

DRAFT

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

IV. ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

A. ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS [*NOTE: Title changed from ECO-NOMICS*]

[*New introduction*] No economic system is sustainable unless it accommodates the ecosystems on which it depends. Our current system, based on the notion of perpetual economic expansion on a finite planet, is colossally flawed. We urgently need to apply human ingenuity to the problem of using far less from nature to meet our needs – which is a different goal from exploiting nature and “Third World” people so that we can meet the invented and implanted false “needs” that advertisers continually push at us in a “grow or die” type of economy. We need to acquire the ability to distinguish between need and greed, in spite of what the media assure us we “need.” We also need to restore a seriously progressive tax structure, rather than continuing to move money toward the top echelons of our society, while squeezing everyone else. Such a restoration, plus the end to bankrupting military adventurism and imperial designs, would contribute significantly to the reduction of the huge federal deficit that has been imposed on the American people since 2000.

Foremost, the Green Party stands for community-based economics and regional trade. We believe that the only model of true economic security is for a community and area to be largely (not entirely) self-sufficient in the production of its necessities. Through foreign trade, they can then export that which is extra, that which they could afford to lose should environmental disasters, social unrest in their trading partners’ countries, or other disruptions disturb the flow of their trade. We support not the corporate dominance of “free trade” – which, through the machinations of the World Trade Organization, places the desires of transnational corporations above the level of national laws – but true “fair trade,” which protects communities, labor, and the environment. Community-based economics and regional trade keep money circulating largely in the community and the region, rather than going to distant corporate headquarters as soon as a purchase is made. This is the most rational model for economic security. It includes family farms and community-supported agriculture, farmers’ markets, credit unions, nonprofit community-development corporations, incubator programs to aid start-up small businesses, apprenticeship programs in local businesses, local currency, community-focused banks, and trade with adjacent regions. Consumers in this type of market economy prefer to patronize locally owned businesses because each purchase has a positive rippling effect in the community. Unlike other political parties in the modern era, the Green Party views (even community-based) economics not as an end in itself but in service to community development, through the building and strengthening of community bonds that constitute the social fabric.

We can learn from indigenous people who believe that the earth and its natural systems are to be respected and cared for in accordance with ecological principles. Concepts of ownership should be employed in the context of stewardship, and social and

ecological responsibility. We support environmental and social responsibility in all businesses, whether privately or publicly owned.

To create an enduring society, we must devise a system of production and commerce where every act is sustainable and restorative. We believe that all business has a social contract with society and the environment (in effect a “fiduciary responsibility”), and that “socially responsible business” and “shareholder democracy” can be models of prospering, successful business.

1. We call for an economic system that is based on a combination of private businesses, decentralized democratic cooperatives, publicly owned enterprises, and alternative economic structures, all of which put human and ecological needs alongside profits to measure success, and which are accountable to their communities.

2. Community-based economics constitutes an alternative to both corporate capitalism and state socialism. It values diversity and decentralization.

Recognition of limits is central. The drive to accumulate power and wealth is a pernicious characteristic of a civilization headed in a pathological direction. Greens advocate that economic relations become more direct, more cooperative, and more egalitarian.

Humanizing economic relations is just one aspect of our broader objective: to shift toward a different way of life characterized by sustainability, regionalization, a more harmonious balance between the natural ecosphere and the human-made technosphere, and a revival of community life. Our perspective is antithetical to both Big Business and Big Government.

3. Greens support a major redesign of commerce. We endorse “true-cost pricing.” (See below.) We support production that eliminates waste. In natural systems, everything is a meal for something else. Everything recycles, there is no “waste.” We need to mimic natural systems in the way we manufacture and produce things. “Consumables” need to be designed to be thrown into a compost heap and/or eaten. “Durable goods” would be designed in closed-loop systems, ultimately to be disassembled and reassembled. “Toxics” would be safeguarded, minimally produced, secure, and would ideally have “markers” identifying them in perpetuity with their makers.

4. Sustaining our quality of life, economic prosperity, environmental health, and long-term survival demands that we adopt new ways of doing business. We need to remake commerce to encourage diversity and variety, responding to the enormous complexity of global and local conditions. Big business is not about appropriateness and adaptability, but about power and market control. Greens support small business, responsible “stakeholder capitalism,” and broad and diverse forms of economic cooperation. We argue that economic diversity is more responsive than big business to the needs of diverse human populations.

5. Greens view the economy as a part of the ecosystem, not as an isolated subset in which nothing but resources come in and products and waste go out. There is a fundamental conflict between economic growth and environmental protection. There is an absolute

limit to economic growth based on laws of thermodynamics and principles of ecology. Far before that limit is reached, an optimum size of the economy is reached which maximizes human welfare in an holistic sense.

6. We support a "Superfund for Workers" program as envisioned by the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union in 1991. Such a program would guarantee full income and benefits for all workers displaced by ecological conversion until they find new jobs with comparable income and benefits.

7. The Green Party supports methods, such as the Index of Social Health Indicators, the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare and the Genuine Progress Indicator, which take into account statistics on housing, income, and nutrition.

B. [NEW PLANK]

MEASURING ECONOMIC PROGRESS - Economic Growth and the Steady-State Economy

1. Economic growth has been a primary goal of American policy. Corporations, politicians beholden to corporations, and economists funded by corporations advocate a theory of unlimited economic growth stemming from technological progress. Based upon established principles of the physical and biological sciences, however, there is a limit to economic growth.

2. American economic growth is having negative effects on the long-term ecological and economic welfare of the United States and the world. There is a fundamental conflict between economic growth and ecological health (for example, biodiversity conservation, clean air and water, atmospheric stability).

3. We cannot rely on technological progress to solve ecological and long-term economic problems. Rather, we should endeavor to make lifestyle choices that reinforce a general equilibrium of humans with nature. This requires consciously choosing to foster environmentally sound technologies, whether they are newer or older technologies, rather than technologies conducive to conspicuous consumption and waste.

4. Economic growth, as gauged by increasing Gross Domestic Product (GDP), is a dangerous and anachronistic American goal. The most viable and sustainable alternative is a steady state economy. A steady -state economy has a stable or mildly fluctuating product of population and per capita consumption and is generally indicated by stable or mildly fluctuating GDP. The steady-state economy has become a more appropriate goal than economic growth in the United States and other large, wealthy economies. A steady state economy precludes ever-expanding production and consumption of goods and services. However, a steady-state economy does not preclude economic development, a qualitative process not gauged by GDP growth and other measures that overlook ecological effects.

5. One way to measure the economy is to assess the value of non-monetary goods and services and measure the rate of infant mortality, life expectancy of people, educational opportunities offered by the state, family stability, environmental data and health care for all people. Another is to quantify what human benefit (in terms of education, health care, elder care, etc.) is being provided for each unit of output. Measuring the gap between the most fortunate and the least fortunate in our society, for example, tells us how well or poorly we are doing in creating an economy that does not benefit some at the expense of others.

6. For many nations with widespread poverty, increasing per capita consumption (in some cases via economic growth and in other cases via more equitable distributions of wealth) remains an appropriate goal. Ultimately, however, the global ecosystem will not be able to support further economic growth. Therefore, an equitable distribution of wealth among nations will be required to maintain a global steady-state economy. A global economy with inequitable wealth distribution will be subject to continual international strife and conflict. Such strife and conflict, in turn, ensures the economic unsustainability of some nations and threatens the economic sustainability of all.

C. CITIZEN CONTROL OVER CORPORATIONS

End Corporate Welfare: Currently, corporations possess more rights and freedoms than natural human persons. Through a series of judicial rulings, and by virtue of their ability to control governments and economies through concentration of wealth, corporations have judicially rewritten our Constitution and have emerged as unaccountable, unelected governments. The Green Party supports all reforms that seek governmental regulation of corporations. In the interim, we support measures that hold executives and officers of corporations directly liable for harm that results from their decisions.

The US intentionally defined corporations through charters or certificates of incorporation. In exchange for the charter, a corporation was obligated to obey all laws, to serve the common good, and to cause no harm. Early state legislators wrote charter laws to limit corporate authority, and to ensure that when a corporation caused harm, they could revoke its charter.

In the late 19th century, however, corporations claimed special protections under the Constitution. They insisted that once formed, corporations might operate forever, with the privilege of limited liability and freedom from community or worker interference in business judgments.

The federal government doles out billions in subsidies and tax breaks to corporate special interests. The current level of influence now being exerted by corporate interests over the public interest is unacceptable. We challenge the propriety and equity of “corporate welfare” in the form of tax breaks, subsidies, payments, grants, bailouts, giveaways, unenforced laws and regulations; and historic, continuing access to our vast public resources, including the airwaves, millions of acres of land, forests, mineral resources, intellectual property rights, and government-created research.

We support strong national standards for labor rights and the environment so that corporations can no longer force states and cities into a brutal competition for jobs at any cost. Legal doctrines must be continually revised in recognition of the changing needs of an active, democratic citizenry. Huge multinational corporations are artificial creations, not natural persons uniquely sheltered under constitutional protections. We support local and state government attempts to define corporations and to prevent them from exercising democratic rights which are uniquely possessed by the citizens of the United States.

One point remains unequivocal: Because corporations have become the dominant economic institution of the planet, they must address and squarely face the social and environmental problems that afflict humankind.

D. LIVABLE INCOME

1. We affirm the importance of access to a livable income.

[NEW PLANK - some questions raised as to whether this is feasible at this time]

2. We call for a universal basic income (sometimes called a guaranteed income, negative income tax, citizen's income, or Citizen Dividend). This would go to every adult regardless of health, employment, or marital status, in order to minimize government bureaucracy and intrusiveness into people's lives. The amount should be sufficient so that anyone who is unemployed can afford basic food and shelter. State or local governments should supplement that amount from local revenues where the cost of living is high.

3. Job banks and other innovative training and employment programs which bring together the private and public sectors must become federal, state and local priorities. People who are unable to find decent work in the private sector should have options through publicly funded opportunities. Workforce development programs must aim at moving people out of poverty.

4. The growing inequities in income and wealth between rich and poor; unprecedented discrepancies in salary and benefits between corporate top executives and line workers; loss of the "American dream" by the young and middle-class – each is a symptom of decisions made by policy-makers far removed from the concerns of ordinary workers trying to keep up.

5. A clear living wage standard should serve as a foundation for trade between nations, and a "floor" of wage protections and worker's rights should be negotiated and set in place in future trade agreements. The United States should take the lead on this front – and not allow destructive, corporate predatory practices under the guise of "free" international trade.

[NOTE: Updated, New language and combination of material in Tax justice]

E. TRUE COST PRICING & TAX FAIRNESS

Middle-class and poor people are paying an ever greater proportion of federal taxes, and too often local and state taxes are unfair and regressive. 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 big business and financial institutions and the rich.

The high price of corporate welfare corrupts the political process by encouraging the exchange of political favors for campaign donations. Corporate tax breaks are ultimately paid for by higher taxes on the middle class; they distort the rules of the marketplace and seldom serve a larger public purpose.

We call for a tax policy that moves to eliminate loopholes and other exemptions that favor powerful interests. Small business and the self-employed, in particular, should not be penalized by a tax system which benefits those who can “work” the legislative tax committees for breaks and subsidies.

A central goal of tax policy should be “transparency” – that is, a system that is simple, understandable, and resistant to the machinations of special interests.

When taxes are levied against labor, using labor in production is more expensive and is therefore a disincentive for employment. This also diminishes the economic value of labor by decreasing the worker's purchasing power, thus discouraging work.

Corporations focus on revenue growth at the expense of nearly everything else. Even breaking the law can be justified when the fine for being caught is less than the profit to be made. We must motivate the business community to act responsibly towards the people and the Earth. One way is true cost pricing and the other way is fair taxation.

True Cost Pricing

True Cost Pricing (TCP) is an accounting and pricing system that includes all costs into the price of a product. This would make more-ecologically-sound products cheaper to the consumer in terms of market price and the demand for these products would increase. Also, various cultural/traditional industries that have been marginalized by unrestrained technology could flourish.

Under our current system, many products carry hidden environmental and social costs such as air and water pollution, deforestation, and toxic waste. These costs are created during the production, use, or disposal of the products. While the producer internalizes revenue and profits from these products, the costs are externalized to society and the natural environment. In addition, many of the laws that exist to prevent environmental and social damage are not adequately enforced. Examples include (1) smog checking of vehicles and (2) tobacco taxes and court settlements, which are not being used as intended. In this way, externalized costs equate to a subsidy.

TCP would account for this.

To implement TCP, we call for:

1. Environmental taxes such as the Carbon Tax (See Carbon Tax below).

2. TCP to be a basis for decisions on government projects and in Environmental Impact Statements.
3. Integrate TCP into domestic industrial policies and regulations, and likewise, promote it in international trade agreements.
4. Implement product labeling to inform consumers of the total cost of the product's ingredients and manufacturing process.
5. Enforce laws that exist to prevent environmental and social damage.
6. Establish an information clearinghouse, consultant's network, and other communication channels for the exchange of information about ecologically benign techniques.
7. Recognize that TCP may have short term impact on people of lesser financial means and implement measures to mitigate these effects.

Fair Taxation

Taxes pay for important public services. Tax policies should foster a more equitable progressive tax structure, as opposed to the present regressive nature of taxation which levies the heaviest burdens on those least able to pay.

Corporations currently receive tax breaks that promote growth and the consumption of resources. Tax breaks should promote sustainability and social responsibility.

Any shift in tax policy must be done gradually, so that people and government can adjust to the changes. Also, changes should move toward appropriate scale of collection and use of taxes

We propose:

1. More progressive taxation. Sales, corporate and income taxes should be adjusted to relieve the burden on those less able to pay and increase the burden on large and multinational corporations and the super wealthy, who do not pay their fair share. Raise the state income tax for higher income people. Also, reduce income taxes for low-wage workers to encourage people to seek employment rather than relying on public assistance.
2. Raising corporate taxes. The corporate share of taxes has fallen from 33% in the 1940s to 7% today, while the individual share has risen from 44% to 85%.
3. Tax policies that promote sustainability and social responsibility. Subsidies, export incentives, tax loopholes and tax shelters that benefit large corporations now amount to hundreds of billions of dollars each year. These promote growth and the consumption of resources.
4. Shifting investments away from such things as automating the production of disposable products, which reduces the number of jobs. Also, discourage leveraged buyouts and mergers which extract working capital. Instead, we must promote

community development and job creation.

5. Carbon taxes should be imposed on all fossil fuels, because of detrimental effects of carbon emissions on the environment. (See plank III. E. Clean Air/Greenhouse Effect). Those with the highest carbon content would be taxed the most, ranging from coal (highest) to oil to natural gas. Revenues would go into a fund initially earmarked for carbon-reducing activities.

6. Offsetting Regressive Taxes. The carbon tax would favor those of lower income, by being directed to fund public transportation improvement and subsidies, weatherization and other efficiency measures, and passive solar installations. As revenues increase, the funds would be used to provide relief to low income people in such programs as housing and education and could eventually replace regressive taxes such as sales taxes.

7. Encourage the enactment of the Tobin tax on financial transactions across borders.
[*Explanation?*]

8. Decrease taxes on labor.

9. Decrease the cap on the mortgage tax deduction in both federal and state income taxes.

10. Comparison of the current property tax system versus a tax system based on the value of the underlying land. We would also increase the total property tax contribution to government financing relative to sales and income taxes.

11. Re-establishment of the inheritance tax. Inheritance tax revenues should be dedicated to health and welfare benefits for the poor and to enlisted soldiers salaries.

12. Aim for revenue neutrality in the tax changes. We are not proposing a bigger overall role for government. However, there are some situations where certain priority activities are under-funded.

13. Any shift in tax policy be done gradually, so that people and government can adjust to the changes. Also, changes should move toward appropriate scale of collection and use of taxes.

F. COMMUNITY ECONOMIC INVOLVEMENT

Reforms that allow communities influence in their economic future should be implemented, including:

1. Locally owned small businesses, which are more accessible to community concerns.
2. Local production and consumption where possible.

3. Incentives for cooperative enterprises, such as consumer co-ops, credit unions, incubators, micro-loan funds, local “currencies,” and other institutions that help communities develop economic projects.
4. Allowing municipalities to approve or disapprove large economic projects case-by-case based on environmental impacts, local ownership, community reinvestment, wage levels, and working conditions.
5. Allowing communities to set environmental, human rights, health and safety standards higher than federal or state minimums.
6. A national program to invest in the commons; to rebuild the infrastructure of communities; repair and improve transportation lines between cities; and protect and restore the environment. A federal capital budget should be put in place and applied in a process that assesses federal spending as capital investment.
7. Direct democracy through town meetings, which express a community’s economic wishes directly to local institutions and organizations.

G. SMALL BUSINESS

1. Greens support a program that counteracts concentration and abuse of economic power. We support many different initiatives for forming successful, small enterprises that together can become an engine (and sustainable model) of job creation, prosperity and progress. Small business is where the jobs are. Over the past decade and a half, all new net job growth has come from the small business sector.
2. The Green economic model is about true prosperity – “Green means prosperity.” Our goal is to go beyond the dedicated good work being done by many companies (which is often referred to as “socially responsible business”) and to present new ways of seeing how business can help create a sustainable world, while surviving in a competitive business climate.
3. We believe that conservation should be “profitable” and employment should be creative, meaningful and fairly compensated.
4. Access to capital is often an essential need in “growing” a business. (See IV. Economic Sustainability, x. Banking Reform below.)
5. The present tax system acts to discourage small business, as it encourages waste, discourages conservation, and rewards consumption. Big business has used insider access to dominate the federal tax code. The tax system needs a major overhaul to favor the legitimate and critical needs of the small business community. Retention of capital, through retained earnings, efficiencies, and savings, is central to small business

competitiveness. Current tax policies often act to unfairly penalize small business.

6. Government should reduce unnecessary restrictions, fees, and “red tape.” In particular, the “Paper Simplification Act” should be seen as a way to benefit small business and it should be improved in response to the needs of small businesses and the self-employed.

8. We support the full deductibility of health insurance premiums paid by the self-employed.

9. State and local government should encourage businesses that especially benefit the community. Economic development initiatives should include citizen and community input. The type and size of businesses given incentives (tax, loans, bonds, etc.) should be the result of local community participation.

10. Pension funds, the result of workers’ investments, should be examined as additional sources of capital for small business. (See IV. Economic Sustainability, x. Pension Reform below.)

11. Insurance costs should be brought down by means of active engagement with the insurance industry. Insurance pools need to be expanded.

[NOTE: Moved language on privatization of Social Security to II. Social Justice. Tax Justice]

12. One-stop offices should be set up by government to assist individuals who want to change careers or go into business for the first time.

13. Home-based businesses and neighborhood-based businesses should be assisted by forward-looking planning, not hurt by out-of-date zoning ordinances. Telecommuting and home offices should be aided, not hindered, by government.

[NOTE: New Plank]

H. WORK AND JOB CREATION

There is plenty of work to do that does not jeopardize our future, does not widen the gap between the richest and the poorest in our society and that can enrich our communities. We must encourage the creation of these opportunities. People whose livelihoods depend on supporting remote, multi-national corporations cannot be expected to support changing the system.

We propose a third alternative to a job or no job: that is to provide everyone a sustainable livelihood. The need of our times is for security, not necessarily jobs. We need security in the knowledge that while markets may fluctuate and jobs may come and go, we are still able to lead a life rooted in dignity and well-being.

The concept of a "job" is only a few hundred years old; and the artificial dichotomy between "employment" and "unemployment" has become a tool of social leverage for corporate exploiters. This produces a dysfunctional society in various ways: (1) It is used to justify bringing harmful industries to rural communities, e.g. extensive prison construction and clear cutting of pristine forests. (2) It has been used to pit workers (people needing jobs) against the interests of their own communities. (3) It has created a self-esteem crisis in a large segment of the adult population, who have been forced into doing work that is irrelevant, socially harmful, or environmentally unsound.

The Green Party will also promote policies that have job-increasing effects. Many people will still need jobs for their security. We need to counterbalance the decline in jobs caused either by new technology, corporate flight to cheaper labor markets outside our borders, or the disappearance of socially wasteful jobs that will inevitably occur as more and more people embrace a green culture.

To begin a transition to a system providing sustainable livelihood, we support:

1. The creation of alternative low consumption communities and living arrangements, including a reinvigorated sustainable homesteading movement in rural areas and voluntary shared housing in urban areas.
2. Universal health care requiring coverage for all. (See II.Social Justice, x. Health Care)
3. The creation and spread of local currencies and barter.
4. Subsidizing technological development of consumer items that would contribute toward economic autonomy for individuals, such as renewable energy devices.
5. Setting up local non-profit development corporations.
6. Providing people with information about alternatives to jobs.

For creating jobs, we propose:

1. Reducing taxes of labor. This will make labor more competitive with energy and capital investment. (See Taxation above.)
2. Solidarity with unions and workers fighting the contracting out of tasks to part-time workers in order to avoid paying benefits and to break up unions.
3. Adopting a reduced-hour (30-35 hours) work week as a standard. This could translate into as many as 26 million new jobs.
4. Subsidizing renewable energy sources which directly employ 2 to 5 times as many people for every unit of electricity generated as fossil or nuclear sources yet are cost competitive. Also, retrofit existing buildings for energy conservation and build non-polluting low impact transportation systems.

5. Supporting small business by reducing tax, fee and bureaucratic burdens on them. The majority of new jobs today are created by small businesses. This would cut their mortality rate and help them create more.
6. Since the Green Party supports locally-owned small business in contrast to mega-corporations, the trend toward "bundling" of contracts and minimizing opportunity for small--and minority- and women-owned businesses--is of great concern.
7. By reducing consumption, we minimize outsourcing -- the exportation of jobs to other countries -- wince the relative "price" of US workers would fall.

I. BANKING AND INSURANCE REFORM

1. We support a broad program of reform in the banking and savings and loan industry that acts to ensure their commonwealth obligations to all communities. Since lending institutions are chartered by the state to serve the best interests of communities, the privileges that come with power at the center of commerce carry special responsibilities.
2. The government should ensure that low- and moderate-income persons and communities, as well as small businesses, have access to banking services, affordable loans and small-business supporting capital. Loans should be made available to small business at rates competitive to those offered big business. We support "disclosure laws," "anti-redlining laws" and a general openness on the part of the private sector as to what criteria are used in making lending decisions. We oppose arbitrary or discriminatory practices which deny small business access to credit.
3. We oppose disinvestment practices, in which lending and financial institutions move money deposited in local communities out of those same communities, damaging the best interests of their customers and community. We support the extension of the Community Reinvestment Act and its key performance data provisions to provide public and timely information on the extent of housing loans, small business loans, loans to minority-owned enterprises, investments in community development projects and affordable housing.
4. We believe Congress should act to charter community development banks, which would be capitalized with public funds and work to meet the credit needs of local communities.
5. Insurance industry regulation is essential to reduce the cost of insurance by reducing its special-interest protections; collusion and over-pricing; and excessive industry-wide practices that too often injure the interests of the insured when they are most vulnerable. We must rein in bad-faith insurance practices, such as avoidance of obligations and price fixing.

6. We support federal laws that act to make policies transportable from job to job and seek to prevent insurance companies' rejection of applicants for "prior conditions." This is a move in the right direction but in no way addresses the scope of the problem, whether in health insurance, life insurance, business, liability, auto or crop insurance.

7. We support initiatives in secondary insurance markets that work to expand credit – for economic development in inner cities; affordable housing and home ownership among the poor; "transitional" farming to sustainable agriculture; and for rural development maintaining family farms.

8. We oppose insurance laws which permit a company to own insurance on its employees.

J. PENSION REFORM

1. Working people, who own over \$3 trillion in pension monies (deferred wages in effect), should have financial options for where their money is invested apart from the current near-monopoly exerted by a handful of managers, banks, insurance companies, and mutual funds. Pension funds should not be used for corporate mergers, acquisitions and leveraged buyouts, corporate decisions that undercut workers rights, employment, and retirement while hugely rewarding non-productive speculation. The current system has allowed vast amounts of American workers' hard-earned money to be squandered on job-ending, plant-moving, corporate downsizing.

2. Pension funds are gigantic capital pools that can, with government support, be used to meet community needs and benefit workers and their families directly.

3. Corporate-sponsored pension funds (the biggest category of funds) should be jointly controlled by management and workers, not exclusively by management.

4. Federal law must be changed so that pension funds need simply seek a reasonable rate of return, not the prevailing market rate, which greatly restricts where investments can be made.

5. A secondary pension market set up by the government to insure pension investments made in socially beneficial programs must be considered as one method that could greatly expand the impact of this capital market, as demonstrated in the case of federally insured/subsidized mortgage lending.

6. Prudent pension fund investing should both make money and do good work. Creating jobs and supporting employment programs in public/private partnerships can become a priority as we seek to expand opportunities "where the jobs are" (toward small business, not transnational business). Why not look to targeting the under- and un-employed? We believe there are myriad opportunities for a profound shift in how the capital of

America's workers is best put to use.

K. ANTI-TRUST ENFORCEMENT

1. We support strong and effectively enforced anti-trust regulation to counteract the concentration of economic power that carries a severe toll on the economy. The anti-trust division of the Justice Department has had its scope and powers reduced. An explosion of unregulated mergers and acquisitions, spin-offs and leveraged buy-outs has overwhelmed the federal government's capacity to provide effective oversight. Financial and trading markets have become particularly vulnerable to "insider trading." Securities and Exchange Commission regulation of these markets has seriously fallen short. Overall, what we see in unchecked market power is corruption, self-serving abuse of the democratic, political process, price gouging, loss of productivity and jobs, reduced competitiveness, and of predatory and monopolistic practices.
2. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) must vigorously oversee mergers where the combined sales of the companies exceed \$1 billion.
3. The Justice Department must redefine its definition of "relevant market share" in assessing mergers.
4. The Congress must enact its calls for "competitiveness" by stopping illegal monopolistic practices.
5. We oppose the largesse of government in the form of massive corporate entitlements.

L. ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND DEFENSE CONVERSION

[NOTE: Updated, some new material]

We support defense technology transfer toward a peacetime technology-based economy, particularly new industrial applications and developments in the areas of advanced communications, alternative energy, non-toxic battery technology and waste management.

1. Consolidation of the nuclear weapons complex should move toward alternative civilian technologies and non-proliferation work, not toward a new generation of nuclear weapon design and production.
2. The Green Party, recognizing the need for de-escalating the continuing arms race strongly opposes putting nuclear weapons, lasers and other weapons in space in a new militarization policy that is in clear violation of international law. [See I. Democracy. xx. Space Policy]

3. Let us go forward with government and civilian space programs; research initiatives in sustainability science, environmental protection, ecological economics and transportation, appropriate technologies and technology transfer; environmental sampling and monitoring; systems testing; laser communications; and high speed computers.

4. Let us devote a larger percentage of our nation's research and development budget, both private and public, toward civilian use and away from military use. Let us address our chronic trade imbalance in this fashion – not by increasing exports of military weapons and technologies. (See I. Democracy, x. X)

5. Advanced telecommunications technologies (many of which came originally from defense applications) such as fiber optics, broadband infrastructure, the Internet and the World Wide Web hold great promise for education, decentralized economies, and local control of decision-making. We believe we must move toward decentralization in these efforts, carefully protecting our individual rights as we go forward.

Advanced and high definition TV, digital communications, and wireless communications hold promise and challenge. For example, the public airwaves that will accommodate the new generation of telecommunications technology should not be free giveaways to media giants. An auction and built-in requirements that attach licenses to act "in the public interest" is needed. Technology provides a tool: we must use these tools appropriately and ethically. (See II. Social justice x. Free Speech. Media)

Broadband Internet access should be open to competition like long-distance - not simply the current choice between cable or telephone company monopolies, where grassroots Internet service providers must merge or go out of business. Broadband access should be a taxpayer-funded utility, like water and sewer -- ending the "digital divide" which keeps low-income folks from access to the Internet.

6. We call for a federal Technology Assessment Office to examine how technology fits in with life on Earth, in our neighborhoods and the quality of our daily lives.

7. [*New plank*] Open-source software is necessary to achieve personal, cultural and organizational security in the face of technological threats brought by corporations and individual criminals. Government has a vital role in breaking up software monopolies, not so much by filing antitrust suits, but by buying nothing but open systems. The US Federal Government and the larger states are buyers large enough to influence the computer and software systems through their purchasing. It should be illegal for a government agency to create and store information vital to its operations in a format it doesn't control. Governments should always consider storing information with open-source software and in-house staff instead of only commercial systems, vendors and software. One way to achieve this would be to add a virtual bid for in-house open source deployment whenever a software purchase goes out for bid.

The Green Party supports protection of software (free or proprietary) by means of the copyright. We strongly oppose granting of "software patents." Mathematical algorithms are discovered, not invented, by humans; therefore, they are not patentable. The overwhelming majority of software patents cover algorithms and should never have been awarded, or they cover message formats of some kind which are essentially

arbitrary. The latter patents only exist to restrain competition, and the harm falls disproportionately on programmers who work independently or for the smallest employers.

8. [*New language: Intellectual Property*] The Green Party opposes patenting or copyrighting lifeforms, algorithms, DNA, colors or commonly-used words and phrases. The Green Party supports broad interpretation and ultimate expansion of the Fair Use of copyrighted works. We support "open source" and "copyleft" models in order to promote the public interest spirit of copyright.

9. Nanotechnology - the science of manipulating matter at the molecular level - is poised to provide a new industrial revolution with vast social and environmental consequences. Like nuclear science and biotechnology, nanotechnology is being pursued largely outside of public debate, risking great harm and abuse in its use and application.

The Green Party called for a halt to nanotechnology development until the following conditions are met:

- 1) development of full and open public debate about the implications of nanotechnology and the fusion of nanotech with biological, materials and information sciences;
- 2) development of democratic public control mechanisms which would regulate the direction of nanotechnology research and development;
- 3) expanded research into the environmental and health consequences of exposure to nanoscale materials;
- 4) development of technology to contain and monitor nanoscale materials; and
- 5) development of precautionary safety measures for the containment and control over nanoscale materials.

M. THE NATIONAL DEBT

The national debt approaches 7 trillion dollars, and the diversion to interest payments nearly 20 percent of tax revenues. We call for immediate debate and action to stop this transfer of wealth from the taxpayers to the wealthy.

For many years the federal government borrowed hundreds of billions of dollars. Money that should have been going into a better "safety net" for the poor, homes for the homeless, environmental and public lands conservation, sustainable jobs, research and development, roads and bridges, schools and the technologies of tomorrow, has been lost to servicing the national debt. We cannot ignore the consequences of our nation's past deficits and the related costs of debt service.

Working people and the small business community are shouldering a disproportionate amount of the debt burden. Yet the incurrence of the federal debt was, to a large degree, the end product of those who were on watch during the Cold War and military-defense

industry buildup. Also, hundreds of billions were lost in the savings and loan bailout, loopholes, tax breaks, and multinational corporate tax avoidance. Hundreds of billions were lost due to a failed tax code that has been held prisoner to special interests and has produced historic gross inequities between corporate America and working Americans.

During the 1980s, our national debt grew from approximately \$1 trillion to over \$5 trillion and we refused to fund Social Security, food stamps, public housing, higher education, public transportation, and other services.

1. We must continue to move toward reduction of the national debt and make up for the neglect that the deficits caused.
2. We believe a comprehensive approach that forms a basis for a debt reduction plan would include debt payback, increased revenues, and decreased expenditures in some areas.
3. We support increases in domestic and discretionary spending that is our nation's essential "safety net," to protect those most in need. We support increases in the portion of entitlement benefits (one-fifth) that go to children, the lowest income, elderly, and disabled. These include food stamps, family assistance, Medicaid, and supplemental security income.
4. We oppose privatization of Social Security. We support increased funding for Social Security, public housing, higher education, public transportation, environmental protection, renewable energy and energy conservation.
5. To help make up for our nation's neglect, we support tax increases on mega-corporate and wealthy interests; defense budget reductions and entitlement reductions for those who can afford reductions most. Entitlement spending is over one-half of the federal budget. One way to reduce entitlement costs substantially is by "means testing," i.e., scaling back payments to the six million citizens in families with incomes over \$50,000 annually.
6. Revitalize the Public Sector: As taxes on working people have been unfairly increased, many important public services have been sharply reduced. Corporate-backed politicians are using the anti-government sentiment they have so carefully engineered to kill vital programs that many employers have always despised. If corporations continue to get their way, OSHA will be gutted, our environmental and labor laws will be worthless, our public health system will be dismantled, and the safety net and public universities will be only a dim memory.