

VIII. ENVIRONMENT (Resolutions relating to urban growth, waste management, energy, pollution, wildlife, and environmental safety.)

A. Environmental Responsibility – Sustainable Environment

WHEREAS, scientists from around the world have issued and increasingly continue to issue warnings stating that, unless we change our stewardship of the earth, particularly the effects of industry and agriculture, various aspects of the environment will likely be changed irrevocably, and with unknowable consequences; and

WHEREAS, disruptions of the environment are already demonstrating such effects as depletion of ocean fish stocks, extinction of native species in estuaries such as the Chesapeake Bay and the San Francisco Bay and elsewhere; evident effects on human health such as disruption of immune system responses, asthma, skin cancers, and possibly reproductive systems; in animal health, in the form of mutations in some species and the extinction of others, such as corals, owing to pollution, ozone depletion and global warming; and

WHEREAS, short-sighted policy development has put agricultural production for fuel into direct competition with production for food, especially heavily subsidized corn-based ethanol.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers calls on legislators, business leaders, educators, consumers, and faith communities to take responsibility for the quality of the environment individually and collectively, and to develop the basis for sustainable economic systems that will preserve and regenerate our planet for generations to come; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers opposes subsidy programs for production of ethanol to the extent that they distort food prices and availability at home and abroad; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers calls on government and academia to closely monitor and measure the effects on farm workers who are daily exposed to all of nature's elements plus man made toxic substances; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers advocates for Al Gore's *Environmental Challenge to America* that the U/S reach the goal of 100% renewable and truly clean energy (100% zero-carbon electricity) by 2018; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers support the work of international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, which work for protection of the environment and for ecologically sustainable growth in agriculture, aquaculture, industry, and other economic activity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers call upon the U.S. Government to support international cooperation on environmental protection through treaties and alliances; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers call on government and industry to encourage and undertake development of energy sources which will be environmentally benign and sustainable, and which will diminish dependence on petroleum and other non-renewable resources.

B. Environmental Pollution

WHEREAS, environmental pollution from industrial and agricultural sources contaminates water, land, and air; and

WHEREAS, the effects of such pollution contribute to birth defects, cancers, asthma, and other health conditions; and

WHEREAS, programs such as freeing of “brown lands” [recovered pollution sites] for construction of housing may bring adults and children in close contact with dangerous contaminants without their knowledge; and

WHEREAS, agricultural runoff may contaminate rural drinking water with farm chemicals, hormone-laced animal waste and other substances, the presence and effects of which are not known to residents; and

WHEREAS, these hazards affect virtually all people, they disproportionately affect the poor who may not be informed of hazards, or having been informed, may not have options available to protect themselves from danger.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers join and support the efforts of organizations throughout the country that address environmental pollution, and especially those whose concern includes the lopsided impacts of such pollution on the most vulnerable members of our society.

C. Banned Depleted Uranium, Nuclear Testing, and Radiation Experiments

WHEREAS, millions of American children born in the 1950's and early 1960's were exposed to large amounts of radioactive iodine from atmospheric nuclear weapons tests, and between 10,000 and 75,000 may develop thyroid cancer as a result of drinking contaminated milk; and

WHEREAS, new battlefield weapons using depleted uranium have apparently resulted in thousands of illnesses among United States' Gulf War veterans and people living in countries where the U.S. has used depleted uranium weapons; and

WHEREAS, the Pentagon has changed United States' conventional weapons into radioactive weapons by adding depleted uranium to ammunition, and that the depleted uranium in such weapons yet poses a danger to soldiers, presents public health and environmental problems, and is contrary to international law.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers calls for medical screening and compensation for nuclear test-related cancer victims, as well as victims of radiation from depleted uranium weapons and calls for banning their use; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers calls on Congress to work with the United Nations to ban all weapons that contain depleted Uranium, and also ban transfer of depleted Uranium to other countries.

D. Prohibit Transport of Nuclear Fuel Rods

WHEREAS, the prospect of a "Mobile Chernobyl" looms in the transportation of radiated nuclear fuel rods to an "interim" high level storage site in Uranium; and

WHEREAS, this movement would violate existing environmental laws on radiation exposure.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers oppose the transportation to, and storage in Yucca Mountain in Nevada which has been designated for this purpose.

E. Protect the Old Growth Forests

WHEREAS, only four percent of the original old growth redwood forests remain anywhere on earth, and the old growth forests in Georgia, Michigan, Northern Idaho, Oregon, SW Washington State, and other parts of the U.S. are currently in danger of being cut down by corporations.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers urges the U.S. government to do what is necessary to protect and preserve all old growth forests in the United States.

F. Preservation of Natural Habitats

WHEREAS, natural habitats are fragile and cannot be duplicated; and

WHEREAS, development – both commercial and residential – threatens and jeopardizes the future of natural habitats like the Everglades; and

WHEREAS, all citizens are responsible for sustaining our environment and its ecology for present and future generations.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Gray Panthers supports legislation and executive orders to designate natural habitats – such as the Everglades – as national and natural treasures to be sustained and nurtured by present and future generations.