

# NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

## PREAMBLE

We depend upon natural resources and ecosystem services for our existence and survival. However, unsustainable use and waste, coupled with population increase, is leading to exponential depletion.

## VISION

The vision of the Greens is that natural resources are managed and replenished in accordance with the principles of intergenerational equity, the precautionary principle, biodiversity conservation, symbiosis and respect for traditional ownership.

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Greens is to minimise the consumption of all natural resources, and nonrenewable resources in particular, to improve sustainability and reduce barriers to equitable distribution, whether for environmental, technical, physical or political reasons. Furthermore, the Greens seek to support and implement efforts to recover, recycle, and reuse resources to reduce demand for primary inputs and their associated ecological impacts. The objectives of the Greens will be to develop and implement --

- Social and economic policies that encourage and maintain a reduction in the physical burden human societies place upon our planet
- Regulatory controls for some resources to ensure that the social and environmental impact of their use is acceptable and sustainable
- Research to identify sustainable patterns of resource use for the future
- Sustainable use of forestry resources
- Sustainable forest management policies and industry plans,

## ACTION PLAN

The Greens will take actions to:

- Reduce the demand and need for primary natural resource inputs
- Improve the economy-wide effectiveness, efficiency and adoption of resource recovery and recycling to achieve a circular economy
- Protect and restore ecological diversity and ecosystem services.

Therefore, the Greens will –

## Environmental Costs

- Ensure that the cost of using natural resources takes account of the environmental costs of their extraction or harvesting, processing and disposal
- Ensure that natural resources are managed in accordance with the principles of intergenerational equity, the precautionary principle, biodiversity conservation, respect for traditional ownership, and in consultation with local communities and people
- Act against illegal logging, as it is a crucial challenge facing sustainable development with severe economic, environmental and social impacts, including deforestation, serious human rights violations, and climate change impact

- Be guided by climate change as a central consideration in the management of natural resources, including forests and mining
- Minimise the consumption of all natural resources, and in particular, non-renewable resources
- Phase out the routine use of non-renewable materials in favour of renewable alternatives
- Minimise damage, including the reduction of genetic and ecological diversity, caused to the natural environment by extracting or growing natural resources for industrial use
- Induce industry to invest in resource-saving technology by minimising waste during manufacturing and increasing energy efficiency in industry
- Promote research into ecologically sound cultivation techniques for renewable raw materials and develop less energy intensive methods of cropping and processing
- Work towards establishing an international code of conduct for trans-national companies to minimise environmental damage and prevent harm to indigenous populations from resource extraction, including returning control over resource extraction to local indigenous populations

### **Water**

- Develop and implement water extraction licensing frameworks balancing the needs of users and the environment
- Encourage the adoption of levels of domestic and industrial water consumption which minimise damage to the environment through entrapment and treatment works
- De-privatise water and ensure water services are run with the direct participation of the communities concerned
- Bring all water resources and infrastructure back into public ownership, including traditional fisherpersons, administered and run by democratically elected local bodies based on water catchment areas

### **Waste**

- Have a clear hierarchy of waste treatments, with reuse first, followed by recycling and composting, followed by treating the residual waste in non non-polluting ways that produce useful products like biogas and the least possible quantity of inert material for landfill
- Prohibit discharge of polluting waste from industry into domestic sewers
- Encourage domestic composting, diversion of recyclables, and removal of hazardous materials from municipal waste streams
- Give full powers to the local councils to establish waste recovery and sorting facilities for the collection of all domestic and commercial waste, and to sell recovered materials to industry for recycling
- Work towards a target of zero waste and a circular economy
- Intensify research into the recycling of secondary raw materials
- Prohibit import and export of waste, unless it is to be recycled

### **Minerals**

- Legislate that all mineral rights are held by the state on behalf of the communities which occupy the land or, in the case of off-shore rights, which border it

- Create a mechanism that the resource extraction rates, with intergenerational equity in mind, are managed to ensure the greatest benefit to current and future generations
- Ensures that resource extraction decisions are guided by rigorous independent environmental and social impact assessment

### **Forests**

- Protect native forests and ecosystems, especially “virgin” forests and ecosystems
- Recognise the essential role played by mature forest ecosystems in wildlife habitat, carbon storage, water supply, soil quality and retention, recreation and tourism
- Launch programmes to encourage revegetation of land, including salt affected land, with biodiverse native vegetation that provide carbon sinks, hydrological management and biodiversity restoration
- Support a sustainable and productive wood products industry from plantations and farm forestry that creates long-term skilled jobs and social sustainability in regional communities
- End export of wood chips and whole logs from native forests
- Encourage plantations with a diversity of species rather than monocultures
- Encourage the use of locally grown, sustainable-certified timber products
- Protect local timber industries by banning on the import and sale of illegally harvested wood products
- Align forestry and energy policy in order to promote clean burning biomass and biofuel opportunities, especially to replace coal use
- Make strong standards for indigenous and plantation forests so that all timber and wood products are sourced from sustainably managed forests only

### **Mining and Mineral Exploration**

- Integrate stringent and transparent environmental and social protection standards to mining and resource extraction decisions that deliver both long and short term benefits to the communities
- Bind resource extraction approvals to the informed consent and approval of indigenous groups
- Evaluate mining applications based on transparent and comprehensive natural resource mapping, strategic planning and rigorous independent environmental and social impact assessment
- Legislate for rigorous independent ongoing monitoring and compliance with undertakings and legal obligations of all mining projects including during the rehabilitation phase
- Prohibit mineral exploration and mining (including the extraction of petroleum and gas) in residential areas, good quality agricultural land and terrestrial and marine nature conservation reserves, national parks, wilderness areas and other areas of high nature conservation value
- Ban new thermal coal mines or thermal coal mine expansions, and ensure an orderly, planned phase out of thermal coal exports/imports with a just transition for affected communities
- Phase out all existing underground coal gasification projects
- Encourage a planned, orderly, phase-out of existing fracking and unconventional gas developments including coal seam gas, shale and tight gas due to the short and long-term risks to our water, land, communities, the climate, food production and marine areas

- Strengthen rights of landholders regarding access, negotiation, appeal and compensation rights in their dealings with mining and resources companies
- Prohibit the exploration for, and mining and export of, uranium

**References:**

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