

January 27, 2003

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

A nation's spending priorities reflect its collective values. Among the highest priorities must be protecting all of God's creation for this and future generations. For too long, our spending patterns as a nation have reflected a short-term vision of perceived prosperity rather than a long-term vision of our responsibilities as caretakers of this Earth.

As people of faith we remember that God's covenant with Noah was not only with humanity but also with the earth (Genesis 9:8-11) With this covenant come bountiful blessings and profound responsibilities. As you prepare to release the Fiscal Year 2004 Federal Budget, we ask that you seize this opportunity to reprioritize our federal spending and guide this nation towards fulfillment of these responsibilities.

Specifically, we believe a balanced approach to federal spending would include the following key elements:

Sustainable Energy Policy: Currently, the budget fosters a reliance on fossil fuels through oil and gas subsidies, expands nuclear programs with little concern for the toxic burden placed on future generations, and threatens further exploration of sensitive lands and off-shore waters. Instead, we believe spending should focus on developing renewable energy sources and increasing energy efficiency.

Protection of Natural Treasures: We request full funding of programs that safeguard our nation's natural treasures. We believe clean air and water are fundamental rights for all of God's children and should be protected. Furthermore, we urge full funding for programs that protect forests, estuaries, and beaches as well as those safeguarding endangered species and their critical habitat.

Enforcement and Clean-Up: Laws and regulations are only as valuable as the agencies' ability to enforce them. We urge full funding for enforcement of all environmental laws and those agencies, such as the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Justice, that are responsible for monitoring the equitable enforcement of these laws. In addition, we ask for a renewed commitment to programs, such as Superfund, that clean up our nation's polluted areas – including government facilities both military and civilian.

International Commitments: We also request that the FY04 budget reflect a renewed emphasis on the participation and cooperation of the United States in international commitments to the global environment. From climate change to the

health of our oceans to the transboundary shipments of toxic wastes, our global community is facing unprecedented ecological degradation. Having contributed disproportionately to the world's environmental problems, the United States remains in the unique position to be a leader in developing and implementing solutions. We ask that you reclaim that mantle of leadership and renew our nation's international commitment to a truly sustainable future.

We understand the challenges of fiscal deficits and the competing pressures for federal resources. We believe, however, that our nation cannot ignore the growing ecological debt it is placing on our global neighbors and on future generations. Redirecting resources away from ecologically destructive subsidies and programs and towards sustainable practices both nationally and globally will bring us closer to a right and just relationship with our neighbors and creation. Our covenant with God requires nothing less.

Respectfully,

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cc: Mitchell E. Daniels Jr.
Director - Office of Management and Budget

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