

THE REPUBLICAN REVERSAL

Research Documents

Primary Sources

2012 Republican Party Platform

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America's Natural Resources: Energy, Agriculture and the Environment

We are the party of sustainable jobs and economic growth — through American energy, agriculture, and environmental policy. We are also the party of America's growers and producers, farmers, ranchers, foresters, miners, and all those who bring from the earth the minerals and energy that are the lifeblood of our nation's historically strong economy. We are as well the party of traditional conservation: the wise development of resources that keeps in mind both the sacrifices of past generations to secure that bounty and our responsibility to preserve it for future generations.

Domestic Energy Independence: An "All of the Above" Energy Policy

The Republican Party is committed to domestic energy independence. The United States and its neighbors to the North and South have been blessed with abundant energy resources, tapped and untapped, traditional and alternative, that are among the largest and most valuable on earth. Advancing technology has given us a more accurate understanding of the nation's enormous reserves that are ours for the development. The role of public officials must be to encourage responsible development across the board. Unlike the current Administration, we will not pick winners and losers in the energy marketplace. Instead, we will let the free market and the public's preferences determine the industry outcomes. In assessing the various sources of potential energy, Republicans advocate an all-of-the-above diversified approach, taking advantage of all our American God-given resources. That is the best way to advance North American energy independence.

Our policies aim at energy security to ensure an affordable, stable, and reliable energy supply for all parts of the country and all sectors of the economy. Energy security is intimately linked to national security both in terms of our current dependence upon foreign supplies and because some of the hundreds of billions of dollars we pay for foreign oil ends up in the hands of terrorist groups that wish to harm us. A growing, prosperous economy and our standard of living and quality of life, moreover, depend on affordable and abundant domestic energy supplies.

A strong and stable energy sector is a job generator and a catalyst of economic growth, not only in the labor-intensive energy industry but also in its secondary markets. The Republican Party will encourage and ensure diversified domestic sources of energy, from research and development, exploration, production, transportation, transmission, and consumption in a way that is economically viable and job-producing, as well as environmentally sound. When our energy industry is revitalized, millions more Americans will find work in manufacturing, food

production, metals, minerals, packaging, transportation and other fields — because of the jobs that will be created in, and as a result of, the energy sector. We are determined to create jobs, spur economic growth, lower energy prices, and strengthen our energy industry.

Our Nation's Energy Abundance

Coal is a low-cost and abundant energy source with hundreds of years of supply. We look toward the private sector's development of new, state-of-the-art coal-fired plants that will be low-cost, environmentally responsible, and efficient. We also encourage research and development of advanced technologies in this sector, including coal-to-liquid, coal gasification, and related technologies for enhanced oil recovery.

The current Administration—with a President who publicly threatened to bankrupt anyone who builds a coal-powered plant—seems determined to shut down coal production in the United States, even though there is no cost-effective substitute for it or for the hundreds of thousands of jobs that go with it as the nation's largest source of electricity generation. We will end the EPA's war on coal and encourage the increased safe development in all regions of the nation's coal resources, the jobs it produces, and the affordable, reliable energy that it provides for America. Further, we oppose any and all cap and trade legislation.

All estimates of America's **oil and natural gas** reserves indicate an incredible bounty for the use of many generations to come. At a time when unemployment has been above 8 percent for 42 consecutive months, the longest stretch since the Great Depression, and some 23 million Americans are either unemployed, underemployed, or have given up on finding work, we should be pursuing our oil and gas resources both on and offshore. It is nonsensical to spurn real job creation by putting almost all of our coastal waters off limits to energy exploration, while urging other nations to explore their coasts. We call for a reasoned approach to all offshore energy development on the East Coast and other appropriate waters, and support the right of States to a reasonable share of the resulting revenue and royalties. We support opening the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) for energy exploration and development and ending the current Administration's moratorium on permitting; opening the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) for exploration and production of oil and natural gas; and allowing for more oil and natural gas exploration on federally owned and controlled land. We support this development in accordance with applicable environmental, health and safety laws, and regulations.

The current President personally blocked one of the most important energy and jobs projects in years. The Keystone XL Pipeline—which would have brought much needed Canadian and American oil to U.S. refineries—would create thousands of jobs. The current President's job-killing combination of extremism and ineptitude threatens to create a permanent energy shortage. We are committed to approving the Keystone XL Pipeline and to streamlining permitting for the development of other oil and natural gas pipelines.

Nuclear energy, now generating about 20 percent of our electricity through 104 power plants, must be expanded. No new nuclear generating plants have been licensed and constructed for

thirty years. We call for timely processing of new reactor applications currently pending at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

The federal government's failure to address the storage and disposal of spent nuclear fuel has left huge bills for States and taxpayers. Our country needs a more proactive approach to managing spent nuclear fuel, including through developing advanced reprocessing technologies.

We encourage the cost-effective development of **renewable energy**, but the taxpayers should not serve as venture capitalists for risky endeavors. It is important to create a pathway toward a market-based approach for renewable energy sources and to aggressively develop alternative sources for electricity generation such as wind, hydro, solar, biomass, geothermal, and tidal energy. Partnerships between traditional energy industries and emerging renewable industries can be a central component in meeting the nation's long-term needs. Alternative forms of energy are part of our action agenda to power the homes and workplaces of the nation.

Pulling the Plug on American Energy Independence: The Failure of the Current Administration

The current Administration has used taxpayer dollars to pick winners and losers in the energy sector while publicly threatening to bankrupt anyone who builds a new coal-fired plant and has stopped the Keystone XL Pipeline. The current President has done nothing to disavow the scare campaign against hydraulic fracturing. Furthermore, he has wasted billions of taxpayers' dollars by subsidizing favored companies like Solyndra, which generated bankruptcies rather than kilowatts.

Since the current President took office in 2009, consumers pay approximately twice as much for gas at the pump. Our common theme is to promote development of all forms of energy, enable consumer choice to keep energy costs low, and ensure that America remains competitive in the global marketplace. We will respect the States' proven ability to regulate the use of hydraulic fracturing, continue development of oil and gas resources in places like the Bakken formation and Marcellus Shale, and review the environmental laws that often thwart new energy exploration and production. We salute the Republican Members of the House of Representatives for passing the Domestic Energy and Jobs Act, a vital piece of pro-growth legislation now introduced by Republicans in the Senate.

Agriculture

Abundant Harvests: Protecting Our Farmers

Agricultural production and agricultural exports are a fundamental part of the U.S. economy, and the vigor of U.S. agriculture is central to our agenda for jobs, growth, and prosperity. Our farmers and ranchers are responsible for millions of jobs and for generating a trade surplus of more than \$137 billion annually. Our producers provide America with abundant food, export food to hungry people around the world, and create a positive trade balance. Because of their care for the land, the United States does not depend on foreign imports for sustenance the way we depend on others for much of our energy. However, Americans are concerned about the

increasing cost of their food under the current Administration policies that restrict energy production and raise costs for producers due to increased regulation. Our dependence on foreign imports of fertilizer could threaten our food supply, and we support the development of domestic production of fertilizer. The success of our system of risk management policies will enable farmers and ranchers to continue to feed and fuel the nation and much of the world.

Restoring Economic Stability for Our Farmers

Uncertainty is threatening the survival of our nation's farmers. America's growers and farmers are aging and much of America's farmland will be passed to the next generation of farmers with families. Uncertainties in estate and capital gains tax laws threaten the survival of multigenerational family farms. The proposals for tax reforms contained elsewhere in this document will make certain that family farms will not be lost.

The Proper Federal Role in Agriculture

Agricultural producers and the jobs they generate throughout the entire food chain must confront volatility in both the weather and the markets. We support farm programs that enable them to manage the extraordinary risk they meet in the fields every year. These programs should be as cost-effective as they are functional, offering risk management tools that improve producers' ability to operate when times are tough.

Just as all other federal programs must contribute to the deficit reduction necessary to put our country back on a sound fiscal footing, so must farm programs contribute to balancing the budget.

Programs like the Direct Payment program should end in favor of those, like crop insurance, that help manage risk and are counter-cyclical in nature.

We support the historic role of the USDA in agricultural research that has transformed farming here and around the world. Because food safety is a major concern of the American people, we urge Congress to ensure adequate resources for the Department's responsibilities in that regard. The U. S. Forest Service controls about 193 million acres of land and employs 30,000 workers. The Forest Service should be charged to use these resources to the best economic potential for the nation. We must limit injunctions by activist judges regarding environmental management. In order to secure one of the country's most important natural resources, we will review the way the Forest Service handles wildfires. This summer's lack of rainfall over much of agricultural America highlights the importance of access to water for farmers and ranchers alike. We stand with growers and producers in defense of their water rights against attempts by the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers to expand jurisdiction over water, including water that is clearly not navigable.

The productivity of America's farmers makes possible the generosity of U.S. food aid efforts around the world. These programs are fragmented between the Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development. They should be streamlined into one agency with a concentration on reducing overhead to maximize delivery of the actual goods.

The food stamp program now accounts for nearly 80 percent of the entire USDA budget. In finding ways to fight fraud and abuse, the Congress should consider block-granting that program to the States, along with the other domestic nutrition programs.

Protecting Our Environment

The environment is getting cleaner and healthier. The nation's air and waterways, as a whole, are much healthier than they were just a few decades ago. Efforts to reduce pollution, encourage recycling, educate the public, and avoid ecological degradation have been a success. To ensure their continued support by the American people, however, we need a dramatic change in the attitude of officials in Washington, a shift from a job-killing punitive mentality to a spirit of cooperation with producers, landowners, and the public. An important factor is full transparency in development of the data and modeling that drive regulations. Legislation to restore the authority of States in environmental protection is essential. We encourage the use of agricultural best management practices among the States to reduce pollution.

Our Republican Party's Commitment to Conservation

Conservation is a conservative value. As the pioneer of conservation over a century ago, the Republican Party believes in the moral obligation of the people to be good stewards of the God-given natural beauty and resources of our country and bases environmental policy on several common-sense principles. For example, we believe people are the most valuable resource, and human health and safety are the most important measurements of success. A policy protecting these objectives, however, must balance economic development and private property rights in the short run with conservation goals over the long run. Also, public access to public lands for recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting should be permitted on all appropriate federal lands.

Moreover, the advance of science and technology advances environmentalism as well. Science allows us to weigh the costs and benefits of a policy so that we can prudently deal with our resources. This is especially important when the causes and long-range effects of a phenomenon are uncertain. We must restore scientific integrity to our public research institutions and remove political incentives from publicly funded research.

Private Stewardship of the Environment

Experience has shown that, in caring for the land and water, private ownership has been our best guarantee of conscientious stewardship, while the worst instances of environmental degradation have occurred under government control. By the same token, the most economically advanced countries—those that respect and protect private property rights—also have the strongest environmental protections, because their economic progress makes possible the conservation of natural resources. In this context, Congress should reconsider whether parts of the federal government's enormous landholdings and control of water in the West could be better used for ranching, mining, or forestry through private ownership. Timber is a renewable natural resource, which provides jobs to thousands of Americans. All efforts should be made to make federal lands

managed by the U.S. Forest Service available for harvesting. The enduring truth is that people best protect what they own.

It makes sense that those closest to a situation are best able to determine its remedy. That is why a site- and situation-specific approach to an environmental problem is more likely to solve it, instead of a national rule based on the ideological concerns of politicized central planning. We therefore endorse legislation to require congressional approval before any rule projected to cost in excess of \$100 million to American consumers can go into effect.

The Republican Party supports appointing public officials to federal agencies who will properly and correctly apply environmental laws and regulations, always in support of economic development, job creation, and American prosperity and leadership. Federal agencies charged with enforcing environmental laws must stop regulating beyond their authority. There is no place in regulatory agencies for activist regulators.

Reining in the EPA

Since 2009, the EPA has moved forward with expansive regulations that will impose tens of billions of dollars in new costs on American businesses and consumers. Many of these new rules are creating regulatory uncertainty, preventing new projects from going forward, discouraging new investment, and stifling job creation.

We demand an end to the EPA's participation in "sue and settle" lawsuits, sweetheart litigation brought by environmental groups to expand the Agency's regulatory activities against the wishes of Congress and the public. We will require full transparency in litigation under the nation's environmental laws, including advance notice to all State and local governments, tribes, businesses, landowners, and the public who could be adversely affected. We likewise support pending legislation to ensure cumulative analysis of EPA regulations, and to require full transparency in all EPA decisions, so that the public will know in advance their full impact on jobs and the economy. We oppose the EPA's unwarranted revocation of existing permits. We also call on Congress to take quick action to prohibit the EPA from moving forward with new greenhouse gas regulations that will harm the nation's economy and threaten millions of jobs over the next quarter century. The most powerful environmental policy is liberty, the central organizing principle of the American Republic and its people. Liberty alone fosters scientific inquiry, technological innovation, entrepreneurship, and information exchange. Liberty must remain the core energy behind America's environmental improvement.

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