

## Protecting the Environment - 1983

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### Issue

Preserving natural resources and safeguarding air, water and land against pollutants that threaten the health and safety of all people and for generations yet to come.

### Background

Jewish tradition tells us that the world is God's creation and we must cherish and preserve it. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," declares the Psalmist. Talmudic law prohibits the destruction of natural resources. In the rabbinic literature we read, "When God created man He showed him everything in the Garden of Eden and said to him: 'See My Work, how good it is. Know that everything which I created, I have created for you. And now take care, lest you spoil and destroy My world. For if you spoil and destroy it, no one will rebuild it after you.'"

### Resolution

**Clean Air and Pure Water**—Increasing awareness by the public of the disastrous implications of continuing pollution of our air, water and land has led to action by federal and state governments to control and regulate the causes of pollution. In the United States we are deeply distressed that federal budget cuts and major policy changes may weaken the effectiveness of programs that are designed to keep the air clean and the water pure. Acid rain, which has already altered large sections of the forested watershed ecosystem in the Eastern part of North America threatens to destroy the pristine environment of the continent.

Therefore we call on Sisterhood members to communicate with appropriate government officials about the need to maintain strict pollution standards and to appropriate adequate funds for clean-up, research, monitoring and enforcement.

**Toxic and Radioactive Wastes**—We are gravely concerned that the traditional methods of handling toxic and radioactive wastes threaten the public's health and safety.

We call for prompt action by the various governments and industries of our constituents' respective nations. We urge Sisterhood members to stimulate and support legislation and regulations that protect persons, property and our environment from the harmful effects of toxic and radioactive wastes; encourage waste reduction and recycling and research efforts into new, safe disposal methods.

**Land Preservation**—We believe every nation needs a well-developed public land policy that protects the wilderness areas of wildlife against exploitation by economic and recreational interests.

We encourage Sisterhood members to study this issue and to work with other groups dedicated to preserving the natural beauty and natural resources of this world.