An Open Letter to Political Independents and Current or Former Republicans

We, the undersigned, stand on common ground.

As former Republican elected and appointed officials, we are proud of our service to America and of our efforts to secure and protect her natural heritage. We’re equally proud of previous generations of Republicans who, for well over a hundred years, improved the country they loved through excellent conservation and environmental achievements. That history, while rarely acknowledged these days, is well documented at greenelephantcoalition.org.

During our time in office, we and other Republicans like us joined with Democrats in bipartisan efforts to guarantee that Americans had clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. We and others like us cooperated with Democrats to protect at-risk animals, plants, and other natural assets: our national parks, monuments, wilderness areas, wildlife refuges, wild and scenic rivers, and so on. We and others like us respected science and did our best to be guided by it.

Now, unfortunately, that great legacy is in danger.

Acting together through The Green Elephant Coalition, we are raising our voices in alarm at the reckless and harmful actions of our current president over his first three and a half years in office, which are also well documented at greenelephantcoalition.org.

- He has appointed unqualified, unsuitable, and highly compromised men—two of them so corrupt that they later were forced out of office—to run the Interior Department and the Republican-created Environmental Protection Agency.

- He has weakened or rolled back America’s long-standing, prudent, Republican-backed environmental laws, including the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act, all of which were passed with overwhelming bi-partisan support. And he continues doing so, even as agency experts say the resulting pollution will cost lives and exacerbate the worst public-health crisis in a century.

- He has trampled Republican-initiated protections for the public lands and wildlife that belong to the American people, not to the special interests that exploit them for profit.

- He has rejected the advice of scientists in all fields, including climate and public health. He has taken steps to deprive the country of their collective knowledge and wisdom and publicly belittled their dedicated service.

- He has undermined America’s standing in the world and weakened our ability even to join, much less to lead, the fight against such global perils as the climate crisis and ocean pollution.

- He is a clear and present danger to the health and well-being of Americans alive today and of unborn generations who will inherit the world we leave behind.
We can expect that, if given a second term, our current president would double down on his unprincipled and irresponsible conduct. He would further squander a century of progress, by Republicans and Democrats alike, to preserve, protect, and defend the natural resources that shaped our history, underpin our economy, hold the key to our future prosperity, and enable our healthful outdoor recreation. We can’t stand idly by and allow that to happen.

And so, today we announce or reaffirm our support for Joe Biden for president.

We encourage all Republicans and Independents who value a healthy environment and cherish our natural heritage to join us in supporting the election of Mr. Biden, a trusted, respected, and stable public servant with the depth of experience and record of healing, pragmatic, and centrist leadership that America needs now.

We realize that we may be asking many of you to vote for a Democratic candidate for president for the first time in your lives. We do this because we believe that—for the sake of present and future generations of Americans—the current chaotic and destructive administration must end. Voting for Joe Biden is the right thing to do.

As Americans, all of us live in a remarkable constitutional republic that secures our individual freedoms, including the freedom to choose our leaders. The Founding Fathers expected us to exercise our freedom to choose with responsibility and foresight. Today, we face the most consequential political decision of our time: whether to re-elect the unfit current president or to dismiss him from service and place our trust in Joe Biden as our next chief executive.

We choose Mr. Biden and urge like-minded voters of any political affiliation to do the same.

Christine Todd Whitman, former Governor of New Jersey
David Durenberger, former United States Senator from Minnesota
Charles Djou, former Member of Congress from Hawaii
Mickey Edwards, former Member of Congress from Oklahoma
Wayne T. Gilchrest, former Member of Congress from Maryland
James Greenwood, former Member of Congress from Pennsylvania
Robert Inglis, former Member of Congress from South Carolina
John LeBoutillier, former Member of Congress from New York
Paul N. “Pete” McCloskey, former Member of Congress from California; co-founder, Earth Day
Claudine Schneider, former Member of Congress from Rhode Island
Richard Zimmer, former Member of Congress from New Jersey
Mindy Jaffe, former State Representative in Hawaii
Bridgett Luther, former Director of the California Department of Conservation, appointed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger

Martha Marks, former Lake County (IL) Board Member; founder, The Green Elephant Coalition
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