

Green Party of Michigan Platform
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Preface (5/21/01)

This Platform is a general overview of the positions and goals of the Green Party of Michigan. Specific actions and positions with regard to the subjects we address will be outlined in future handouts and position papers. We encourage comments on our Platform, and collaboration on revisions and position papers from community groups and individuals. We welcome you to contact us for more specific information on our positions, the candidates and issues we support, and people you can contact in your area about upcoming Green meetings and events.

The Greens are, in essence, everyone striving for peace, ecological sustainability, fair access to the necessities of life, and human, civil, and equal rights. The Green Party of Michigan

seeks to work with people throughout the state, the country, and the world to make fundamental positive changes in our governments, economic systems, and overall well being. We recognize that these changes can only happen through the wills and desires of free people.

Our mission is to fight abuses of the political system, build positive alternatives, work for change in the current political structure, and keep a vigorous dialogue going in the community. We work in alliances and coalitions, we train new activists, we support other activist groups, we are involved in electoral politics, we are educating the public and we are building a community for the future. Join us!

Preamble: 10 Key Values (2/10/01)

These are the Ten Key Values of the Green Party of Michigan. They are the basis of the party, and the only requirements for the movement. These values are inseparable from each other, and in fact, sometimes overlap. Every chapter of the Greens – indeed, every Green – will have a slightly different interpretation of these values, so no version should ever be considered the final or definitive statement of the Greens. They need to be spelled out clearly, though, because Greens exist to promote these values, and not to gain influence or fame or fortune. At the root of it, Greens want to see happy, healthy, dignified people, living in sustaining and sustainable communities, on a thriving planet.

Ecological wisdom

Humanity is not separate from nature, nor do individuals live in isolation from each other. Our actions and lifestyles inevitably have an impact on our human and natural environment. We seek to minimize our negative impact and maximize our positive impact on both. More than stop-gap solutions like recycling, this means living in harmony with our surroundings. We must live as Thoreau did: deliberately.

Social justice

The promises of our Constitution and society are meant for all people, regardless of our superficial differences (including economic disparity). Everyone deserves the chance to live a healthy, meaningful life. Greens help individuals reach for that life. Further, we oppose efforts by business or government to infringe on the human rights of citizens of other nations, whether they are in the United States or at home.

Grassroots democracy

The legitimacy of government is derived from the voluntary consent of the governed. The closer the decision-makers are to those who be affected by the decision, the more effective, efficient, and accountable government is. This value is based on Greens' unshakable conviction that people everywhere have the right to, and capacity for, self-determination.

Nonviolence

Greens acknowledge the need to take desperate measures in self-defense in life-or-death situations, but non-violence to us means actively working to build a world where this is unnecessary. Violence is morally wrong and logistically ineffective, because it treats the symptoms of problems, not the root causes. We also categorically reject the death penalty.

Decentralization

One of the features of modern society is the concentration of political power in career politicians and economic power in career capitalists. Consistent with our value of grassroots democracy, we seek to return both forms of power to those who are affected by its exercise. Greens believe that people know best how to solve their own problems.

Community-based economics

Greens believe that the economy should be about individuals and families, not corporations, which are a legal fiction. We support worker control and worker ownership wherever possible, and responsibility to the community in all cases. We encourage local self-reliance, but reject isolationism. We value people over profits.

Feminism

Greens are feminists, which means that we believe in the equality of women and men (regardless of sexual orientation). By extension, it also means that we affirm the right of all people to self-definition. Each person has the right to choose a culture, and to exhibit all (legal) aspects of its corresponding lifestyle.

Respect for diversity

In ecosystems, diversity is not a pleasant goal to be aspired to, it's a bedrock requirement. Similarly, in human relationships, Greens believe that diversity is both the cause and effect of a healthy society. Traditional politics has long framed the world as "Us vs. Them," but Greens realize that this is a false dichotomy. All humans are sisters and brothers, regardless of how differently we may look or act. We should welcome these differences as the strengths they are, and not use them to set up artificial divisions among us.

Personal and global responsibility

Each of us has a stake in the well-being of our families, communities, nation, and planet. We all must play a role in keeping them healthy and lively. We must hold ourselves accountable for the conditions under which we live and work. We must also analyze the effects our actions have on others, particularly those who have no say in those actions, regardless of how far away in space or time they may be from us. We must change those actions which reduce others' quality of life.

Future focus/sustainability

Similarly, we must consider the lasting effects of our actions. It is unacceptable to live a lifestyle that will deny an equivalent quality of life to succeeding generations. We must use resources in ways that do not use them up, and work to develop sustainable resources that cannot be used up.

Part I: Grassroots Democracy

A community simply does not work without the active involvement of its citizens. People must see that small-scale community economics *can* work; that the idea of workers owning (cooperatives) or holding a large share in (economic democracy) of locally owned businesses is workable; that citizens can peacefully apply the principles of democracy by both voting and participating in their own political space.

1. Community Organizing & Political Participation

Greens support citizen involvement at all levels of the decision-making process; participation in political life requires fair campaigns, wide ranging debate, and choices that have meaning.

We support the right to non-violent direct action that supports social justice, democracy, peace, and sustainable interaction with our environment.

2. Political/Electoral Reform

The two major parties cynically jockey to look as if they care about “good government,” when, in fact, they restrict ballot access to third-parties and independent candidates through a labyrinth of restrictive election laws, and bluntly reject meaningful public debate and election reform.

The Green Party, in association with those citizen groups and political campaigns calling for real reform, accountability, and responsibility in government proposes a COMPREHENSIVE POLITICAL REFORM AGENDA in Michigan.

a. Ballot Access

We need to broaden voter participation and BALLOT ACCESS, urging UNIVERSAL VOTER REGISTRATION, including ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION, voting by mail as allowed in certain other states, and an ELECTION DAY HOLIDAY for all federal elections. We believe that a binding “None of the Above” option on the ballot should also be considered.

b. Proportional Representation & Preferential Voting

We demand choices in our political system. Over two thirds of Americans support the formation of an alternative third-party.

The US is one of only a handful of democracies in the world that still predominantly use a winner-take-all electoral system, which only reinforces the entrenched two-party monopoly. We must work to change this at the local and state level. We recognize individual empowerment, full citizen participation, and PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION as the foundation of effective democracy.

c. Campaign Finance Reform

We propose comprehensive CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM, including caps on spending and contributions, at the national and state level, and use of public funding to

remove undue influence in political campaigns.

State rules for public disclosure of political “gifts” and contributions need to be strengthened to limit corporate influence of our elections through their political action committees.

Providing free television and mail under reasonable conditions for every qualified statewide, congressional, presidential candidate, and party can move the political process toward increased participation.

3. Media Access and Ownership (e.g., Low Power Community Radio)

Over the years, media control has become concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, along with an increased corporate desire to censor the news by simply not reporting on it.

Greens call for:

- * Drastically increasing access to the public airwaves, including the legalizing of low-power community radio
- * Increasing the public interest obligations of broadcasters
- * Taxing broadcast advertising
- * Free air time for political debate including third parties
- * Reinstitution of broadcast media ownership limits
- * Fining strike-breaking papers who do not comply with court orders

4. Corporate Injustice/Accountability

Corporations affect every aspect of life: determining who will receive jobs and how they will earn their living, deciding the direction of technological development, choosing the content of social discourse through control of the mass media, and judging the degree of environmental damage that should be sustained in maintaining productivity. Private power is thus exercised over many of society’s most crucial decisions concerning the use of our resources.

In a democratic society it is proper that the public maintain the right to define the role exercised by private power. The Michigan Green Party supports efforts to expand the role of public oversight of corporate activities: stockholder empowerment, increased input in the governance of public utilities, citizens’ involvement with the activities of regulatory agencies.

a. Workplace Democracy/Labor Organization

The American experiment has been based on democracy. Yet, we see no effort to practice democracy in the everyday workplace. Democracy, though far from perfect, is the most legitimate and effective form of government. We call for it to be implemented in as many companies as possible.

In the absence of true workplace democracy, we call for increased worker participation in the decision-making process. We defend the right of workers to voluntarily join unions and bargain collectively. We call for companies to

pay a living wage. We insist that workers be given safe, comfortable working conditions.

b. Management/Labor Relations

We support efforts to expand economic and workplace democracy as a means to protect employees, consumers, and surrounding communities.

We support employee stock ownership plans (ESOP's) and other forms of employee ownership.

There should be no compromise of basic worker rights. For workplace democracy to be effective, workers must have freedom of speech and the right to associate with groups and unions of their choice. We call for more democracy in the unions, and more accountability from the union leadership.

We endorse legal rights to organize and join unions with democratically elected leadership. We call for penalties against companies for firing or disciplining workers engaged in union-forming activities, and against companies that refuse to negotiate in good faith with the democratically elected union representatives.

We support the right to strike without being permanently replaced.

5. Privatization (January 2004)

Privatization has many forms. With any of these forms, public resources are converted into private ones; they are "privatized."

Public property such as municipal water systems are sold outright. Public services such as garbage collection or prison operation are contracted out to private businesses. Permits to exploit public resources are given out for nominal fees. Tax revenues are diverted to support selected private businesses by direct subsidy and by the granting of "tax breaks." Polluters are allowed to use the public's air and water as their waste disposal sites. With vouchers, public money is diverted to private schools. This is not by any means a comprehensive list.

Privateers are ever vigilant in their search for new ways to make a profit by taking over some function or asset of government. They buy the services of lobbyists, lawyers, and legislators to help them do so. The Republican and Democratic Parties long ago became servants of the corporate economy. Privatization weakens democracy not just by corrupting the political process but by removing resources from the control of public bodies and turning them over to corporate management. There, the first purpose of the resources is to turn a profit; the public good becomes secondary at best.

Privatization is often a form of union busting. A good example is the Postal Service, where a lot of mail is now processed by non-union low-paid workers at pre-sort houses, while USPS downsizes. Privatization has also been used to weaken AFGE, AFSCME and other unions representing workers at every level of government. So privatization must be opposed both in order to provide better services to the public, and to assure a living wage for the workers who provide those services.

The Green Party is against all the forms of privatization

mentioned above, and is opposed to the corruption of democracy that results from privatization as it is practiced today. We believe that public resources should be used for the public good as determined by democratic institutions. Social, natural and physical capital now controlled by city, county, state and federal governments should not be turned over to corporations; those previously turned over should be taken back.

Part II: Social Justice (2/10/01)

Social Justice covers many areas. It is concerned both with rights: civil, gender, free speech -- and needs -- affordable housing, welfare and tax issues.

1. Affordable Housing (5/20/01)

Houses built today are financially out of reach for most people. We believe that much of this problem stems from shortsighted development policies and poor use of existing residential neighborhoods.

Greens propose:

- * Policies which encourage the construction of affordable housing.
- * Legislation that promotes residential redevelopment in existing residential areas, especially the renovation of older homes and neighborhoods.
- * Development policies which require developers to include a range of housing, including affordable housing, in residential development projects.
- * Expanding the power of cities to reclaim and redevelop abandoned real estate.
- * Policies which provide education and access to capital to assist homeowners in reducing their energy costs, and building codes such as the Canadian R-2000 which mandate conservative energy consumption in new buildings.
- * Energy codes and increased enforcement of existing health & safety building codes for rental residential buildings.

2. Health Care

Everyone should have the right of access to medical care. People should have medical insurance -- regardless of their employment status -- and have that insurance cover the medical care that they need. Universal health care is needed, as well as communal child care and reduced cost nursing aid for elders.

a. Child Care

Every child should be cared for in our society, whether by parents or by community effort if the parent is unable. People should have the right to work without being hampered by the unavailability of child care.

b. Elder Care

Every elder should have the right to end his or her days with as much dignity and comfort as is possible, without worrying about expense. One aspect of universal health care should be reduced cost or free nursing aid for elders.

c. Abortion Rights and Reproductive Freedom (8/12/01)

Women shoulder the burden of pregnancy. The choice to carry to term or terminate a pregnancy is theirs. More generally, all individuals must have the right to choose whether or not to reproduce.

Greens propose:

- * The right of women to accept or refuse an abortion for themselves.
- * The availability of abortion services. The legal right to an abortion is irrelevant otherwise.
- * The identification of so-called "crisis pregnancy centers" whose mission is to have unwanted pregnancies carried to full term via delay and disinformation, and mandatory disclosure, such as, "This facility does not provide abortion services or referrals."
- * The inclusion of abortion, tuba ligation, vasectomy and contraceptives in all medical insurance policies.
- * The distribution of contraceptives through public schools, public and private health clinics, armed forces medical facilities and other venues.

3. Education

Free public education is a bedrock of the American system. Public education is essential for the teaching of republican -- representative -- and democratic -- participatory -- ideals. Public education need not end at the schoolroom walls -- learning should extend into the community. Private and home schooling must be allowed to exist; however, public money should not be diverted to private educational enterprises.

a. Public Education Funding (Adopted 5/20/01)

As education is one of the key elements of both modern society and the activities of the Green Party of Michigan, we find it crucial that equal opportunity for that education be made available to every person in the state.

Greens propose:

- * An identical sum be provided by the state per child that does not rely on local property taxes for its funding. This money shall be used to ensure that all of our public schools remain current in such things as infra-structure maintenance, materials, books, and access to the educational opportunities available on the Internet/World Wide Web.
- * That pay incentives be provided to encourage teachers to move to economically depressed areas to provide equitable methods of instruction, state-wide.
- * That some degree of funding be set aside as state support for adult education and the lifelong expansion of the knowledge of all citizens of the state, should they so desire.
- * That this funding be granted as lump sums subject to the authority of the local school boards, which will be more knowledgeable as to the needs of the local school districts.

b. Public Health/Health Education (8/12/01)

Lifestyle choices can radically alter the course of a life. As such, the individual's right of access to unbiased health information should not be infringed.

Greens support:

- * The practice of providing unbiased information about the dangers and benefits of all medical procedures and drugs, and reject the practice of singling out abortion for special treatment.
- * The distribution of unbiased information about contraception through public schools, public and private health clinics, armed forces medical facilities and other venues.
- * A broad and positive sex education program in the public schools.

4. Civil and Equal Rights

Civil rights are the liberties we mutually grant each other as citizens – in exchange for the limits we mutually agree to abide by. Equal rights are the recognition that each citizen is equal to each other. When either of these great guarantees are misaligned, there is turmoil and injustice. We need leaders – and citizens – who aren't afraid to name injustice, prejudice and disrespect for what they are, but who can then demonstrate the justice, consideration and respect that make us all proud to be citizens in our unique democracy.

a. Feminism/Gender Equity (9/6/05)

Political, social, and economic equality between men and women is a fundamental Green value. Our society and our institutions still need to learn that oppressing one another does not improve our lot, and helping each other does. We will support women struggling against oppression, whatever form that oppression may take. We encourage Green women to become candidates for Congress, the Michigan Legislature, and all other elective offices.

To realize these principles we advocate:

- * Guaranteeing each woman's right to participate fully in society – free from sexual harassment, job discrimination, or interference in the intensely personal choice about whether to have a child. In particular, we believe all women should have access to safe, legal, and available contraception, abortion services, and pre-natal care – and professional medical consultation about all three.
- * U.S. Senate ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- * Active investigation and prosecution of sexual-harassment complaints by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunities Commission and the state EEO Office.
- * More funding for programs to address and eliminate the root causes of rape and domestic violence.

- * Legislation that guarantees the right of women to breastfeed in public, regardless of the amount of breast exposed.
- * Paid maternity or paternity leave of at least one year or any combination thereof for all new parents as an expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act.
- * A constitutional amendment guaranteeing the equality of women.
- * A concentrated effort to address issues of women and poverty, such as employment discrimination against single mothers and the gender gap in access to unemployment benefits.
- * Quality government funded child care to enable women to work outside the home if they choose.
- * The right of women to receive equal pay for equal work.
- * The right of women to receive an equal opportunity education and the continued support of Title IX.

b. Child Rights

Today's children are tomorrow's citizens. While they cannot now directly influence the course of human events, their opinions and their thoughts count. They are the people for whom we are holding the Earth in stewardship. They have the same natural rights as we grown-ups: self-expression, personal belief, privacy, bodily integrity.

c. Elder Rights

Our elders are still people and, in many cases can still contribute to our society, both in terms of their natural human originality and in terms of the wisdom they've accumulated over the course of a lifetime. The experiences they share enrich us. When universal health care is implemented, it should include a provision for the care of our elders at reduced or no cost.

d. Native Americans (5/20/01)

Native Americans' rights are threatened. They face disputes over Federal and private lands in or bordering reservations; over treaty rights and obligations, and tribal sovereignty; and over the funding of Federal health and education programs on reservations. Bureau of Indian Affairs tribal and individual trust funds are missing literally billions of dollars. Meanwhile, governments, groups, and individuals continue – intentionally or unintentionally – to discriminate against and stereotype Native Americans.

The Green Party supports the efforts of Native American tribes and individuals to protect their rights and their traditions and to recover their money. We believe that democratically organized tribal councils are far more likely to serve the needs of Native Americans than programs conceived in and run from Washington. We call for an end to

discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping, and for the freedom of Leonard Peltier.

e. Sexual Orientation (5/20/01)

The Greens support the diversity of human sexual orientation just as much as we support the diversity of human religious belief. Regardless of whether sexual orientation is a matter of choice or biology, as long as that choice is made between consenting adults it is neither the business of the state nor of other individuals to either judge or interfere.

Greens propose:

- * The immediate passage of laws granting the right to marry regardless of gender, and ensuring all rights and responsibilities currently extended to married couples (inheritance rights, insurance, taxes, etc).
- * Eliminating sexual orientation as a barrier to adoption
- * The addition of the category of sexual orientation to all existing hate crimes legislation.

f. Assisted Suicide (11/02)

The GPMI believes that a person who is terminally ill should have a humane alternative to suffering through to a "natural" and painful end of life. The patient should have the right to request assistance from a doctor to commit suicide, and the doctor should have the right to give that assistance. We do not favor extending this right to anybody other than the person who would die; neither to family members nor to the courts. This right would not apply to a person in a medical condition which makes it impossible to make or express a decision on this subject. It also would not apply to a person who is not terminally ill. At the same time, we fear this right can be abused, particularly in a medical system controlled by insurance companies whose concern is not giving medical care but profiting from it. Safeguards to prevent suicide being forced on a terminally ill person may also be needed.

g. Criminal Justice/Fairness

Criminal justice issues are intimately connected to social justice issues. A society which does not adequately feed, clothe, house, educate, nurture and inspire all of its citizens, especially its children, will be a society plagued by crime. The present system of retributive justice, based on punishment and infliction of pain, serves to continue rather than stop the cycle of violence. It magnifies the racism, classism, and sexism of our society. Greens support a new system of restorative, transformative criminal justice based upon social justice, nonviolence, and healing.

h. Free Speech

The spontaneous utterance is the basis of all expressive freedom. Therefore free speech, and the right to speak freely, should always be protected, to the degree that it involves neither fraud nor violence. Civil disobedience

should be expressed in such a way to make a maximal point with a minimal amount of disruption. Civil authorities should take the utmost care not to tread upon the rights of citizens who are protesting. Restricting expression proactively because of what "might" happen violates the near-absolute protection of the First Amendment.

Restricting political signage by local ordinance should not be permitted. The content of political signage should not be used as an excuse to restrict it.

i. Racism

Racism – the idea that an individual's appearance is directly correlated with their natural human capacity – is a naive notion. The diversity of the human condition is actually quite wonderful, and it's the enriching interchange that occurs when two unlike people meet that provides one of the unexpected joys that this life holds.

Greens propose:

- * Experiencing the Diversity that already exists within our cosmopolitan culture.
- * Teaching tolerance and discouraging racism by example.
- * Encouraging a Respect for Diversity through cultural exchange programs.

j. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (11/01)

The Green Party of Michigan supports the principles laid out in the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" adopted and proclaimed by United Nations General Assembly resolution 217A (III) of December 10, 1948. We join in the Assembly's call to publicize the Declaration and have it disseminated, displayed, read, and studied in schools and other educational institutions.

As the U.S. and Michigan Constitutions delineate the limits of our governments, so the UN Declaration on Human Rights frames an outline of meaningful human rights. A world in which these human rights are understood – and respected – by all would be a fairer, more just world.

k. Disabilities

The Green Party is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities have full inclusion and opportunity to the maximum extent possible in our society.

The Green Party supports the Independent Living model. Every person needs to have control and responsibility over their personal affairs to the greatest extent possible.

The Green Party fully supports the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). We will support measures that strengthen these laws for consumers and resist any efforts to weaken these laws.

5. Welfare/Workfare Issues

The welfare of the people is the main concern of the state. While this association is usually figurative, there is a small population for which it is literal. It's the state's job to provide a minimal level of survival while helping them either in returning to a productive lifestyle, if possible, or providing for an ongoing income, if that is not feasible. Workfare burdens marginal members of society with additional responsibilities when they are already having trouble meeting the demands of life. From an economic perspective, the state should realize that it is *investing in* a potentially productive member of society; its payoff will come later in the increased tax revenues from a returned-to-productivity worker. Refusing to provide income *because* a person can't function is ultimately counter-productive.

6. Tax Justice/Fairness (5/20/01)

Greens support progressivity in taxation as a matter of principle, believing that those who benefit most from our economy, and from the social structures which protect private property, have a responsibility to return more. Middle-class and poor people are paying an ever-greater proportion of federal taxes, while local and state taxes are too often inequitable and regressive. In addition, the tax code is a labyrinth of deductions, loopholes, exemptions and write-offs, the result of insider- and industry-lobbying that has damaged our economy as it has served the interests of business. We believe a central goal of tax policy should be "transparency" – that is, a system that is simple, understandable, and resists the influence of special interests.

Greens propose:

- * Reducing the tax burden for the working poor.
- * Reducing subsidies, export incentives, tax loopholes and tax shelters that benefit large corporations and individual campaign contributors.
- * Examining new approaches to taxation, such as environmental taxes, as a partial substitute for income taxes, in order to promote social objectives.
- * Taxing capital gains the same as wages or any other income.
- * Restoring a fair share from corporate taxes. The corporate share of taxes has fallen from 33% in the 1940s to 15% today, while the individual share has risen from 44% to 73%.
- * Supporting appropriate tax incentives to reward socially responsible actions which benefit the community.

7. Drugs

The right of personal choice is the fundamental American right. Surely the act of in taking substances into the body is a sufficiently intimate activity to render it a matter of personal responsibility, rather than state intrusion. Hard-core addiction is an illness, not a crime. Put users on prescription, and crime will drop dramatically when they don't have to rob people and steal property to pay for their compulsive drug needs. Proven programs exist to help people heal their addictions, yet are systematically under funded.

The irony in all this is that the drug problem is really a capitalism problem. Harsh penalties for drug possession, selling and use raise prices by the well-known law of supply and demand, thus attracting criminal elements who are willing to risk punishment for high returns; this is then used to justify and fund a "war on drugs" while, ironically at the same time, funneling large amounts of money into criminal hands. A legal model of decriminalization and taxation combined with a medical model of education, prescription and treatment would solve these problems by simultaneously de-funding criminals and easing the drain on police resources, while increasing revenues for the state and helping citizens return to productivity.

III-A: Environmental Sustainability (2/10/01)

We are using up the Earth's resources, causing the extinction of whole species, and polluting the land, water, and air at an alarming rate. Our well-being, and the well-being of all generations to come, is at risk. The media, governments and corporations are giving increasing lip service to environmental concerns; in fact, 'business as usual' continues; profit and power still supercede quality of life and a hopeful future. Our institutions and laws support this irresponsible and life threatening behavior. WE REQUIRE REAL CHANGE NOW. A hopeful future is possible for ourselves and our children, but individuals, organizations, corporations and governments must dedicate themselves and their policies to environmental sustainability. To these ends, the Green Party of Michigan promotes the use of environmentally sound and socially just criteria for the production of energy and goods, in dealing with pollution and waste, and in our relationships with each other and other species.

1. Energy

A comprehensive energy policy is a critical element in our environmental thinking. We must move away from non-renewable, polluting energy sources and toward cleaner, renewable ways to generate power and heat which are abundant and are proving to be effective on increasingly larger scales.

Greens support:

- * Instituting true-cost pricing in energy industries.
- * Rewarding research and use of sustainable technologies.
- * Decentralizing control of energy policy and production.
- * Choosing and facilitating lifestyles that lower overall use of energy.
- * Buying energy efficient products.
- * Coordinating energy use among individuals and communities.

a. Energy: Problems

Our current unsustainable energy practices center on the use of nuclear power and fossil fuels.

Nuclear power plants have proved to be accident prone, environmentally unsound, and have often been shown to cost more than would their replacement with alternative forms of energy generation. It has not been proven that permanent storage or reprocessing of nuclear materials and waste is environmentally safe.

In Michigan, fossil fuels like coal and oil are our primary sources of energy. The pollution that has resulted from the burning of fossil fuels is linked with many health problems and with the potentially catastrophic effects of ozone layer depletion. Many processes for extracting fossil fuels are expensive and environmentally dangerous.

Greens propose:

- * We call for the decommissioning of all nuclear power plants.
- * We support alternative, safer sources of energy for the areas these reactors serve, as well as

support, training and job placement for displaced plant workers.

- * We call for the Michigan Low Level Waste Advisory Board to ban the import of nuclear wastes into MI. The export of wastes generated in MI to other states or countries should also be banned. Michigan should not be used as a corridor for the transport of nuclear wastes either.
- * We call for immediate short term transition energy strategies as we move away from fossil fuels and nuclear energy and toward more sustainable energy sources.
- * We call for the strict monitoring and public reporting of power plant emissions and wastes.
- * We support the removal of unnecessary economic and regulatory barriers to start-up companies, who choose to manufacture vehicles with hybrid combustion engines and hyper cars which use hydrogen fuel.
- * We advocate fuel efficiency standards and rebates or tax credits for production and purchase of vehicles that have lower environmental impacts.

b. Energy: Solutions

We support the use of solar, wind, water and geothermal energy (among others), as well as reduction in energy consumption. Our lakes and waterways offer great opportunities to also pioneer the use of community-based, small-scale hydro plants which are less damaging to the ecosystem and more amenable to wildlife bypasses than large-scale hydroelectric plants. On the smallest scales, further development of more efficient and easily maintainable technologies like household and neighborhood solar panels and windmills that generate energy from abundant, free sources can help put control of household economy, and basic quality of life, back into the hands of families and communities.

True-cost pricing, support of continued development of sustainable technologies, and increasing community control of energy production can allow us all to afford to choose energy from sources that don't deplete or pollute our local and global environments. True-cost pricing for all goods and energy production is an integral step in moving toward a market system that functions in balance with the environment. Thus, as citizens begin to have more access to renewable energy sources, we believe that energy rates should increasingly reflect the true financial and environmental impacts of energy production, including renewability of the source, pollution levels, and waste clean-up costs.

The way our government approaches an energy policy should serve the public interest, not work to maintain

current, unsustainable industries. Through funding allocations and legislation, increasing ownership of the means of energy production by municipalities, cooperatives and households should be encouraged.

Greens propose:

- * We call for the development of lower-environmental-impact wind and solar energy, especially on large scales: for example, the excellent wind power devices at Traverse City.
- * We support statewide tax credits for energy efficient measures on new structures and retro-fits of existing ones, including non-toxic recyclable insulation, weatherizing, energy saving lighting and appliances, and on-site renewable energy production.
- * We call for a state-wide energy policy that addresses not only energy production and pricing but also that helps communities and individuals coordinate and reduce energy use.
- * We call on regulatory agencies to include energy use during production in their standard-setting processes for product approval.

2. Industry in the Environment

Industry exists to produce, and one byproduct of that production is pollution. Pollution has several ugly faces: air, water, and noise and hormone pollution – each brings its own set of problems that must be dealt with.

In an ideal world, each waste stream would feed into a reclamation stream. But we are not yet there: only a third of the waste produced in the United States is recycled. There are two ways to look at reducing industrial production's waste: reduce supply of it by instituting industry waste reclamation programs, or reduce demand by conservation measures on the part of individuals.

a. Production and Consumption

Energy is used and pollution produced in the production and distribution of food, housing materials, and all consumer goods. Unfortunately the ability of the earth's ecosystems to disperse and break down the pollutants has long since been overwhelmed. It is especially true in an area like Michigan, where it has been standard practice to clear-cut the forests and use our huge lakes as dumps for countless tons of solid and liquid waste. Even more toxic wastes have been deposited in our lakes from air pollution.

Industrial practices, individual habits, and the laws produced by our governing bodies all need to change drastically to bring our consumption of non-renewable resources and our production of harmful pollutants into line with what our bodies and our ecosystems consider healthy.

b. Pollution

Pollution takes many forms. Air pollution includes fossil fuel emissions of carbon monoxide, unburned hydrocarbons, various greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide,

methane, and nitrous oxide, plus small but potent amounts of various carcinogens and also chlorofluorocarbon emissions. Increased carbon dioxide is the most notable culprit for the Greenhouse Effect, excess methane from meat stock animals has also been implicated. The sources of this increased CO₂ are many: internal combustion engines, industrial pollution, and increased forest fire activity. Deforestation also plays a major role in the earth's inability to reprocess excess CO₂.

Most of the paper produced or used in Michigan uses a chlorine-based bleaching process that releases large amounts of chlorinated compounds into our water. Given the profound importance of clean water, we support the establishment of federal, state, and local groundwater protection agencies. Our right to clean water is non-negotiable.

Greens propose:

- * We support the establishment of federal, state, and local groundwater protection agencies with authority to establish standards for the use of water; to provide tough and timely enforcement of laws enacted; and to protect our aquifers from overuse, depletion and contamination.
- * We endorse alternative solutions to water treatment and clean-up, for example constructed wetlands and biological remediation.
- * We support the federal Clean Water Act, and call for even stricter standards.
- * We support strict controls by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality on effluent from industrial plants. We call for much stricter control of sewage effluent reaching rivers and streams and the Great Lakes. We support stricter controls on agricultural runoff high in nitrites from chemical fertilizers and manure as well as pesticides and fossil fuel contamination.
- * We support 'polluter pay' type laws that would require cleanup at the expense of the polluter rather than local or state government.
- * We call on our representatives to support the federal Clean Air Act and push for compliance with the Global Climate Treaty signed in Rio de Janeiro at the Earth Summit.
- * We call for a moratorium on logging in Michigan until the full effects of deforestation can be understood. We call for strong new legislation for the protection of forest habitat both at the state and federal levels.

c. Industry and Production

We call for industry and government to address the real full-life costs of products placed on the market. Currently, industry only pays for the initial production of a product,

while consumers and the taxpaying public have to pick up the tab for the harmful side effects of the pollution generated by that production. Industry must also be held accountable to fully inform its employees, nearby residents, and its shareholders of all the pollution produced in its operations and the possible consequences of that pollution.

d. Conservation: Consumption and Personal Choice

We believe that people should have the choice to consume less. We encourage individuals to consider the significant impact that reducing household consumption of water, energy, and disposable goods can have on the ecosystem.

Greens propose:

- * We call for education that helps communities understand what can be done in the household to conserve the world's limited resources.
- * We call for a reduction in wastes produced and a reduction in source material use.
- * We support premium pricing for virgin materials that reflect the degree to which the sources are renewable.

e. Waste Management

The prudent conservation of resources that we advocate will bring U.S. household consumption closer to the more sustainable levels of other industrialized nations, making waste management less of a pressing issue.

Greens propose:

- * We call for environmentally-safe modes of waste disposal that are sustainable over time. Ann Arbor's landfill, with its leachate control and biogas monitoring, is a good example of this.
- * We support re-use and recycling of all possible materials and items at every level of the economy, including household curbside recycling. We call for the phasing out of use of non-rechargeable batteries.
- * We support an expansion of the "Bottle Bill" statute to include all glass, metal, and plastic beverage containers.
- * We call for communities to have direct, democratic control of the waste management activities which occur in their jurisdiction. Michigan should not be a dumping ground for the trash of other municipalities, states, or provinces.
- * We oppose incineration of municipal solid waste, sewage, non-biological medical waste, and toxic waste. We support a moratorium on any new incinerators. We call for the constant, independent monitoring of emissions from currently operating incinerators.
- * We call for legislation to hold companies and government bodies accountable for toxic waste dumping, spills and contamination.

f. Noise Pollution

Noise is among the most pervasive pollutants today. The problem with noise is not only that it is unwanted, but also that it negatively affects human health and well-being. We believe that people, businesses, and organizations do not have unlimited rights to broadcast noise as they please, as if the effects of noise were limited only to their private property. On the contrary, they have an obligation to use the commons in ways that are compatible with or do not detract from other uses.

Greens propose:

- * We support efforts to raise awareness of noise pollution and help communities take back the commons from noise polluters.
- * We support establishing networks among local noise activists, assisting communities and activists who are working to reduce noise pollution, and monitoring and advocating for stronger noise controls, locally and nationwide.

g. Hormone Disruptors

Hormone disrupters are found in many aspects of daily life, including pesticides, plastic products, water, some soil, certain fish, milk products, chicken, beef, breast milk, and during development in our mothers' wombs. These chemicals act like very potent estrogens in the body which can be responsible for reproductive abnormalities, neurological deficits, hormone-related cancers, and reduced fertility.

Greens propose:

- * That adequate funding is provided for scientific research into the effect of endocrine disrupters on human health, animal health, and the environment.
- * That public education campaigns are mandated about the possible hazards of hormone disrupters and how to reduce public exposure to hormone disrupters.
- * That chemicals identified as hormone disrupters, such as plasticizers, that have a known safe alternative be required to be phased out over a 5-year period.
- * That chemicals identified as hormone disrupters that have no known safe alternative be targeted for research and development of viable and safe replacements.
- * That all possible support and encouragement be given for cleaning up sources of hormone disrupters in the water and soil.

h. Spent Nuclear Reactor Fuel

Radioactive waste, including spent nuclear fuel, can be made safer by capturing it inside glass ingots. This process, called "vitrification", prevents the radioactive material from being scattered on the wind or easily leached into the water

supply. Vitrifying spent nuclear fuel greatly reduces the risk of a spontaneous “meltdown”. It also makes the spent fuel unavailable for reprocessing – and less of a target for terrorists.

The Bush regime wants to leave U.S. spent fuel in its current dangerous form until the Yucca Mountain storage site is declared “ready.” Then it would be shipped – still in its most hazardous form – to Nevada, where it would be vitrified. There is no cost advantage to a large national vitrification plant instead of smaller plants located where the spent fuel is now. There is a safety advantage to making radioactive waste safer as soon as possible. As a bonus, vitrifying the waste now would create jobs now, in all areas of the country that have nuclear power plants – including Michigan.

Greens propose:

- * Making spent nuclear fuel safer now, by vitrifying it on the sites where it is now stored.
- * Prohibiting shipment of spent nuclear fuel on any public right-of-way unless it is first vitrified.

3. Respect for Other Species

The long-term viability of humans – and all other earthbound species – is intimately linked with the viability of this planet Earth. Therefore, it is not only merely important, it is crucial that the planet continue to live so it can support all species. It is therefore a political necessity to ensure a sustainable ecology.

Michigan is a bellwether state for sustainable ecology. As home to the world’s largest fresh-water system – the Great Lakes – it must stand against those who would destroy Nature for their own selfish, short-term economic interests. Only if we live in such a way as to make sure that our children and grandchildren have a high quality of life, will we be able to bear history’s judgment that we were adequate stewards of life on Earth.

a. Biodiversity

The number of species on the Earth, both plant and animal, is declining at a frightening rate. Biodiversity is important for 2 reasons:

- 1) A diverse ecology is a healthy ecology. An ecology with many niches and biomes within it is more adaptable to changing conditions.
- 2) A more diverse ecology has more chemicals in it, and thus is more likely to have important pharmaco-logical agents within it. Already powerful anti-cancer drugs have been developed from rainforest plants.

b. Depletion/Resource Use

The planet is finite; therefore, planetary resources are finite. We ought not make the mistake of our forebears and assume that all resources are infinite. To this end, products should both be constructed of recycled materials and constructed in such a way as to make them easily recyclable at the end of their life cycle. Nature recycles everything – we can learn to do the same.

c. Protection of Species/Habitat

Here in Michigan we are blessed with large amounts of wetlands – the bedrock (so to speak) – of Michigan’s ecology. But they are under attack from short-sighted development interests who see only a swamp to be drained and filled for yet another sprawling subdivision. We must preserve what has not yet been taken. The disruption of wetlands leads to a decline in natural bird populations and a subsequent dramatic rise in insect populations, leading to the increased use of pesticides, with their well-known deleterious consequences.

Every acre taken for man’s use threatens the survival of other species. This lessening of biodiversity is not a good thing. Other species and habitats ought to be protected, by, for example, Land Conservatories.

d. Environmental Justice

The Greens of Michigan believe that the environmental movement must also be a social justice movement. The political marginalization of communities of color and economically disadvantaged communities has meant that these communities have been forced to shoulder a disproportionate share of the human and environmental costs of production. Every aspect of industrial production reflects this unjust pattern: extraction of resources, unsafe working conditions, location of polluting facilities and waste sites, and the marketing of harmful products.

Greens propose:

- * We call for all environmental groups to embrace the philosophy that an injury to one is an injury to all, opposing solutions that amount to “not in my back yard”.
- * We call for the identification and elimination of activities that are unduly hazardous and cannot be made safe. When risks continue, appropriate compensation is essential.
- * We call for a worker’s bill of rights, including the right to know, the right to act, the right to a safe workplace and a safe community, the right to refuse work that is hazardous, and freedom from economic intimidation.
- * We believe that political representation should reflect the economic and cultural make-up of those represented.
- * We call for social impact statements as a prerequisite to all waste facility sites.

e. Animal Rights (5/20/01)

As Greens, we believe that humanity should share the planet with all its other species. All policies concerning human settlement, food, energy, natural resources, water (fresh and saline), development and industrialization should be formulated to minimize further disruption of the nonhuman ecosystems’ ability to maintain them. We don’t believe that our species has a right to exploit and inflict violence on other creatures simply because we have the

desire and power to do so. Our ethic upholds not only the value of biological diversity and the integrity and continuity of species, but also the value of individual lives and the interest of individual animals.

Greens propose:

- * Factory farming of livestock must be phased out in an ethically and environmentally responsible way.
- * Unnecessary, ineffective, or inappropriate use of animal experimentation, such as its use in the cosmetics industry, must be terminated.
- * Government oversight and regulation of the training and treatment of animals in circuses, carnivals, pet stores, and other commercial enterprises must be improved dramatically.

III-B: Economic Sustainability (2/10/01)

Capitalism – in the form of an enterprise – needs a steady stream of customers, or it will die. Therefore it follows that an economy must be sustainable in order for a steady stream of customers to appear. To be sustainable, ecology must be both robust and diverse, and so must an economy. Innovation must be allowed to flourish and fill the economic niches. But business must live sustainably, and farm and harvest the resources it needs, not merely exploit them.

1. Eco-nomics

Ecology and economy have a common root word, *oikos*, which is Greek for “home.” Economics is how we maintain and manage our household, both literally and in the larger sense. Ecology is the study of our larger home, the Earth. The word “ecology” is often used interchangeably with “environment,” but Greens use it in a larger way. We include the natural environment, but also the environment we have constructed for ourselves. We consider it no less important to understand society than nature. They are both our home.

Our economy can be thought of as an ecosystem. In an ecosystem, energy is cycled from one organism to the next. Each uses it for a time, then passes it on. No organism can monopolize energy or control others, because none is at the “top” of the system. Each needs all the others. Our understanding of economics should reflect this model. Wealth should cycle throughout society, without excessive concentrations in any one person or group of people.

There are other ways in which our economy should mirror nature: It should be innovative and diverse, and not depend on a single category of products or services, or for that matter, a single economic model. It should be self-reliant, though not a totally-closed system. It should know its limits, and be aware when it has reached a mature stage of development. It should be self-restorative. It should include some competition, but focus on cooperation. It should put a high quality of life within the reach of all.

We must be like nature – everything we produce should be reusable, recyclable, or decomposable. Only this, combined with careful, conservative, energy consumption, can allow humanity to play a healthy role in the ecosystems we inhabit.

2. Economic Democracy & Labor Issues

Some companies these days have begun holding out the promise of stock options to crucial managers. But most companies do not offer stock in themselves directly to their workers. If the workers want to own stock, they have to buy it on the open market. By permitting – indeed, encouraging – workers to own stock in their company, the loop is closed. The workers would own the means of production, yet the company would continue without interruption. In fact, it would be found that such companies do *better* in their industry, because the workers are more motivated to be productive.

Shareholding brings the privilege of voting, and it is here that workers could significantly influence the company. Every

company should have a representative of the workers on the Board as a full member of the team. The worker/stockholders could work to elect such a person.

a. Corporate Accountability, Anti-Trust Enforcement

Corporations are created under a grant from the state and thus are, (in theory at least), under the control of the people, so long as the People have control of the State. The People must have a mechanism for ensuring the accountability of the corporations; the State is designed to be it. When corporations gain control of the State however, the fox is guarding the henhouse, and the People suffer.

Anti-trust is a tool for the People to use through their government to keep corporations competing fairly; it is the stick to chasten the corporation which does not.

Greens propose:

- * Comprehensive corporate political reform, including disclosure of sources and limits on contributions.
- * Programs encouraging links between a community’s citizens and the enterprises that operate there.
- * The preservation – and use, if necessary – of the tool of anti-trust to encourage corporations to compete fairly.
- * Use of the corporate “death penalty” [revocation of State business charter] to punish enterprises that consistently fail to protect the public or their own workers from dangers in the business process, or who commit fraud in the marketplace.

b. Insurance & Pension Reforms

Greens find the practice known as redlining – systematically denying people home insurance based solely on the geographic location of their house – especially repugnant. Since these areas tend to be areas of low income and low savings rates, a home tends to be the primary asset. Despite laws against redlining, it still continues.

Greens propose:

- * Redlining needs to be vigorously rooted out; existing laws must be properly enforced.
- * Workers must assert their right to see that their pension funds are adequately invested, both as to investment return and social criteria. Laws should be enacted to protect the right of a worker to his or her earned pension.

c. Trade Issues in Michigan (NAFTA, MAI) (5/20/01)

The Greens are opposed to all the various organizations – WTO, NAFTA, MAI, FTAA, etc. – born of the thrust by corporations for what they call “free trade.” They seek to create new rights for investors, global rights which

will override local democracy, community economics, and human rights. Republicans and Democrats compete over which can best advance “globalization” of corporate power; Greens wish to reverse it. We are against corporate control of government and subordination of constitutional self-government to international trade bodies, and for limitations on corporate power.

In Michigan, it is especially apparent that unions have been weakened and that real wages have declined for ordinary workers. Many of Michigan’s manufacturing jobs have been moved to low-wage regions where workers’ rights and environmental protections are invisible. In addition, the Great Lakes are threatened with water withdrawals which, under a regime of “free trade,” the citizens of those states would be unable to prevent.

3. Decentralized/Community Economics

It is quite possible to have a company that is owned by its employees. The cooperative form of business is quite resilient and helps to spread the risks of enterprise among the worker / owners. Something closer to a true democracy emerges. The Greens support the development of alternative business models that look beyond the traditional, patriarchal, “command-and-control” model.

a. Small Business and Job Creation

We can perceive the business world as an ecology with cash-flow similar to food-flow in a nature-based ecology. Like living beings, enterprises can grow, but they can also shrink as they attempt to dynamically adjust to economic conditions. Every small business owner intuitively understands sustainability: the enterprise cannot outgrow its food source – cash flow.

Small business is the engine of job creation in America, therefore we encourage the growth and preservation of small, locally owned businesses in a diverse, vibrant “ecology”.

Greens propose:

- * Worker ownership of companies, and workplace democracy in non-worker owned companies. The more the ownership of a company is spread out, the more responsive that enterprise will be both to its own workers and the community.
- * Community oversight of businesses with an eye to keeping them responsible members of the community.
- * The hiring of “non-traditional” workers such as differently-abled citizens and elder citizens. A diverse workplace is a resilient workplace, where people can learn and grow together in an atmosphere of shared work and knowledge.

b. Banking for People/Microcredit

One critical instrument of the plutocracy in America is the banking industry. By withholding loans on the basis of

being “not economically viable” (i.e. powerspeak for African American, Latino, single mothers, gay couples, those living in a redlined district, immigrants, etc.) banks have effectively shut out the majority of our population at one time or another. The time has come to find ways to invest in those people whom the system has never invested in.

Effective ways of doing this include microcredit and community banks. Community banking is mandated through the Community Reinvestment Act. Microcredit would do away with the conventional banking system for most people, by setting up community-based (and in some cases community-owned) small lending institutions. Small banks or credit unions, or some other organized group with capital, can make loans to very needy people who have determined goals for earning and repaying loans. The program has worked around the world, and in some places in this country. Michigan has particularly underserved areas in terms of capital, including many parts of the Upper Peninsula and all urban centers.

It is time for community-based economics, one of our 10 Key Values, to be put into practice.

c. Alternative Currencies

Many alternatives to cash exist, including scrips drawn on local communities and bartering. Under the barter system, one gets goods in exchange for goods, or services in exchange for services, or some combination of these. Scrips are local alternative currencies, often denominated in terms of hours of work, rather than dollars.

The Internal Revenue Service finds it tremendously difficult to assess the value of alternative currencies, and that is why they have failed to become open and widespread. However, the IRS *has* found alternative currencies to be legal. Our government takes a cut of every transaction in the cash economy in the form of a sales tax, so that it may redistribute that money in the form of subsidies, many of which are unjust.

By not participating in the cash economy, one has the opportunity to protest the ways in which our government, regardless of efforts to replace bad politicians, wastes money.

Greens propose:

- * We support the implementation of alternative currencies within local communities, including but not limited to systems of barter and exchange.

d. Community Involvement

A community simply does not work without the active involvement of its citizens. Education in a new community-centered way of life needs to be undertaken; people must be shown that small-scale community economics *can* work; that the idea of workers owning (cooperatives) or holding a large share in (economic democracy) of locally owned businesses is workable; that citizens can peacefully apply the principles of democracy by both voting and participating

in their own political space; that people of all ages can participate in and grow and build this world. The future – both long and short-term – should always be taken into account when developing community.

e. Livable Income (5/20/01)

A living wage can be calculated on the premise that a person working 40 hours a week ought to be able to pay for basic housing without spending more than 30 percent of gross income. Most living wage laws have been passed by municipalities and apply to the employees of businesses having contracts with the municipalities.

Greens support these laws on the basis of social justice, grassroots democracy, decentralization and community-based economics. The Greens oppose all moves to prohibit and overturn local living wage laws at the state level.

4. Land Use

Build communities, not sprawl. Build small, locally based businesses, not big remote corporations. Decentralize and downsize. Reduce space devoted to cars. Encourage community gardens and urban farming. Use unused space on top of buildings for locally produced wind and solar.

a. Urban Renewal/New Urbanism

Use the good ideas of New Urbanism. We can organize the spaces we live in to approximate a more natural way of life with no loss (and indeed in many cases a gain) in the quality of life we enjoy. Instead of asphalt-paved grids catering to high-speed lifestyles, our homes could return to a traditional village style of clusters of homes beside forest preserves. The calming and energizing power of nature is a necessity in our ultra-tech world.

Even in cities, room can and should be made for more green spaces and less traffic. Trash and waste reclamation needs to be integrated into city life; on-site solar, wind and water power generation can also be integrated into a New Urbanism.

b. Transportation Issues

America's love affair with the automobile must end. Southeast Michigan drivers drive the most miles per driver of anywhere in the world. Too much of our valuable land has been taken up with transportation routes for cars. Too much pollution has resulted from cars. Although in recent years this has begun to reverse, there is still far too much ecological damage from the manufacture and use of cars. Perhaps the most damaging aspect of land use in Michigan is sprawl, which is unfortunately facilitated by easy access to automobiles.

Greens propose:

- * More and cleaner public transportation (especially in outlying regions to connect with existing public transportation systems).

- * De-emphasizing motorized traffic in favor of other modes of travel (foot, bicycle).
- * Free or reduced-cost public transportation for urban workers, removal of oil subsidies, production of alternative and cleaner fuels.
- * Emphasis on urban boundaries to prevent sprawl and thereby reduce the demand for vehicular traffic, re-emphasis on city and town centers drawing people centrally.
- * Creating thoroughfares for necessary traffic, such as trucking and emergency vehicles, while closing many thoroughfares and letting them revert back to small roads or open farmland.
- * The development and increased availability of alternative long-distance transportation systems, as well as the elimination of the need to travel for business through the use of the Internet.

c. Open/Public Space

Psychological studies in geography and urban planning have shown that open spaces are essential to any urban space for health of the community. Pressures from the private sector of our society (read: the economic elites) have dwindled the number of commonly held properties alarmingly, to the extent that many communities have hardly any parks or public property other than that needed to conduct the business of government. Land held in the common good, whether it be a town park, river corridor, state forest or park, or wildlife area, is essential to the overall well-being of our ecosystem on which we depend. We encourage instruments such as community land trust, to keep land from private hands in perpetuity, and purchase of development rights, to keep land from being developed wholesale.

Greens propose:

- * Preserve open, undeveloped space even in cities.
- * Encourage land conservatories.
- * Ban on commercial use of public lands (logging, oil drilling, etc.)
- * Use public lands responsibly (restrictions on off-road vehicles).
- * River preservation and restoration.

5. Agriculture

Agriculture is, in a certain sense, the foundation of human life. But now, with the coming of the genetic revolution and the rise of giant "factory farms", this ancient art has taken a bizarre twist. We must tread cautiously in this brave new area. However, we are seeing the rise of market forces demanding certified organic foods as a reaction to artificially modified food products. People are using their free choice to select the food that they know is healthy for them – let's hope that there are still enough farmers to satisfy their need for authenticity. We support the farmers who carry on this ancient but literally vital craft.

a. Farmland Preservation

It is in the public's best interest to preserve farmland near cities. We encourage the retention of farmlands within families or as donations to local land trusts and conservancies. We need to limit rural development by use of Master Zoning Plans. We encourage both topsoil preservation and topsoil regeneration programs.

b. Agricultural Industrialization

The coming of industrialization to agriculture has both good and bad aspects. On the positive side, the so-called Green Revolution has increased grain production world-wide, thus staving off starvation for millions. On the negative side, the "full-speed-ahead" movement into transgenic manipulation of agricultural crops by profit-driven organizations without adequate testing or oversight alarms us. With little public debate, corporations have drastically altered the genetic components of the world's food supply; now it appears that a Pandora's box of super-resistant pathogens may have been opened. The widespread use of antibiotics in factory-farmed animals – as well as factory farming itself – should also be rethought and discouraged.

c. Rural Development

It is not only the right, it is the duty of each township to carefully manage their finite resource of land. Because of the inequitable land tax structure, the exact same land is valued more highly when zoned "business" or "residential" than "agricultural" or "unzoned", so there is an inherent and built-in tendency toward development for the purpose of expanding the tax base. But it must be recognized that the larger community – both now and in the future – has an interest in staying the scythe of unrestricted development. Undeveloped lands are crucial habitats for the ever-shrinking patches of nature in our midst. Too much of our rural land has been taken up into urban space, or treated in the same way as urban space is, and much food producing area has been lost in this way. If we are to feed our people in the future, prime farmland must be preserved from sprawl, both urban and rural.

d. Hemp

Low-THC hemp has many sustainable possibilities. The very qualities which make it an excellent plant-fiber crop limit its use as a smokable leaf plant. Hemp use will spare trees, as it produces four times as much usable plant material per acre, and on a yearly basis at that. Its processing does not require toxic chlorine compounds. Hemp used in place of cotton will also be beneficial to the environment as well. Hemp may be utilized for fuel, oil, food, fabric, paper, building boards, soaps, shampoos, and glue.

6. Arts and Culture

The shape of our culture influences and reflects the values of our society. Present trends are towards creating a culture that is synonymous with consumer society. We reject this model. We

suggest instead a society that is built on a culture of creativity. Everyone has the potential to be creative; we need a culture that cultivates that potential. A culture of creativity would nurture community, and could challenge the value of wasteful consumption.

Essential for a Green future is the development of a green aesthetic.

Greens support:

- * The independent artist. Increased funding unencumbered by political agenda is needed for the arts.
- * Decentralized culture. Micro-radio and web music offer examples of how artists can gain control of the promotion of their art.
- * The importance of arts education. A recent study showed that music training promotes math skills. More importantly arts education prepares us for understanding our culture and our world.
- * Popular control of the mass media. Society has rightful ownership of the airwaves, Broadcasters should pay rent proportional to the value of the resource they use.

Part IV: Peace and Non-violence (8/02)

Peace is the ambience of safety. People who feel safe have no need to get defensive or to overreact to a perceived threat. People need to feel safe in order to be the best that they can be; this is something that, in the long run, benefits all of us.

The Bush regime is leading our nation on a path to permanent war. The suicide hijackings of September 11 were certainly crimes against humanity. The World Court – rejected by Bush and company – could have been used to punish the conspirators and to win the support of the world. Those crimes are no reason to support Israel's crimes against Palestinian humanity; no reason to fight a war for oil in the name of a war on terror; no reason to abandon our own civil rights and the protections of due process in the name of national security.

The Greens are principled advocates of nonviolence. This goes beyond simply not supporting violent solutions such as war or even protesting acts of war, and police brutality. It involves working to learn, use, and advocate proactive nonviolent solutions to situations that typically motivate emotions of anger, revenge, or fear.

1. Gun Control & Gun Freedom

As Greens, we are Americans; we still believe in the Constitution. That includes the Second Amendment. But considering guns' unique potential for sudden deadly consequences, we call for care and responsibility to be exercised in every dealing with guns.

Greens propose:

- * We should be promoting the teaching of non-violence through the peaceful resolution of conflict.
- * There is absolutely no need for weapons in an educational setting. Disarming police D.A.R.E. officers would be a symbolic beginning. D.A.R.E. officers are community outreach officers who educate children about the dangers of drugs, alcohol and delinquent behavior. Gun-carrying D.A.R.E. officers only encourage children's fascination with guns. Children do not need images of the gun.
- * Gun show sales need stricter regulation. Buyers should only be allowed to buy at shows if they already have established themselves as buyers with the Secretary of State. There should be no sales to first time buyers at gun shows.
- * Trigger locks need to be purchased with every gun sale. There should be a trigger lock for every gun.
- * Every user of guns should be licensed by the state, certified in the knowledge of, use of, and care of a gun.
- * The issuance of concealed weapons permits should be on a need-to-carry basis. The rules for the issuance of such permits should be uniform state-wide.

2. Domestic Violence

It should be made clear by the community as well that domestic violence will not be tolerated. A side-effect of any arrest for domestic violence would be anger-management and conflict resolution for all parties; while parents are responsible for the social and moral upbringing of their children, society has a stake in their future as well. The right of a child to a safe and caring upbringing should not be abridged.

Greens propose:

- * We call for the establishment of shelters for victims of domestic violence – regardless of sex or gender orientation – in every community, and adequate funding for those shelters.

3. Rape and Sexual Violence (8/12/01)

Sexual aggression is a crime that affects all individuals in our society either directly by victimization or indirectly through the climate of fear and dehumanization that are its legacy. The causes of sexual aggression may be many, but they all distill into this basic element: that humans are treated as commodities and objects, not people.

Greens propose:

- * Development and expansion of community mental health programs for the support and healing of all victims of sexual assault, sexual abuse, and rape, regardless of gender, age, or sexual orientation.
- * The development of counseling programs to help heal and reform convicted sex offenders.
- * A serious effort to address the problem of rape in prisons, nursing homes, juvenile detention facilities, and other institutions, whether committed by residents or staff.
- * Investigation of the accuracy and effectiveness of the criminal sex offender registry in preventing recidivism, and the other consequences of the registry.

4. Death Penalty

Greens strive for a society free from violence, and refuse to accept state-sanctioned executions. By executing those who have committed the most heinous crimes, we come to see violence – killing – as an acceptable solution to the problem of violence in our society, and our society loses its sense of the dignity and value of human life and becomes even more desensitized to violence as a result.

5. Police Brutality/Power, Citizen Oversight

Every police officer swears to “protect and serve” the community in which he works; unfortunately, this is an ideal that human officers sometimes fall short of. One problem that is found in every police department when things go wrong is the so-called Code of Silence: officers cover up for other officers, even in Internal Affairs investigations. This illustrates the need for an independent, elected board composed of civilians to oversee the

police department (such as the one established recently in Royal Oak); after all, the citizens *are* the ultimate employer of the officers.

Greens propose:

- * The establishment of Citizen Oversight panels in each municipality for the purposes of evaluating police service in that community.
- * Vice and drug “teams” should be disbanded; not only do they contribute to an “enemy” mentality among officers, they spread fear in communities where hope should be being built.

6. Peace and Non-violence Training

The Greens are principled advocates of nonviolence. This goes beyond simply not supporting violent solutions such as war or even protesting acts of war, and police brutality. It involves working to learn, use, and advocate proactive nonviolent solutions to situations that typically motivate emotions of anger, revenge, or fear. Thus we support active training in nonviolence, such as that provided by the Michigan Faith & Resistance Peace Team.

At the core of active nonviolence is learning to deal with the anger and emotional/verbal violence that underlies physical violence. Training in nonviolent communication should be part of a typical school curriculum, or at least encouraged for parents.

7. Nuclear Weapons/Great Lakes Basin

The Great Lakes bioregion is a unique entity that is at particular risk for contamination by pollutants. Most perfidious of these contaminants are fissionable materials and their products. While virtually all other materials that cause soiling of the Great Lakes are byproducts of humankind’s occupation of the land and are therefore more or less unavoidable, radioactivity is almost nonexistent naturally in this bioregion. Humankind’s intervention has caused massive pollution by radioactivity in this bioregion and threatens considerably more pollution.

The Green Party of Michigan supports the creation of a Nuclear Free Great Lakes Basin, which calls for a ban on all activities involving nuclear fissionable material and cleanup of areas already contaminated. We can no longer tolerate nor contribute to the poisoning of our region caused by nuclear weapons, nuclear power, or nuclear waste.

8. Military Spending in Michigan

While Michigan does not have one of the huge military-industrial powerhouse companies like Lockheed or Grumman, and while Michigan, unlike many other states, does not have many military bases left, we still receive too much in the way of military spending in the form of contract and subcontract Pentagon work. Michigan houses several manufacturers of chemical and biological warfare agents, including the only business which deals with anthrax vaccine. There are also high tech firms involved in the military intelligence industry. We demand that all of these companies be identified and strongly encouraged to disinvest in the making of weapons materials or materials whose end product is a weapon.

Another area which concerns Greens is the use of institutions of higher education in the testing and developing of military devices and components. This is a perversion of the mission of these institutions, which were never meant to be part of the military-industrial complex. Greens demand that all institutions of higher learning in the state immediately divest themselves of their military contracts and return to their original calling to teach the liberal arts, not the arts of war.