



Two hundred and fifty years ago, a people declared that no nation should be ruled without consent and no one should be forced to live under tyranny. They declared that the legitimacy of government stems from its ability to protect the dignity and rights of people. And when it becomes destructive of that purpose, the people have both the right and responsibility to alter or abolish it. We would be wise to revisit the meaning of these words today.

But as an ecologist, as a dad, as a person deeply embedded within my community, in these strained and disoriented times, I have come to learn that beneath any government, beneath constitutions and statutes, beneath borders and economies there are older truths still. Truths to which the Declaration of Independence serves as corollary. Truths that do not disappear even when we are too busy to notice them, even when many of our laws and market incentives attempt to obscure them. To a world still capable of candor, but often too hurried and unsettled to notice what holds it together, I offer this declaration.

A Declaration of Interdependence

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that no person is self-made, that no nation stands alone, that no generation owns the Earth it inherits, that no liberty can endure if it undermines the conditions that make life possible.

We are each carried through this life by relationships we did not create. Innumerable relationships we rarely notice and scarcely understand. Relationships that are easy to degrade and hard to restore. Every single breath of air we take is a gift from the algae in the oceans, the grasses of the savanna, the labor of leaves. Every meal we eat is an offering emerging from relationships between healthy soil, sun, rain, seed, pollinators, farmers, truck drivers. Every child arrives into the world helpless, surrounded by hands that must choose care over neglect. Every community is held together by trust it cannot buy, it cannot innovate its way around, and it cannot substitute with mere rules.

These interdependencies are not utopian ideals. They are reality. We may honor them or violate them, but we do not escape them.

So let this be the work of our time: to free ourselves not only from tyranny, but from the illusion of separateness. To restore what has been depleted, and reconnect what has been severed. To widen our circle of care until our laws, our economies, our daily lives reflect what the living world has always known: we belong to one another.

And that interdependence is our greatest strength, our safety, our stability, and our hope.



Two hundred and fifty years after declaring independence from tyranny, a declaration that remains an unfulfilled aspiration, let us also declare our utter and inescapable interdependence with the world.

A declaration states a truth. The power of that truth resides in how we live differently for knowing it. And that requires a pledge. So let us pledge to each other to strive daily to become worthy of all we have been given: to take no more than we need, to return care for what has cared for us, and to hand forward a world worthy of all those who will inherit it.