

On the Question of the Creation of Funds for Specially Protected Natural Territories in the Republic of Kazakhstan (theses)

A. Who are We?

The Ecological Society “Green Salvation” was founded in 1990 and is registered as a public organization in Almaty city. Our goal is to protect the human right to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature, and to foster improvements to the socio-ecological situation in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The Primary Focus of Our Activities

1. Defending the human right to a favorable environment
2. Participating in the development of environmental protection legislation
3. Environmental awareness and education
4. Environmental actions

B. Why are We Interested in the Environmental Protection Funds under Discussion?

Through our activities, Green Salvation devotes great attention to the Especially Protected Natural Territories, first and foremost the Charynsk State National Natural Park and the Ile-Alatau State National Natural Park.

We consider the given funds to be effective mechanisms through which to ensure the work of the Especially Protected Natural Territories. It is necessary to establish funds in our country first of all for world heritage objects and for those Especially Protected Natural Territories for which inclusion in the World Heritage List is only proposed in order to hasten their nomination, and to protect and conserve these unique territories.

C. Problems that the Funds may Encounter

1. During the entire period of Kazakhstan’s independence, the Parliament has not developed and approved an environmental policy.
2. Many legal problems remain unresolved. National environmental protection legislation is not observed. Recently, there has been a tendency to soften environmental protection legislation.
3. The Especially Protected Natural Territories are the property of the government and lower-level executive bodies. As a result, the lands that are part of the Especially Protected Natural Territories are constantly being manipulated.
4. The authorized bodies are frequently inactive, which leads to deteriorating conditions in many of the Especially Protected Natural Territories.
5. Often the public does not have access to justice and is not able to protect the rights of citizens and the territorial integrity of the environmental system of Especially Protected Natural Territories.
6. Environmental protection measures conducted by the government are poorly coordinated with **economic** and other programs.

D. Our Suggestions to Improve the Situation

1. The **state** must guarantee that the funds do not become structures that bureaucrats manipulate in their own interests.
2. The Parliament’s role must be strengthened in the development of the Especially Protected Natural Territories and the control of their activities. The Parliament must manage the lands of the Especially Protected Natural Territories.
3. Specific attention must be devoted to implementing the Aarhus Convention, the most thorough guarantee of public participation in the resolution of issues related to environmental protection, including issues connected to the Especially Protected Natural Territories.

4. It is necessary to increase accountability not only for violations of legislation regarding the Especially Protected Natural Territories, but also for the inactivity of the authorities.
5. The power of local authorities and executive bodies must be differentiated in regards to the Especially Protected Natural Territories.
6. It is necessary to limit the authorities of the akims on the territory of the Especially Protected Natural Territories.
7. Cease **any economic activities** on the territory of nature reserves and limit these activities in parks; develop small business unrelated to the use of the territories.
8. Ensure reliable **legal protection** of the officials in the Especially Protected Natural Territories.

The Ecological Society “Green Salvation”

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Translated by Michelle Kinman