Lowcountry Indivisible Positions on Environmental Issues in the 2020 Election

Climate change is one of the most pressing emergencies facing the world today, and the United States of America must join the majority of other developed countries who are attempting to face the problem head on. Because environmental issues are so crucial, we, the members of the Lowcountry Indivisible Environment Team, have adopted the following platform, which we believe a strong Presidential candidate will share.

1. Climate change is real and human activity is the primary cause
2. The United States must rejoin the Paris Agreement
3. The US must stop its reliance on carbon-based fuels and look towards renewable energy as the future
4. Offshore drilling must be banned
5. Environmental regulations designed to protect our air, water, and land that were weakened by the Trump administration must be restrengthened
6. **Climate change is real and human activity is the primary cause**

This may seem obvious, as 97% of climate scientists agree that a sharp increase in the warming of the Earth’s climate since the mid-20th century is the result of human activity. However, many people including politicians, treat this fact as an opinion. There is no denying that oceans are warming, sea levels are rising, ice is melting, and catastrophic storms are increasing in frequency. It is necessary to acknowledge global warming and make changes immediately to avoid the worst outcomes. In order to achieve this, climate change should be declared a national emergency. By declaring it a national emergency, a variety of resources can be mobilized to stop and/or reverse consequences of global warming and prevent future catastrophes.

1. **The United States must rejoin the Paris Accord**

In December of 2015, 195 countries, including the United States, signed the Paris Agreement at the United Nations Climate Change Conference. The goal of this agreement was to prevent the global temperature from continuing to rise, mainly through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. In June of 2017, President Trump announced that the US would withdraw from the agreement. While the withdrawal won’t officially take effect until 2020, the Trump administration has already begun to undermine this country’s efforts to move away from fossil fuels. We believe that not only does the US need to rejoin the agreement, it should also step in as a leader in the global effort to reduce the impact of climate change.

1. **The US must stop its reliance on carbon-based fuels and look towards renewable energy as the future**

The reduction of fossil fuels and increase in clean energy goes hand in hand with adopting the goals of the Paris Agreement. The US must set a goal to be a 100% clean energy economy by 2050 at the latest. This includes building infrastructure for wind, solar, and geothermal energy, creating jobs in the process. During this transition, it is important to acknowledge the many workers who are employed in the coal and natural gas industries. Part of the transition to green energy must include job retraining, healthcare, and other support for them so they are not left behind.

1. **Offshore drilling must be banned**

Offshore drilling is harmful to both the environment and the economy, as proven by the horrific Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010 that ravaged the Gulf Coast. It has the potential to do irreparable damage to our oceans, rivers, marshes, and wildlife. Additionally, in order to locate oil and gas under the water, seismic testing, or the blasting of air guns, is utilized. These blasts are harmful to marine life, impacting endangered species as well as the fishing industry before drilling has even begun. Furthermore, offshore drilling will add pipelines and refineries, risking leaks and pollution that would destroy the quality of groundwater and air. These hazards are not worth the very limited benefits offshore drilling would bring, especially in a world where fossil fuels are being phased out.

1. **Environmental regulations designed to protect our air, water, land, and animals that were weakened by the Trump administration must be restrengthened**

The Trump administration has been relentlessly assaulting the Environmental Protection Agency through budget cuts, layoffs, and a reduction of the influence of science on policy. This has put thousands of lives at risk and increased the power of corporations in dictating environmental regulations. This practice needs to end and the EPA needs to be restaffed with scientists and researchers who are impartial to the industries they are regulating. In an effort to pander to industry lobbyists (and undermine the Obama administration), Trump has rolled back more than 90 environmental regulations. These roll backs have given some advantages to fossil fuel and other big businesses, but they are actively harming people and disproportionately impact marginalized populations. The Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and many other regulations weakened in the name of profits must be restrengthened to protect both the environment and people. Furthermore, justice must be given to those who have been made sick because of polluted water and air.