

THE COLUMBUS DECLARATION

BY THE UNDERSIGNED IN COLUMBUS, OHIO ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH, 2013

We declare:

That the political, legal, and economic systems of the United States and the State of Ohio allow a privileged minority to impose policy and governing decisions upon the people living in incorporated and unincorporated communities of Ohio and that these policies and decisions violate the rights and threaten the very survival of people and ecosystems;

That the goal of those decisions is to undemocratically concentrate wealth and greater governing power through the exploitation of human and natural communities, while promoting the belief that such exploitation is necessary for the common good;

That the survival of our communities depends on replacing this system of governance by a privileged minority with rights-securing, democratic, community decision-making systems;

That environmental and economic sustainability can be achieved only when the people affected by governing decisions are the ones who make them;

That historically, people have been unable to secure economic and environmental sustainability within a privileged minority-rule system;

That those doctrines which deny the right to self-governance in the communities where we live include state and national preemption of community law, state subordination of municipal and unincorporated governments to legislative and judicial fiat, the erroneous bestowal of constitutional rights upon corporations, and the imprudence of relegating ecosystems to the privatized status of property;

That concentrating on merely lobbying the factions in power to make better decisions has not replaced the current system of privileged minority decision-making with a democratic one;

That treating economic and environmental ills as problems caused by inadequate administrative regulation, rather than as symptoms produced by the absence of democracy and the violation of rights, has not halted the destruction of our human or natural communities.

Therefore, let it be resolved:

That a people's movement must be created with a goal of revoking the authority used by a privileged minority to impose political, legal, and economic systems that endanger our human and natural communities;

That such a movement shall begin in the municipally incorporated as well as the unincorporated communities of Ohio;

That we, the people, must transform our local community struggles into ones that resist and dismantle the existing undemocratic systems while codifying new, democratic, rights-securing and sustainable systems;

That such a movement must grow and accelerate through the work of people in all communities;

That when corporate and governmental decision-makers challenge the people's right to assert local, community self-governance through passage of municipal and community law, the people, through their local

governments, must openly and frontally defy those legal and political doctrines that subordinate the rights of the people and the authority of their local governments to the privileges of a few;

That those communities which have adopted Community Bills of Rights in defiance of rights-denying state and national law must join with other communities in our state and across the nation to envision and build new state and national constitutional structures that codify new systems of governance that assert and secure community and individual rights as the highest law;

That Ohio communities that have already begun this work shall stand together and call for a new state constitutional structure; and

That now, this 16th day of November, 2013, we pledge to begin that work, which will drive the unalienable right to local, community self-government into the Ohio Constitution, thus liberating all Ohio communities from the legal, procedural and political doctrines that prevent them from building economically and environmentally sustainable communities.

We Further Resolve That a Call Issues from this Gathering:

To create a network of people committed to securing for all Ohioans the right to local, community self-government;

To create a new system and doctrines that secure fundamental rights and that reverse political, legal, and cultural doctrines that would interfere with those rights;

To call upon the people from each community across the State of Ohio to convene a People's Constitutional Convention made up of delegates representing every community, whether incorporated as a municipality or not, who will propose constitutional changes to secure the unalienable right of all the people of Ohio to local, community self-government; and

To create the people's movement that will result in these changes to the Ohio Constitution.

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