

# A Sustainable Development Q&A

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From Plymouth Rock to the Pacific Coast, home owners across America are losing rural land and property rights in alarming numbers.



Willingly or not, they are being crowded into high-density urban living and "walkable" communities in the name of sustainable development, Smart Growth and environmental justice.

## ■ What is sustainable development?

The United Nations defined the term in a 1987 report as "development that meets the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." A 1992 UN convention, called Agenda 21, codified the report.

## ■ What is wrong with that?

The "needs" the report refers to are not human needs but those of the planet. It concludes we can only meet them by eliminating or reducing "unsustainable" activities globally. These include property ownership, consumerism, and high meat intake, use of fossil fuels, roadways, automobiles, dams, our legal system, pastures, golf courses and more.

## ■ How can a United Nation's program affect citizens in the United States?

Three presidents agreed through executive orders to 1. abide by these definitions of sustainable development, 2. reduce the "unsustainable" activities and 3. implement action plans to accomplish this through federal agency regulations.

## ■ Why have I not heard of this side of sustainable development before?

Because, most see sustainable development as a safe way to protect the planet. The UN and other groups see sustainable development as a political agenda in which it is acceptable to sever personal rights in the name of the environment.

## ■ How does the UN version of sustainable development enter my community?

Planners or groups approach local officials and "stakeholders" (not always residents) with proposals to review Master Plans and conduct surveys to improve living quality and the environment. Frequently, they invoke perceived "crises" such as transportation issues, overpopulation or poor water quality. Grant money often follows, and may include strings that limit property rights. The UN version, while protecting the earth and wildlife, has secondary regard for personal rights.

## ■ How might sustainable development affect my property rights?

By accepting certain grants and extreme regulations on property usage, owners find their development rights stripped away in favor of bicycle paths, solar farms, open spaces, mixed-use dwellings and controlled property and farming use.

## ■ The Constitution and local laws protect my property rights, don't they?

Not if you sign them away by agreeing to accept certain grants, surrender them through conservation easements, wetland or endangered species designations, or lose them through eminent domain or specific changes in your town's Master Plan.

## ■ What can I do?

See pamphlet: The "Sustainability" Solution.

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