

ENVIRONMENTALISTS FOR BERNIE

A LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR BERNIE FROM A LEADER IN THE CHEMICALS POLICY REFORM MOVEMENT: DR. KEN GEISER

Dear Colleagues,

I am supporting Senator Bernie Sanders in his campaign for President of the United States because he is the only candidate whose environmental and public health policies are broadly informed by a critical assessment of economic policy.

As a long time environmentalist I have witnessed 35 years of compromised and poorly resourced government policies for protecting public health, worker safety and the environment. I see around us the price we pay—rising global temperatures, broken drinking water systems, dangerous workplaces and unsafe products, ubiquitous residues of hazardous chemicals and vast amounts of solid and hazardous waste. And it is not difficult to see the consequences—disabled workers, the rising incidence of infertility, cancer and neurological deficits, unprecedented weather conditions, diminished soils, and landscapes devoid of natural biodiversity. It is clear that our federal policies have favored business development and wealth accumulation and burdened people and the environment with the marginal costs of a high consumption economy. We will not reduce health disparities nor halt damage to natural systems without seriously reformed government policies. Bernie Sanders is the only current Presidential candidate who offers a deep enough grasp of the underlying failures of our current economic system and a willingness to think broadly and boldly in fashioning policies for fundamental change.

Bernie Sanders has long maintained that we cannot have social justice in a nation divided by severe economic inequality. His campaign has focused on good jobs in a fair economy, a living wage, quality health care for all, debt-free college education, a fair tax system, and a less militaristic foreign policy. However, it has also offered specific initiatives on climate change, clean air and water, renewable energy, mass transit, urban and national parks, and a green economy.

In laying out these initiatives Bernie Sanders has consistently founded them on economic policies that promote economic justice and a fairer distribution of wealth. Climate protection policies must address disparities between those who have resources for adaptation and those who do not. Clean air and water are human rights that should not be monetized through privatization and market trading. Renewable energy generation must be decentralized and distributed to benefit people, not mega-utilities. Mass transit must be accessible and affordable and parks must be safe and adequately funded. In achieving a green economy we must promote good jobs and provide compensation to those workers who lose in the transition.

Senator Sanders has inspired young people who see a visionary leader willing to confront our nation's stale and stalled politics and he has moved working and middle class people who see in him a trustworthy leader who believes in the value of a responsible government. I see a pragmatic and responsive leader willing to rethink conventional approaches to human health and environmental protection and a reformer who can envision and promote a more just and sustainable society. That is why I am supporting Bernie Sanders for President.

Ken Geiser
Professor Emeritus

Ken Geiser is an internationally recognized specialist on pollution prevention, clean production, green chemistry and industrial chemicals policy. He is a Professor of Work Environment Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Lowell where he served as a Co-Director of the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production, which promotes sustainable solutions in chemical management and product design. Dr. Geiser is one of the authors of the Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Act and served from 1990 to 2003 as the founding director of the Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Institute. He has served as a policy advisor to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the United Nations Environment Program and participates on several boards of non-profit environmental organizations, including Coming Clean. He is the author of many articles on pollution prevention, toxic chemical policy and sustainable development and the books, *Materials Matter: Towards a Sustainable Materials Policy*, and *Chemicals without Harm: Policies for a Sustainable World*.