

The Declaration of Dependence

[Note: The Executive Committee has approved republication of the Declaration of Dependence as published in the February 1989 *ACSM Bulletin* but **with slight modifications**. As outgoing President of ASPRS, I feel this Declaration is most timely. Although he denies authorship, the Declaration is the work of James Clapp, my ACSM counterpart for the past year. Jim, with due respect to Thomas Jefferson, has given us all something to think about and hold on to — well done.

Dr. Alden P. Colvocoresses.]

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for the People to demand the change of the Political Bonds which have directed their relationship to the land, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, their dependent position to which Laws of Nature and Nature's God required them, a decent Respect to the opinion of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the change.

We hold these Truths to be self evident, that all people are dependent upon the Earth and its air and waters; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable responsibilities, that among these are:

- To understand that the Earth is finite
- To obtain knowledge of the nature and extent of the resources of the Earth and the rights to these resources
- To utilize the Earth and its air and waters for the common good.

That to address these responsibilities, governments are instituted among people, deriving their legitimate powers from the People, that whenever any form of government fails to address its responsibilities, it is the duty of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their, and future generations', Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shown that the People are more disposed to accept future suffering, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of exploitations and abuses, pursued invariably under immediate economic gain, evidence our failure to recognize our Dependence upon the Earth, it is our responsibility to provide for new means for our children's children's security. Such has been the unaware suffering of the People, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter our system of Government. The history of the World is a history of exploitation of the lands, waters and air, all having in direct objective the immediate benefit while neglect-

ing future generations. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

- The forests of the world are being destroyed in name of progress
- Marine ecosystems around the world are threatened by pollution, overfishing, and coastal development
- Car and factories are spewing enough gases into the atmosphere to heat up the Earth in a greenhouse effect
- Ozone-destroying CFCs are released from cans
- The American citizens each year throw away 16 billion disposable diapers, 1.6 billion pens, two billion razors and blades, and 220 million tires
- Swarms of people are running out of food and space
- The Aral Sea may be gone in 20 years
- A massive backlog of poisons and needed cleanup faces the nation
- The nation has essentially forfeited its opportunity to reduce hazardous waste before it is produced
- Oil is spilled in the world's oceans
- The public is opposed to siting all types of waste facilities
- Large sources of pollution, such as run-off from farm land and roadways, are uncontrolled
- Public water use is priced below cost
- Poorer communities cannot finance water resources projects
- Traffic congestion in a major U.S. county costs approximately 485,000 hours per day and 72 million gallons of gasoline per year
- Information available to citizens on easements, zoning, property line, flood plains, etc., is extremely difficult to obtain, frequently out of date, and often imprecise

We the People do solemnly publish and declare that we are dependent upon the Earth, and its waters and its air, and that we are responsible for their use now and for the generations to come. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other to recognize and accept our responsibilities.



*Joint
Executive
Committee
meeting.*