

The Population–Environment Connection

Who Makes It?

***A listing of the population and migration positions of leading
U.S. based environmental organizations.***



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SHARON McCLOE STEIN

Dear Friends of NPG,

Since many of you have asked us to report on the various positions of environmental and population organizations, we have compiled this listing.

The information contained herein is taken directly from official publications, board resolutions, position papers, internet websites and in some cases personal contact with an organization's staff. Positions are current as of April 1999.

In an effort to reflect as accurately as possible all groups' positions, each organization received a pre-publication copy to proof.

We hope you find this to be a useful guide.

Sincerely,



Sharon McCloe Stein
Executive Director



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American Farmland Trust

American Farmland Trust “has adopted no formal position regarding global population and U.S. population.”

Submitted by Ralph Grossi • President

American Forests

Has no formal policies regarding global or U.S. population growth, international migration or U.S. migration.

Researched by NPG Staff

Californians for Population Stabilization

“Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS) is the only organization in the state dedicated to tackling the controversial twin pillars: high fertility, and high immigration rates. Together, they create the state’s number one problem – rampant population growth.

CAPS has a vision for protecting California’s environment and quality of life by turning the tide of population growth...”

Compiled from CAPS’ “Who is CAPS”

Carrying Capacity Network

“Carrying Capacity Network (CCN) advocates national revitalization, economic sustainability, U.S. population stabilization, resource conservation, and immigration reduction as essential components of solutions to the economic, social and environmental challenges facing America today. CCN believes that a five-year moratorium on legal immigration, during which admissions are firmly capped at 100,000, would lay the foundation towards a sustainable long-term immigration policy consistent with U.S. population stabilization.”

Compiled from CCN’s “Is Immigration an Environmental Issue?”

Conservation Fund

“The Conservation Fund is a non-advocacy organization and therefore does not take stands on policy issues regarding [global population growth, U.S. population growth, international migration and U.S. immigration].”

Submitted by John Turner • President

Conservation International

“Although Conservation International does not yet have a board-approved population policy, we are concerned about the impact that human population growth effects on efforts to keep alive our planet’s biological diversity. Our board-approved mission statement points to this role:

‘With the explosion of our planet’s population and the radical conversion of natural lands for living space, farming land, and waste disposal, the ecosystems that have traditionally supported human societies are severely stressed. Ultimately at risk are the air we breathe, the water we drink, the soils and seas that feed us, and the living creatures that give us medicines and countless other products. Conservation International believes that the Earth’s natural heritage must be maintained if future generations are to thrive spiritually, culturally, and economically. Our mission is to conserve the Earth’s living heritage, our global biodiversity, and to demonstrate that human societies are able to live harmoniously with nature.’”

Submitted by James D. Nations • Vice-President

Defenders of Wildlife

“Recognizing the direct link between the rapid growth of human population and the decline in the world’s wildlife and the habitat on which it depends, the Board of Directors of Defenders of Wildlife adopted the following statement of policy:

Among the most important issues affecting the world’s future is the rapid growth of human population. Together, the increase in human population and in resource consumption are basic causes of human suffering and environmental degradation and must become major priorities for national and international action.

Because of its pervasive and detrimental impact on global ecological systems, population growth threatens to overwhelm any possible gains made in improving human conditions. Failure to curb the rate of world population growth will magnify the deterioration of the Earth’s environment and natural resources and undermine economic and social progress. A humane, sustainable future depends on recognizing the common ground between population and the environment.

Current national and international efforts to address the world’s rapidly expanding population are not sufficient. A new commitment to population programs which enhance human rights and conditions is urgently needed. The United States and all nations of the world must make an effective response to the issue of population growth a leading priority for this decade.”

Submitted by Aimee Delach • Executive Assistant

Earth Island Institute

Has no formal policies regarding global or U.S. population growth, international migration or U.S. migration.

Researched by NPG Staff

Environmental Defense Fund

“To resolve the world’s major environmental challenges will require stabilizing the world’s population, at the lowest possible level, along with using natural and human-made resources sustainably, alleviating poverty, promoting non-polluting technologies and implementing efficient and equitable economic development policies.

A successful strategy for stabilizing population requires a comprehensive approach to addressing the array of economic, health and educational issues confronted by families everywhere.

Women must be provided with educational opportunities, increased financial security and improved status if population, development, and environmental programs are to succeed.”

Compiled from EDF's "Population Statement"

Friends of the Earth

Has no formal policies regarding global or U.S. population growth, international migration or U.S. migration.

Researched by NPG Staff

Greenpeace

Has no formal policies regarding global or U.S. population growth, international migration or U.S. migration.

Researched by NPG Staff

League of Conservation Voters

“Rapid global population growth is one of the most serious threats to a healthy and sustainable environment, leading to depletion of natural resources and contributing to pollution.”

“...family planning supporters note that improving access to voluntary family planning not only protects the life and health of women and children, it is also one of the best ways to reduce unwanted pregnancies.”

Compiled from League of Conservation Voters' "Scorecard"

National Audubon Society

“National Audubon Society focuses on supporting U.S. family planning assistance programs in order to reduce fertility in developing nations and in the U.S. In addition, we support state and local initiatives to limit the impact of local growth on bird and wildlife habitat.

National Audubon Society actions reflect an understanding of the relationships between human population growth, individual family decisions and habitat and wildlife trends.”

Submitted by Eric Draper • Senior Vice President, Campaigns

National Research Council

Has no formal policies regarding global or U.S. population growth, international migration or U.S. migration.

Researched by NPG Staff

National Wildlife Federation

“NWF has adopted formal positions regarding global population growth, U.S. population growth and U.S. immigration and reaffirmed these positions numerous times.

Population is important for both environmental reasons, and because 'humans deserve pleasant and productive lives spent in healthful and stimulating environments rather than merely struggling for survival.'

NWF encourages the President of the United States to initiate action, both in this country and abroad, which will result in the development of plans and/or programs to curtail the present expansion of human populations.

NWF supports policies that provide women access to education, financial credit and economic opportunity and comprehensive health care so that they may make informed, free decisions about family size.

NWF resolutions address immigration but do not call for reductions in legal immigration.

NWF urges the U.S. to undertake a vigorous effort to stop illegal immigration into this country, while, at the same time, offering necessary help to the countries affected to lessen their populations and calls for studies to align U.S. immigration policies within the carrying capacity of the land.

NWF supports funding of the U.S. Agency for International Development and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

NWF calls for attention to over-consumption as an issue that relates directly to population. The adoption of simpler life styles in developed countries would help ease many resource problems."

Submitted by John Audley • Director of International Affairs

Nature Conservancy

Has no formal policies regarding global or U.S. population growth, international migration or U.S. migration.

Researched by NPG Staff

Negative Population Growth

Negative Population Growth is a national membership organization founded in 1972 to educate the American public and political leaders about the detrimental effects of over-population on our environment, resources and quality of life. NPG advocates an optimum U.S. population of 150 million accomplished through voluntary incentives for smaller families and reducing immigration to 100,000 annually.

Submitted by Sharon McCloe Stein • Executive Director

Northwest Environment Watch

Population growth is not the root cause, but is a major contributor to environmental problems along with polluting technologies, inefficient infrastructure, heavy resource consumption and market economies blind to ecological value.

We call for aggressive efforts to alleviate child poverty and prevent sexual abuse because they boost birth rates.

We also call for dramatically expanded access to contraceptives and supporting service, along with abortion, and including the insurance coverage for prescription contraceptives.

Northwest Environment Watch calls for higher impact fees for development.

We call for a much slower pace of immigration into the U.S. and Canada, while also vigilantly defending the rights of recent immigrants.

Immigration and population policy must be judged primarily from their impact on equity.

Submitted by Alan Thein Durning • Executive Director

Additional Source: Official Position on Population Growth and Immigration

Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Family planning helps slow rapid population growth, which often leads to scarcities that result in civil conflicts and tension among groups. Slowing population growth helps poorer countries develop politically and economically, which reduces human suffering due to poverty, malnutrition and disease. Easing population growth helps countries participate in world trade, reduces competition for scarce jobs and lessens migration pressures.

Compiled from Planned Parenthood's "Planned Parenthood Fact Sheet"

Population Action International

"We see a world in which women worldwide can survive their childbearing years.

We see a world in which every child is a wanted child, in which families are created by love and choice – not chance.

We see a world in which the poorest billion people have the basic tools to help pull themselves out of poverty.

We see a world in which the U.S. and other wealthy countries exercise the leadership and foresight necessary to foster the prosperity, environmental health and security of our shared world."

Submitted by Patricia Lynch McGrath • Vice President

Population Communications International

"As a means of improving individual and family health and reducing high rates of population growth, Population Communications International advocates small family size based on informed and voluntary choice, and access to appropriate and comprehensive contraceptive services. PCI promotes informed choice about family size through mass media communications aimed at increasing the status and educational opportunities of women and girl children, promoting reproductive and sexual health, and encouraging sustainable development and environmental protection.

PCI values respect for human dignity and rights, in particular women's rights and empowerment; the promotion of education and health, including reproductive health and informed

choice; sensitivity to national and local cultures; and the principles put forth in broadly-accepted United Nations covenants and resolutions.”

Submitted by Patrice Newman • Communications Manager

Population-Environment Balance

“Population-Environment Balance (BALANCE) is the only national, non-profit grassroots membership organization that focuses on all components of U.S. population growth and their effects, and advocates policies designed to result in population stabilization in order to safeguard our carrying capacity (the number of individuals who can be supported without degrading the natural, cultural and social environment).

BALANCE is dedicated to maintaining and improving the quality of life in the United States through population stabilization (through replacement-level fertility and immigration rates).

BALANCE successfully mobilizes its 10,000 members into action in support of policies designed to achieve U.S. population stabilization and immigration reduction while educating environmentalists, policy makers and others about the link between population growth and environmental degradation. In particular, BALANCE supports a temporary, five-year immigration moratorium with an all-inclusive cap of 100,000 a year followed by a replacement-level of 200,000 a year for the long term.”

Compiled from “Population-Environment Balance” Factsheet

Population Institute

“The Population Institute... says what is needed to stabilize Earth’s population is:

- political commitment
- greater motivation for people to have smaller families
- access to knowledge and use of family planning services.”

Compiled from The Washington Post, January 3, 1998

Population Resource Center

The mission of the Population Resource Center is to further the development of public policy by promoting the use of accurate data and sound, objective analysis of these data. Convinced that demographic change is among a handful of basic factors that determine social and economic progress, the Center organizes educational programs that link demographic trends with a wide range of public policy issues. The programs help inform the debate and serve as a bridge between the social science community and the world of public policy.

The goal of the Population Resource Center is to enable policymakers to incorporate the latest research findings in population change into the development of public policy. To achieve this goal, the Center organizes a variety of educational and informational programs providing a link to help policymakers draw the connection between demographic, social and economic change and public policy issues.

The Center is a bi-partisan, non-advocacy organization which does not seek or endorse any legislative remedy to address social and economic change.

Submitted by Jane S. De Lung • President

Sierra Club

“The ‘population explosion’ has severely disturbed the ecological relationships between human beings and the environment. It has caused an increasing scarcity of wilderness and wildlife and has impaired the beauty of whole regions, as well as reducing the standards and the quality of living. In recognition of the growing magnitude of this conservation issue, the Sierra Club supports a greatly increased program of education on the need for population control.

The Sierra Club believes that we must find, encourage, and implement at the earliest possible time the necessary policies, attitudes, social standards, and actions that will, by voluntary and humane means consistent with human rights and individual conscience, bring about the stabilization of the population first of the United States and then of the world; that pursuant to this goal, families should not have more than two natural children and adoption should be encouraged; that state and federal laws should be changed to encourage small families and to discourage large families; that laws, policies, and attitudes that foster population growth or big families, or that restrict abortion and contraception, or that attempt to constrict the roles of men and women, should be abandoned; that comprehensive and realistic birth-control programs should be available to every member of our society; that environmental, population, and sex education should be readily available; that there should be increased research into the sociology of population stabilization and into the improvement of contraceptive technology; that private and governmental departments, commissions, and committees should be created to deal effectively with the population problem; and that the foreign policy of the United States should reflect the urgent realities of the population-environment crisis.

The Sierra Club feels that an intensive and broad-based educational program should be instituted, directed at persons in all countries, regardless of economic or educational level, designed to increase their awareness of the direct relationship between large family size and the adverse consequences of excessive population growth, and the material advantages to existing and future world populations of restraint on growth.

The Sierra Club makes the following specific recommendations for action:

- (1) The United Nations Conference on Population should urge that all national programs that provide incentives to large families (tax relief, financial assistance, etc.) be replaced with programs encouraging small families.
- (2) Each nation should be urged to create a national population commission to formulate policy on population-growth restraint and implement any programs that may be developed.
- (3) The United Nations or another appropriate international agency should expand and create a continuing program for the effective collection and dissemination of data on population-growth trends and densities, as well as the relation of such data to problems of resource allocation and conservation.
- (4) Those countries with the available resources should be urged to contribute funds to defray the cost of population growth restraint programs initiated by less affluent nations and by international agencies.

(5) Achievement of these ends should be made a top priority for United Nations action at all levels, including formulation of concrete programs for national implementation and funding. If the above goals are immediately pursued on an international level, we believe that population reduction may be achieved by voluntary controls on reproduction.”

Sierra Club's "Conservation Policies on Population"

Wilderness Society

“As a priority, population policy should protect and sustain ecological systems for future generations. We will support policies that have a goal of reaching population stability, at the earliest practicable date, through means respectful of human rights and individual conscience. The Wilderness Society will publicize analyses of the threats to our lands from U.S. population growth.

Government agencies should include population growth projections in their cost-benefit analyses of programs and projects.

To bring population levels to ecologically sustainable levels, both birth rates and immigration rates needs to be reduced.”

Wilderness Society's "The Wilderness Society Population Policy"

World Wildlife Fund

“The World Wildlife Fund practices conservation that is humane in the broadest sense, reconciling the needs of human beings and the needs of others that share the Earth. To achieve its conservation mission, WWF addresses the drivers of biodiversity loss, which include poverty and inequality, economic markets, public and development policies, consumption patterns and demographic change.

To better understand the relationship between population dynamics and biodiversity loss, WWF examines the causes of demographic change and its effects on biodiversity conservation. WWF then identifies appropriate responses, such as women’s empowerment, reproductive health partnerships, land-use planning and community based conservation to alleviate the impacts of natural increase and migration on the biological resources around which WWF’s field programs are established.”

Submitted by Diane W. Wood • Vice-President, Research and Development

Worldwatch Institute

“Worldwatch Institute does not have policy positions because we are a research organization, not an advocacy group.”

Submitted by Reah Janise Kauffman • Vice President for Special Activities

Zero Population Growth

The United States should adopt a national population policy that commits the United States to assume a leadership role in international efforts to slow population growth and to plan for demographic changes and slow population growth in the United States.

The United States should increase its funding for international population programs. U.S. population assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act should be available to fund abortion services in any country desiring such assistance in accordance with the laws of that country.

ZPG supports universal accessibility to family planning, sterilization and abortion services in the United States and sufficient funds to accomplish this goal. ZPG advocates increased funding for contraceptive research and public funding of abortions.

ZPG recommends that states remove the existing legal restrictions on contraceptive availability for teenagers and that they enact legislation to guarantee access to both information and services.

ZPG encourages governmental and private efforts to provide for women equality under the law, equal access to education, jobs and property; participation in development efforts; participation in the political process; access to family planning services; and adequate health care for themselves and their families.

ZPG supports the removal of all incentives and subsidies for procreation and larger families.

ZPG supports local government efforts to accommodate growth, provided that such efforts recognize the importance of slowing population growth.

The United States should adopt an overall goal for immigration as part of its national population policy to plan for demographic changes and slow population growth. ZPG believes that immigration pressures are best relieved by addressing factors that compel people to leave their homes and families and emigrate to the United States. ZPG believes U.S. immigration policy should focus on reunifying immediate families. ZPG supports increased funding for the Immigration and Naturalization Service so that all immigrants, refugees and asylees are ensured timely due process and enable the U.S. to enforce measures to prevent fraud and other violations of immigration laws. ZPG believes that the United States should preserve its ability to absorb reasonable numbers of refugees and legal immigrants.

ZPG supports efforts to create a sustainable society both in the United States and worldwide. Such efforts include commitments to conserve energy and natural resources and improve efficiency, eliminate our "disposable society" lifestyle and use the best possible technology to protect the natural and human environment.

ZPG Fact Sheet "Statement of Policy"

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