

# We Believe Statement

## President's Council on Sustainable Development

There are certain beliefs that we as Council members share that underlie all of our agreements. We believe:

1. To achieve our vision of sustainable development, some things must grow--jobs, productivity, wages, capital and savings, profits, information, knowledge, and education--and others--pollution, waste, and poverty--must not.
  2. Change is inevitable and necessary for the sake of future generations and for ourselves. We can choose a course for change that will lead to the mutually reinforcing goals of economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity.
  3. Steady progress in reducing disparities in education, opportunity, and environmental risk within society is essential to economic growth, environmental health, and social justice.
  4. The United States made great progress in protecting the environment in the last 25 years, and must continue to make progress in the next 25 years. We can achieve that goal because market incentives and the power of consumers can lead to significant improvements in environmental performance at less cost.
  5. Economic growth based on technological innovation, improved efficiency, and expanding global markets is essential for progress toward greater prosperity, equity, and environmental quality.
  6. Environmental regulations have improved and must continue to improve the lives of all Americans. Basic standards of performance that are clear, fair, and consistently enforced remain necessary to protect that progress. The current regulatory system should be improved to deliver required results at lower costs. In addition, the system should provide enhanced flexibility in return for superior environmental performance.
  7. Environmental progress will depend on individual, institutional, and corporate responsibility, commitment, and stewardship.
  8. **We need a new collaborative decision process that leads to better decisions; more rapid change; and more sensible use of human, natural, and financial resources in achieving our goals.**
  9. The nation must strengthen its communities and enhance their role in decisions about environment, equity, natural resources, and economic progress so that the individuals and institutions most immediately affected can join with others in the decision process.
  10. Economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity are linked. We need to develop integrated policies to achieve these national goals.
  11. The United States should have policies and programs that contribute to stabilizing global human population; this objective is critical if we hope to have the resources needed to ensure a high quality of life for future generations.
  12. Even in the face of scientific uncertainty, society should take reasonable actions to avert risks where the potential harm to human health or the environment is thought to be serious or irreparable.
  13. Steady advances in science and technology are essential to help improve economic efficiency, protect and restore natural systems, and modify consumption patterns.
  14. A growing economy and healthy environment are essential to national and global security.
  15. A knowledgeable public, the free flow of information, and opportunities for review and redress are critically important to open, equitable, and effective decisionmaking.
  16. Citizens must have access to high-quality and lifelong formal and nonformal education that enables them to understand the interdependence of economic prosperity, environmental quality, and social equity--and prepares them to take actions that support all three.
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