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Primary Sources

2008 Republican Party Platform

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Energy Independence and Security

All Americans are acutely aware of the energy crisis our nation faces. Energy costs are spiraling upward, food prices continue to rise, and as a result, our entire economy suffers. This winter, families will spend for heat what they could have saved for college, and small businesses will spend for fuel what could have covered employee health insurance.

Our current dependence on foreign fossil fuels threatens both our national security and our economy and could also force drastic changes in the way we live. The ongoing transfer of Americans' wealth to OPEC — roughly \$700 billion a year — helps underwrite terrorists' operations and creates little incentive for repressive regimes to accept democracy, whether in the Middle East or Latin America. It didn't have to be this way, and it must not stay this way. Our nation must have a robust energy supply because energy drives prosperity and increases opportunity for every American. We reject the idea that America cannot overcome its energy challenges — or that high gasoline prices are okay, as long as they are phased in gradually. We reject half-measures and believe "No, we can't" is not a viable energy policy.

Together we can build a future around domestic energy sources that are diverse, reliable, and cleaner. We can strengthen our national security, create a pathway to growing prosperity, and preserve our environment. The American people will rise to this challenge.

Growing Our Energy Supply

We must aggressively increase our nation's energy supply, in an environmentally responsible way, and do so through a comprehensive strategy that meets both short and long term needs. No amount of wishing or hoping can suspend the laws of supply and demand. Leading economists agree that any actions that will increase future energy supplies will lead to lower energy prices today. Increasing our production of American made energy and reducing our excessive reliance on foreign oil will:

- Bring down the high cost of gasoline and diesel fuel.
- Create more jobs for American workers.
- Enhance our national security.

In the long run, American production should move to zero-emission sources, and our nation's fossil fuel resources are the bridge to that emissions-free future.

Growing American Energy Production

If we are to have the resources we need to achieve energy independence, we simply must draw more American oil from American soil. We support accelerated exploration, drilling and development in America, from new oilfields off the nation's coasts to onshore fields such as those in Montana, North Dakota, and Alaska. The Green River Basin in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming offers recoverable shale oil that is ready for development, and most of it is on federal lands.

To deliver that energy to American consumers, we will expand our refining capacity. Because of environmental extremism and regulatory blockades in Washington, not a single new refinery has been built in this country in 30 years. We will encourage refinery construction and modernization and, with sensitivity to environmental concerns, an expedited permitting process.

Any legislation to increase domestic exploration, drilling and production must minimize any protracted legal challenges that could unreasonably delay or even preclude actual production. We oppose any efforts that would permanently block access to the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Nuclear Power: the Earth's Clean Future

Nuclear energy is the most reliable zero-carbon emissions source of energy that we have. Unwarranted fear mongering with no relationship to current technologies and safeguards has prevented us from starting construction of a single nuclear power plant in 31 years. Meanwhile, the U.S. Navy has for decades relied upon nuclear-powered vessels, and other nations have harnessed nuclear power to provide a major portion of their energy consumption. There is no reason why the United States cannot catch up and do the same. Confident in the promise offered by science and technology, Republicans will pursue dramatic increases in the use of all forms of safe, affordable, reliable — and clean — nuclear power.

As new plants are constructed using the highest safety and operation standards, the nation's industrial and manufacturing base will be rejuvenated. The labor force will expand, with nearly 15,000 high quality jobs created for every new nuclear plant built — and those workers will lead the nation away from its dependence on foreign oil.

Solar, Wind, Geothermal, Hydropower

Alternate power sources must enter the mainstream. The technology behind solar energy has improved significantly in recent years, and the commercial development of wind power promises major benefits both in costs and in environmental protection. Republicans support these and other alternative energy sources, including geothermal and hydropower, and anticipate technological developments that will increase their economic viability. We therefore advocate a long-term energy tax credit equally applicable to all renewable power sources.

Republicans support measures to modernize the nation's electricity grid to provide American consumers and businesses with more affordable, reliable power. We will work to unleash innovation so entrepreneurs can develop technologies for a more advanced and robust United States transmission system that meets our growing energy demands.

Clean Coal

Although alternate fuels will shape our energy future, coal — America's most affordable and abundant energy resource and the source of most of our electricity — remains a strategic national resource that must play a major role in energy independence. We look to innovative technology to transform America's coal supplies into clean fuels capable of powering motor vehicles and aircraft. We support coal-to-liquid and gasification initiatives, just as we support investment in the development and deployment of carbon capture and storage technologies, which can reduce emissions. We firmly oppose efforts by Democrats to block the construction of new coal-fired power plants. No strategy for reducing energy costs will be viable without a commitment to continued coal production and utilization.

Natural Gas

Natural gas is plentiful in North America, but we can extract more and do a better job of distributing it nationwide to cook our food, heat our homes, and serve as a growing option as a transportation fuel. Both independently and in cooperation with alternative fuels, natural gas will be an essential part of any long-term energy solution. We must ensure it gets to consumers safely and quickly.

Energy Cooperation

We embrace the open energy cooperation and trading relationship with our neighbors Canada and Mexico, including proven oil reserves and vast, untapped Canadian hydroelectric generation.

Reducing Demand for Fossil Fuels

While we grow our supplies, we must also reduce our demand — not by changing our lifestyles but by putting the free market to work and taking advantage of technological breakthroughs.

Increase Conservation through Greater Efficiency

Conservation does not mean deprivation; it means efficiency and achieving more with less. Most Americans today endeavor to conserve fossil fuels, whether in their cars or in their home heating, but we can do better. We can construct better and smarter buildings, use smarter thermostats and transmission grids, increase recycling, and make energy-efficient consumer purchases. Wireless communications, for example, can increase telecommuting options and cut back on business travel. The Republican goal is to ensure that Americans have more conservation options that will enable them to make the best choices for their families.

New Technologies for Cars and Other Vehicles

We must continue to develop alternative fuels, such as biofuels, especially cellulosic ethanol, and hasten their technological advances to next-generation production. As America develops energy technology for the 21st century, policy makers must consider the burden that rising food prices and energy costs create for the poor and developing nations around the world. Because alternative fuels are useless if vehicles cannot use them, we must move quickly to flexible fuel vehicles; we cannot expect necessary investments in alternative fuels if this flexibility does not become standard. We must also produce more vehicles that operate on electricity and natural gas, both to reduce demand for oil and to cut CO₂ emissions.

Given that fully 97 percent of our current transportation vehicles rely on oil, we will aggressively support technological advances to reduce our petroleum dependence. For example, lightweight composites could halve the weight and double the gas mileage of cars and trucks, and together with flex-fuel and electric vehicles, could usher in a renaissance in the American auto industry.

Environmental Protection

By increasing our American energy supply and decreasing the long term demand for oil, we will be well positioned to address the challenge of climate change and continue our longstanding responsibility for stewardship over the environment.

Addressing Climate Change Responsibly

The same human economic activity that has brought freedom and opportunity to billions has also increased the amount of carbon in the atmosphere. While the scope and long-term consequences of this are the subject of ongoing scientific research, common sense dictates that the United States should take measured and reasonable steps today to reduce any impact on the environment. Those steps, if consistent with our global competitiveness will also be good for our national security, our energy independence, and our economy. Any policies should be global in nature, based on sound science and technology, and should not harm the economy.

The Solution: Technology and the Market

As part of a global climate change strategy, Republicans support technology-driven, market-based solutions that will decrease emissions, reduce excess greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere, increase energy efficiency, mitigate the impact of climate change where it occurs, and maximize any ancillary benefits climate change might offer for the economy.

To reduce emissions in the short run, we will rely upon the power of new technologies, as discussed above, especially zero-emission energy sources such as nuclear and other alternate power sources. But innovation must not be hamstrung by Washington bickering, regulatory briar patches, or obstructionist lawsuits. Empowering Washington will only lead to unintended consequences and

unimagined economic and environmental pain; instead, we must unleash the power of scientific know-how and competitive markets.

International Cooperation

Because the issue of climate change is global, it must become a truly global concern as well. All developed and developing economies, particularly India and China, can make significant contributions in dealing with the matter. It would be unrealistic and counterproductive to expect the U.S. to carry burdens which are more appropriately shared by all.

Using Cash Rewards to Encourage Innovation

Because Republicans believe that solutions to the risk of global climate change will be found in the ingenuity of the American people, we propose a Climate Prize for scientists who solve the challenges of climate change. Honoraria of many millions of dollars would be a small price for technological developments that eliminate our need for gas-powered cars or abate atmospheric carbon.

Doing No Harm

Republicans caution against the doomsday climate change scenarios peddled by the aficionados of centralized command-and-control government. We can — and should — address the risk of climate change based on sound science without succumbing to the no-growth radicalism that treats climate questions as dogma rather than as situations to be managed responsibly.

A robust economy will be essential to dealing with the risk of climate change, and we will insist on reasonable policies that do not force Americans to sacrifice their way of life or trim their hopes and dreams for their children. This perspective serves not only the people of the United States but also the world's poorest peoples, who would suffer terribly if climate change is severe — just as they would if the world economy itself were to be crippled. We must not allow either outcome.

Continuing Our Stewardship over the Environment

The Republican perspective on the environment is in keeping with our longstanding appreciation for nature and gratitude for the bounty the Almighty has bestowed upon the American people. It was Republican President Theodore Roosevelt who said, "The conservation of natural resources is the fundamental problem. Unless we solve that problem, it will avail us little to solve all others." We agree. Whether through family vacations, hunting or fishing trips, backpacking excursions, or weekend hikes, Americans of all backgrounds share a commitment to protecting the environment and the opportunities it offers. In addition, the public should have access to public lands for recreational activities such as hunting, hiking, and fishing.

In caring for the land and water, private ownership has been the best guarantee of conscientious stewardship, while the world's worst instances of environmental degradation have occurred under governmental control. By the same token, it is no accident that the most economically advanced countries also have the strongest environmental protections.

Our national progress toward cleaner air and water has been a major accomplishment of the American people. By balancing environmental goals with economic growth and job creation, our diverse economy has made possible the investment needed to safeguard natural resources, protect endangered species, and create healthier living conditions. State and local initiatives to clean up contaminated sites — brownfields — have exceeded efforts directed by Washington. That progress can continue if grounded in sound science, long-term planning, and a multiuse approach to resources.

Government at all levels should protect private property rights by cooperating with landowners' efforts and providing incentives to protect fragile environments, endangered species, and maintain the natural beauty of America. Republican leadership has led to the rejuvenation and renewal of our National Park system. Future expansion of that system, as well as designation of National Wilderness

areas or Historic Districts, should be undertaken only with the active participation and consent of relevant state and local governments and private property owners.

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