

# THE SANTA BARBARA DECLARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

Written by UCSB Professor Rod Nash, 1969

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All people have the right to an environment capable of sustaining life and promoting happiness. If the accumulated actions of the past become destructive of this right, men now living have the further right to repudiate the past for the benefit of the future.

And it is manifest that centuries of careless neglect of the environment have brought mankind to a final crossroads. The quality of our lives is eroded and our very existence threatened by our abuse of the natural world.

Moved by an environmental disaster in the Santa Barbara Channel to think and act in national and world terms, we submit these charges:

- We have littered the land with refuse.
- We have encroached upon our heritage of open space and wildland.
- We have stripped the forests and the grasses and reduced the soil to fruitless dust.
- We have contaminated the air we breathe for life.
- We have befouled the lakes and rivers and oceans along with their shorelines.
- We have released deadly poisons into earth, air, and water, imperiling all life.
- We have exterminated entire species of birds and animals and brought others close to annihilation.
- We are overpopulating the earth.
- We have made much of the physical world ugly and loud, depriving man of the beauty and quiet that feeds his spirit.

Recognizing that the ultimate remedy for these fundamental problems is found in man's mind, not his machines, **we call on societies and their governments to recognize and implement the following principles:**

- We need an ecological consciousness that recognizes man as member, not master, of the community of living things sharing his environment.
- We must extend ethics beyond social relations to govern man's contact with all life forms and with the environment itself.
- We need a renewed idea of community which will shape urban environments that serve the full range of human needs.
- We must find the courage to take upon ourselves as individuals responsibility for the welfare of the whole environment, treating our own backyards as if they were the world and the world as if it were our backyard.
- We must develop the vision to see that in regard to the natural world private and corporate ownership should be so limited as to preserve the interest of society and the integrity of the environment.
- We need greater awareness of our enormous powers, the fragility of the earth, and the consequent responsibility of men and government for its preservation.
- We must redefine "progress" toward an emphasis on long-term quality, rather than immediate quantity.

## WE, THEREFORE, RESOLVE TO ACT.

WE PROPOSE A REVOLUTION in conduct toward an environment which is rising in revolt against us. Granted that ideas and institutions long established are not easily changed; yet today is the first day of the rest of our life on this planet.

**WE WILL BEGIN ANEW.**