

Canadians for Limits to Growth:

Dedicated to Reducing Human Impact on Earth

The signatories to this Declaration are or were members of The Canadian Association for the Club of Rome which meets regularly in Ottawa to discuss all aspects of the developing crisis in our world which was clearly identified by a group of scientists in Rome in an epoch-making report, *Limits to Growth*, in 1972. A *30-year update* in 2004 demonstrated that the warnings of the earlier report were entirely correct: planet Earth has reached the limits of its capacity to sustain ever growing human numbers and its ever growing appetite for consumption of Earth's parts. When some members of CACOR failed to persuade the organization to make a public statement to sound the alarm once again, some of us resigned in protest. Troubled by the continuance of public and corporate policies that ignore the changing world, eight of us met in private and, finding that between us we commanded the necessary expertise, crafted over many months, a declaration *Canadians for Limits to Growth*, urging the public to confront the realities of climate change, population explosion, intensifying use of fossil fuels with all the implications for disaster, and to change their way of life both individually and as a society. The results are printed below. We have no plans to create an organization to work for the political application of these insights but you are invited to reflect on and spread to others the essential message of the need to confront reality contained in this Declaration.

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We, members of Canadians for Limits to Growth, call upon our fellow Canadians to join with us in restoring the health of our planet and in achieving a more secure future for humanity.

Ten thousand years ago, at the beginning of the era of agriculture, humans numbered about five million and their impact on Earth's ecosystems was minimal. Since about 1800, technological development, fossil fuel energy, and increasing plunder and consumption of an apparent cornucopia of Earth's resources have contributed to an eight-fold increase in human numbers to almost seven billion, a level which vastly exceeds the Earth's carrying capacity and continues to increase. The multiplication of human numbers has also accelerated the discharge of our wastes and poisons, thereby undermining the health of the Ecosphere.

Experience tells us that no species can indefinitely increase its numbers, its level of consumption, and its production of wastes, without leading to widespread impoverishment, misery and the collapse of its population. Among humans, exceeding limits to growth is already resulting in major resource wars and regional pandemics and famines. Thousands of species around the world are at serious risk of extinction. Climate change provides irrefutable evidence that humans have exceeded the limits of the atmosphere's capacity to absorb the by-products of human activity.

Humanity's practice of taking what we want from the Earth and discharging wastes without thought for tomorrow must end! Now, more people are beginning to awaken to emerging wastelands. The sciences, from ecology to molecular biology, have demonstrated our kinship with all other forms of life on Earth. Slowly, there is an increasing awareness that our actions affect the ecological health of all parts of Earth's terrestrial and marine ecosystems required for wellness and survival. This awareness brings responsibilities.

The time has arrived to acknowledge our interdependence with all life and to embrace our responsibility to nurture and respect the Earth. We are part of and dependent on the web of life; as we damage it, we also wound ourselves.

Most persons in positions of leadership continue to evade or pay lip service to environmental issues and the limits to growth. They continue to act as advocates of still more economic growth and destructive development, promising more in the face of mounting evidence that human demands already far exceed Earth's limits. While the principal responsibility to reverse direction rests with governing bodies, corporations also have been given strong legal powers to foster growth and to continue to destroy the lands and waters of our Earth. Corporate powers are wildly excessive and need to be brought under social control or be terminated. While each of us too has a duty to reduce our impact on the planet, the principal responsibility lies with governing bodies.

The early 21st century is a crucial time that requires exceptional leadership. People can modify their behaviour through education so as to support the Earth's ecosphere and draw upon its natural resources frugally and with humility. We must reverse our present collision course with Earth's natural limits and become caring guardians of future generations. We must develop and apply

ecological ethics and ecological economics. Unless we reduce our demands on Earth by decreasing our numbers and our consumption, nature will do this for us, as it has done for countless species since the beginning.

Signed by:

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