



## An Environmentally Sustainable Community

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The modern environmental movement began on the beaches of Santa Barbara in 1969, and we have a special responsibility as a county, to be an environmental leader and a role model for cities and counties across the country. **Environmental justice, restoration and enhancement** must be integral components of our environmental policy. We believe that government must do more than maintain the status quo. Sustainability must be our guiding principle. We seek ways to live which allow future generations to live here, too. We must sustain, not squander our resources.

Although much has been done to restore and enhance the environment under Democratic leadership in Sacramento, significant environmental degradation continues to occur locally and the environment is further threatened with continued abuses. Environmental degradation jeopardizes the beauty of our landscape, the health of our people, the vitality, and even the safety and security of our nation. We must revamp tax policies that provide direct and indirect subsidies to the most polluting and extractive industries, and we must further encourage governmental and industrial support for environmental education programs at all academic levels, including urban, low-income schools.

We strongly reconfirm our commitment to prevent any new drilling off our coasts. Santa Barbara County Democrats reject the idea that economic growth and environmental protection are opposing interests, and believe instead that we must adopt a sound and progressive energy policy that will create jobs now and into the future through research and industrial development of non-fossil fuels, including the adoption of sustained yield approaches to the development of agricultural resources.

To that end, we call for the following policies and principles:

- **Clean Energy & Energy Independence** - We support initiatives for environmental enhancement that promote clean energy based on a foundation of non-petroleum, renewable, sustainable sources, with a goal of energy independence. This may be achieved by providing tax incentives and subsidies for alternative energies such as solar, wind, tidal, and geothermal, establishing a renewable energy portfolio standard for local private utilities, and establishing a public renewable energy utility. We encourage the reduction of energy consumption and the use of energy efficient products and practices.

- **California Coast** – We support strengthening California's pioneering coastal protection program by revising outdated local coastal programs, implementing the State's polluted runoff protection plan, and preserving the integrity of the coastal act by defending the California Coastal Commission and the process for appointment of coastal commissioners. We call for the phasing out all offshore oil and gas drilling along the California Coast. We must establish and enforce marine protected areas to restore and protect coastal fish species. Coastal public access and recreational opportunities should be expanded by additional funding to develop, open, operate and maintain new coastal public access, the acquisition of coastal parklands and development of the California Coastal trail. We must protect and restore coastal wetlands, rivers, streams and other environmentally sensitive habitat areas. The County should continue to support the work of BEACON (Beach Erosion Authority for Clean Oceans and Nourishment) in focusing on coastal erosion, beach nourishment, and clean oceans. We must also support the clean up of toxic hot spots.
- **Natural Resources.** - The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is the major legal tool for protecting California's environment. We support full implementation and enforcement of CEQA principles, in order to protect the state's natural and cultural resources, including historical and archaeological sites, and strongly oppose efforts to undermine it through legislation or regulation.
- **Ecology and Industry** – We encourage industry to develop life enhancing, rather than life destroying, products that do not deplete our resources. In order to reduce the use of water, land and fertilizers, we support the development of alternative methods for producing paper, clothing, food and building supplies. We must also encourage the replacement of environmentally and occupationally harmful technologies with clean production systems. Situate high voltage transformers and high voltage power lines far away from schools, libraries, public playgrounds and residential neighborhoods.
- **Plastic Bag Ordinance** – In order to reduce negative environmental impacts, litter problems and recycling issues related to plastic bags, we call for a Plastic Bag Ordinance banning the distribution of non-biodegradable plastic carryout bags, and encouraging supermarkets, retail pharmacy chains, and other retailers to provide their customers with either biodegradable carryout bags or reusable bags made from cloth or from durable plastic.
- **Open Space Preservation-** Overdevelopment threatens not only our quality of life, but also the irreplaceable natural treasures which make our area among the most geologically and biologically diverse in the nation. Urban growth boundaries, infill, transfers of development rights and the inclusion of open space within population centers must be guiding principles of all levels of local planning.
- **Agriculture** - Agricultural production is a main economic engine of SB County. In addition to its economic importance, agriculture represents, in some ways, “the highest and best use of our land,” producing food for our population. Changing the use of agricultural land for other purposes should be done only with the utmost caution and after maximum public debate.