

# DECLARATION OF RIGHTS OF LAKE VÄTTERN

## *Preamble*

We the people declare that Vättern comprise an ecosystem upon which hundreds of thousands of people and countless species depend for health, drinking water and survival. We further declare that this ecosystem is in imminent danger of irreversible devastation due to continued abuse by people and corporations enabled by government policies, permitting and licensing of activities that unremittingly create cumulative harm, and lack of protective intervention.

We the people find that this emergency requires shifting public governance from policies that urge voluntary action, or that merely regulate the amount of harm allowed by law over a given period of time, to adopting laws which prohibit activities that violate fundamental rights which, to date, have gone unprotected by government.

We find that laws ostensibly enacted to protect us, and to foster our health, prosperity, and fundamental rights do neither; and that the very air, land, and water – on which our lives and happiness depend – are threatened. Thus it has become necessary that we reclaim, reaffirm and to extend legal rights to our natural environment in order to ensure that the natural world, along with our values, our interests, and our rights, are no longer subordinated to the accumulation of surplus wealth.

And since all power of governance is inherent in the people, we, the signatories of this declaration declare and enact this Lake Vättern declaration, which establishes irrevocable rights for the Lake Vättern Ecosystem to exist, flourish and naturally evolve.

## **Section 1. Lake Vättern (Definition of lake Vättern Ecosystem)**

1. Lake Vättern is a living ecosystem comprising all the natural water features, communities of organisms, soil as well as terrestrial and aquatic sub ecosystems that are part of Lake Vättern.

## **Section 2. Rights of Lake Vättern**

Lake Vättern has the rights to

1. exist, flourish, regenerate and naturally evolve.
2. To restoration, recovery and preservation; and
3. To perform its natural functions.

## **Section 3. Obligations of human beings to lake Vättern**

1. Every human being is responsible for respecting and living in harmony with Lake Vättern.
2. Damages caused by human violations of the inherent rights recognized in this Declaration shall be rectified and society shall be responsible for the restoration of the integrity and health of Lake Vättern.