved significantly. Agricultural debt has fallen by 30 percent. Under this President and sound Republican policies, net farm income has reached record levels.

At the same time, we cut by two-thirds the cost of government commodity programs. Only one-half of one percent of the federal budget is now spent on those programs. By reducing dependency on government, we have created a healthier agricultural sector. We will build upon our 1985 and 1990 legislation and repeal obsolete or unworkable statutes while continuing to provide a viable base of support for U.S. farmers.

Agricultural prosperity is essential to the Nation's global competitiveness. We will continue to expand the growth of American agriculture through exports, development of new products, and new markets. Commodity exports this year will hit \$40 billion, a 50 percent increase over the levels of five years ago. There has never been an annual deficit in our balance of agricultural trade, and the positive balance this year will be \$18 billion.

We pledge to fight unfair competition and to bring down the walls of protectionism around the world that unfairly inhibit competitiveness of U.S. farm exports. We pledge continued pressure to open world markets through the Uruguay Round, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and bilateral negotiations. We affirm that there will be no GATT agreement unless it improves opportunities for U.S. farmers to compete in world markets. We repeat our demand for cutbacks in export subsidies by the European Community and elsewhere, and we will fight the use of arbitrary health and sanitation standards to sabotage U.S. exports.

New markets for agricultural products will also be created as producers translate technological breakthroughs into new uses, such as soy oil diesel and biodegradable plastics. We support the widest possible use of ethanol in the U.S. motor fuel market, including in oxygenated fuels programs and as ethanol blends in reformulated gasolines. In addition, the Republican Party supports increased research and development to reduce ethanol production costs and expand its use in motor fuel markets. Such use will greatly help American farmers, improve the rural economy, and reduce our dependence on imported oil.

Building our farm economy requires meeting our farmers' financing needs. Critical to these needs are competitive, reasonable interest rates for U.S. producers. Under George Bush, interest rates have been dramatically reduced, thereby contributing substantially to improving the net income of American farm and ranch families. We will continue working to ensure that farmers have access to credit, with particular consideration to the needs of young and beginning farmers. We recognize the importance of efficient, equitable transportation systems to the economic viability of agricultural exports; and we will work to achieve greater efficiencies within the U.S. maritime industry and to decrease the cost to agriculture of shipping services.

We support farm conservation efforts, both those pioneered in our 1985 Farm Bill and entirely voluntary undertakings, which result in three times as much erosion control as those mandated by law. We support the Conservation Reserve, with more than 35 million acres now enrolled. It shows what farmers can do through incentives rather than government controls.

We value our Nation's real wetlands habitat and the diversity of our native animal and plant life. We oppose, however, bureaucratic harassment of farm, ranch, and timber families under statutes regarding endangered species and wetlands. When actions are required to protect an endangered species, we recognize that jobs can be lost, communities displaced, and economic progress for all denied. Accordingly, prior to the implementation of a recovery plan for a species declared to be endangered, we will require the Congress to affirm the priority of the species on the endangered list and the specific measures to be taken in any recovery plan. These acts should not rest with the rubber stamp of a bureaucrat.

With regard to wetlands, following our principle that environmental protection be reasonable, land that is not truly wet should not be classified as a wetland. Protection of environmentally sensitive wetlands must not come at the price of disparaging landowners' property rights. Thus, we endorse, as President Bush has done, legislation to discourage government activities that ignore property rights. We also find intolerable the use of taxpayer funds, through the Legal Services Corporation, to attack the agricultural community.

Power for Progress. Energy sustains life as we know it: our standard of living, the prospect for economic growth, the way our children will live in the century ahead. Republican energy policy, now as in the past, reflects the commonsense aspirations of the American people.

Our goals address our fundamental needs: an energy supply, available to all, that remains reasonably priced, secure, and clean, produced by strong energy industries on which the country can rely, operating in an environmentally responsible manner and producing from domestically available energy resources to the maximum extent practicable.

Anyone older than a teenager can remember the energy upheavals of the bad old days, when political games threw the Nation into a tailspin. Stranded in gasoline lines, shocked by home heating bills, shutting down factory operations, America's motorists, homeowners, and workers rightly blamed official Washington for wrecking something which had always worked so efficiently that it was taken for granted.

Today, after 12 years of Republican reform, we can again have confidence in our energy policies. The average household spends 11 percent less on energy, as adjusted for inflation, than it did in 1980, because of both conservation and lower costs.

We broke the shackles of bureaucratic regulation by ending petroleum price and allocation controls, deregulating natural gas wellhead prices, and repealing restrictions on the use of clean-burning natural gas by industry and utilities. We repealed the Windfall Profit Tax on crude oil that penalized investment in domestic oil production. We promoted free competition in an open marketplace and ended the public subsidy to the "synthetic fuels" program. And we broke the back of OPEC, the international energy cartel.

And, equally important, we undertook a reevaluation of estimates of our domestic energy resource base, which the Carter Administration had determined to be inadequate. The Republican Administration correctly found that we can indeed continue to supply a significant amount of our domestically available energy resources, including natural gas and coal, for all energy consumption needs well into the next century.

When Iraq's dictator moved to seize the world's energy lifeline by controlling the Persian Gulf, George Bush did more than liberate Kuwait. He prevented energy crisis and economic shutdown in America. Now his National Energy Strategy leads toward continued growth in the century ahead. It provides the Nation with a comprehensive and balanced strategy for America's energy future. Specifically, it promotes adequate energy supplies and reduces consumer costs by relying on market forces, diversifying domestic energy sources, and improving the efficiency and flexibility of energy consumption. We seek to foster greater competition and increased output, in the interest of producers and consumers alike.

The domestic oil and gas industry saves us from total dependence on unreliable foreign imports. But over the past decade, it has lost more than 300,000 jobs. Drilling rigs are still. Crippled by environmental rules and taxes, independent producers have been devastated and major companies are moving operations overseas. We will reverse that situation by allowing access, under environmental safeguards, to the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, possibly one of the largest petroleum reserves in our country, and to selected areas of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). We support incentives to encourage domestic investment for onshore and OCS oil and gas exploration and development, including relief from the alternative minimum tax, credits for enhanced oil recovery and geological exploration under known geological oil fields and producing geological structures, and modified percentage depletion rules to benefit marginal production. We will ensure that royalty payments on federal lands remain consistent with changing economic conditions.

Most important, unlike Democrat no-growth fanatics, we know what is most at stake in the energy debate: the family's standard of living, including job opportunities, household income, and the environment in which we live.

That is why we have been supporting complete decontrol of wellhead prices for clean natural gas, which have already declined ten percent in the last four years while consumption increased by the same amount. We support replacing government controls with the power of the market to determine transactions between buyers and sellers of natural gas. We encourage the use of natural gas for both vehicles and electricity generation, and the expansion of research, development, and demonstration for end-use natural gas technologies. We will foster more public-private partnerships to advance use of natural gas.

The Republican Party has a deep and abiding commitment to America's mining industry. We support the original intent of the Mining Law of 1872: to provide the security necessary for miners to risk capital investment on federal lands, thus preserving jobs and bolstering the domestic economy.

We support clean-coal technologies to allow greater use of America's most abundant fossil fuel within standards required by the Clean Air Act. We encourage the export of U.S. coal. We support acceleration of the international transfer of coal-related technologies to boost exports for U.S. coal, in order to capitalize on America's leadership in these technologies.

We oppose any attempt to impose a carbon tax as proposed by liberal Democrats.

We endorse major national projects, like the Superconducting Super Collider, which offer the promise of developing more efficient ways to store, transport, and use energy.

We will hasten development of the next generation of nuclear power plants—one of the cleanest, safest energy sources of all. Republicans back reform of the nuclear licensing process. We will site and license a permanent waste depository and a monitored retrievable storage facility. We reject the scare tactics used against nuclear power by those who want to shut down this essential contributor to the American future.

We endorse development of renewable energy sources and research on fuel cells, conservation, hydro, solar, hydrogen, and wind power as components of our overall plan for energy security and environmental quality.

Public Lands. The millions of acres that constitute this Nation's public lands must continue to provide for a number of uses. We are committed to the multiple use of our public lands. We believe that recreation, forestry, ranching, mining, oil and gas exploration, and production on our public lands can be conducted in a way compatible with their conservation. The United States has some of the richest mineral resources in the world. Our public lands should not be arbitrarily locked up and put off limits to responsible uses.

Approximately 50 percent of the lands in the West are owned by the federal government. These lands are a deeply intermingled patchwork quilt of public and private ownership. In order to provide an economic base for the people of the West, a public-private cooperative partnership on these lands for multiple use in an environmentally sound manner is imperative.

Transportation. From its founding, the Republican Party has considered the Nation's transportation system crucial to economic opportunity for all. That is why our 1860 Platform endorsed the Transcontinental Railroad. It is why President Eisenhower signed the Interstate and Defense Highway Act, bringing America closer together and launching a lengthy economic expansion.

Today, America's transportation system is safer, more efficient, more reliable than that of any other country. It employs one of every ten workers and accounts for \$800 billion in spending. It enables us to compete in the world market and gives us more choices in our daily lives.

Under President Bush, that system has been strengthened by revolutionary legislation to pave the way into the century ahead. Providing \$151 billion for highways and transit systems, it is the most extensive transportation improvement project in our Nation's history—and a tremendous jobs program as well.

Highway death rates have dropped to an all-time low, largely due to better road design and stronger safety programs. This progress would be wiped out by the Democrats' draconian plan for higher Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards. Their national nominees want to

require a 45 miles-per-gallon standard. That means unsafe vehicles, reduced consumer choice, higher car costs, and a loss of 300,000 jobs in the auto industry here at home.

To reduce the congestion that still chokes urban areas, we established a National Highway System of 155,000 miles, giving States and localities greater voice in decisions about projects. It will improve connections between ports and highways, airports and railways; spur development of new airports and reduce their environmental impact; promote private investment in transportation; and foster high-tech solutions to congestion.

To keep America on the move, we assert the same principle that guides us in all other sectors of the economy: consumers benefit through competition within the private sector. That is why we will complete the job of trucking deregulation. We will also abolish the Interstate Commerce Commission, finally freeing shippers and consumers from horse-and-buggy regulation. We applaud the President's executive order that will assist communities to privatize government-controlled ventures, such as airports and toll roads.

Our tough trade campaign, along with regulatory reforms, will assure U.S. air carriers fair access to international routes and allow the U.S. merchant marine to sail over foreign protectionism. The President has proposed and will aggressively pursue a comprehensive revision of existing maritime policy.

Regulatory reform of airlines now allows more people to fly more safely, at better prices. Tough laws for drug and alcohol testing are making all modes of transportation safer than ever. Disabled persons will have greater access to the entire transportation network under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Wherever possible, the market should allocate investment in transportation, steering the development of passenger rail, mass transit, and highways to best suit consumers. States and localities should have discretion in using Highway Trust Fund revenues to construct new roads, expand existing ones, or invest in mass transit facilities, as they see fit. We advocate development of high-speed rail systems, through private investment, to serve inter-city travel. We also advocate development of short-haul aircraft with vertical take-off and landing capability, to bring commerce and jobs to communities large and small.

We will continue aggressively to support development of intelligent highway systems, an efficient battery for electric cars, perfected natural gas vehicles, greater private investment in space travel, and removal of regulatory impediments to intermodal transport.

Because Republicans advocate personal responsibility, we salute groups, organizations, and individuals that take direct action to improve safe driving and street safety.

Environment. Cleaning up America is a labor of love for family, neighborhood, and Nation. In the Republican tradition of conserving the past to enrich the future, we have made the United States the world's leader in environmental progress.

We spend more than any other country on environmental protection. Over the last 20 years, our country has spent \$1 trillion to clean its air, water, and land. We increased GNP by 70 percent while cutting lead in the air by 97 percent. Our rivers run cleaner than ever in memory. We've

preserved parks, wilderness, and wildlife. The price of progress is now about \$115 billion a year, almost two percent of GNP; and that will grow to three percent by 2000.

Clearly we have led the world in investment in environmental protection. We have taught the world three vital lessons. First, environmental progress is integrally related to economic advancement. Second, economic growth generates the capital to pay for environmental gains. Third, private ownership and economic freedom are the best security against environmental degradation. The ghastly truth about state socialism is now exposed in what used to be the Soviet Union: dead rivers and seas, poisoned land, dying people.

Liberal Democrats think people are the problem. We know people are the solution. Respecting the people's rights and views, we applied market-based solutions to environmental problems. President Bush's landmark Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, the toughest environmental law ever enacted, uses an innovative system of emission credits to achieve its dramatic reductions. This will save \$1 billion over the Democrats' command-and-control approach. Other provisions of that law will cut acid rain emissions in half, reduce toxic pollutants by 90 percent, reduce smog, and speed the use of cleaner fuels.

The President's leadership has doubled spending for real wetlands and targeted one million acres for a wetlands reserve through his Farm Bill of 1990. We have collected more civil penalties from polluters in two years than in the previous twenty, begun the phase-out of substances that harm the ozone layer, and launched a long-term campaign to expand and improve national parks, forests, and recreation areas, adding 1.5 million acres. President Bush has dramatically increased spending for cleaning up past environmental damage caused by federal facilities.

Our reforestation drive will plant one billion trees a year across America. Our moratorium on offshore drilling in sensitive offshore areas has bought time for technology to master environmental challenges. Our farm policies have begun a new era in sound agricultural environmentalism.

Because the environment knows no boundaries, President Bush has accelerated U.S. research on global climate change, spending \$2.7 billion in the last three years and requesting \$1.4 billion for 1993, more than the rest of the world put together. Under his leadership, we have assisted nations from the Third World to Eastern Europe in correcting the environmental damage inflicted by socialism. We proposed a worldwide forestry convention and gave almost half a billion dollars to forest conservation. We won debt-for-nature swaps and environmental trust funds in Latin America and the Caribbean. We secured prohibitions against unilateral export or dumping of hazardous waste. We led the international ban on trade in ivory, persuaded Japan to end driftnet fishing, streamlined response to oil spills, and increased environmental protection for Antarctica. Adverse changes in climate must be the common concern of mankind. At the same time, we applaud our President for personally confronting the international bureaucrats at the Rio Conference. He refused to accept their anti-American demands for income redistribution and won instead a global climate treaty that relies on real action plans rather than arbitrary targets hostile to U.S. growth and workers.

Following his example, a Republican Senate will not ratify any treaty that moves environmental decisions beyond our democratic process or transfers beyond our shores authority over U.S. property. The Democrats' national candidates, on the other hand, insist the U.S. must do what our foreign competitors refuse to do: abolish 300,000 to 1,000,000 jobs to get a modest reduction in "greenhouse gases."

Environmental progress must continue in tandem with economic growth. Crippling an industry is no solution at all. Bankrupt facilities only worsen environmental situations. Unemployment is a form of pollution too, poisoning families and contaminating whole communities.

Some in our own country still refuse to face those facts. They try to hijack environmentalism, making it anti-growth and anti-jobs. Although the average family of four now pays \$1,000 a year for environmental controls, liberal Democrats want to tighten the squeeze. They use junk science to foster hysteria instead of reason, demanding rigid controls, more taxes, and less resource production.

However, with billions of dollars at stake in national production and jobs, not to mention our quality of life, our decisions to spend on environmental protection must not be determined by the politics of the moment. We will use scientifically respectable risk-benefit assessments to settle environmental controversies. It is time to replace knee-jerk reactions with the kind of scientific analysis that helps businesses, individuals, and communities contribute to economic and environmental progress through flexible application of laws. We must base our environmental policies on real risks to human health, determined by sound, peer-reviewed science, including procedures for what is an acceptable risk.

We will require federal agencies to promptly compensate, from their own budgets, for any taking of private property, including the denial of use.

We will legislatively overhaul the Superfund program to speed the clean up of hazardous waste and more efficiently use Superfund dollars. We will develop greenways of parks and open space in urban areas to further improve the quality of life in our cities. We will work with U.S. industry and labor to identify promising markets abroad where America's environmental know-how can carry our success story to the rest of planet earth.

Source: Republican Party Platforms: "Republican Party Platform of 1992," August 17, 1992. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25847>.