

Environmental and Energy Policy

Outline

- Background/evolution
- Energy/environment relationship
- Environmental policy – background and major areas
- Energy policy
- Climate change

Background

- Environmental policy is broad in scope
- Human relationship w/nature
- Set of natural systems that interact
- Government actions that affect environmental quality and use of natural resources

Evolution of Environmental and Energy Policies

- Early environmental policies geared toward conservation and resource protection
 - e.g., conservation policies, start of National Forest Service
- Some minor moves to control pollution
- Energy policy not a major concern
- Support for nuclear power

Modern Environmental Movement

- Shift in opinion toward quality of life
- Published reports and literature (e.g., *Silent Spring*)
- Initial responses were toward natural resources
- Deferred to states on issues of pollution control
- Growth of interest groups demanding action, as well as favorable public opinion
- Regulatory solutions favored
- Multiple statutes

Conflict Arises

- Concern by conservatives about government role
- Were policies effective and efficient?
- Industry concerned over costs
- What effects on the economy?
- Reagan and Bush policies
 - attempted executive changes, but little reform
 - public responded
 - new laws passed (RCRA, CAAA)
- Conflict continues
- George W. Bush policies

Major Policies

- National Environmental Policy Act
 - requires environmental impact statement (EIS); public review; creation of Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)
- Clean Air Act 1970 and 1990
 - ambient air quality standards, emission limits (stationary and mobile sources), acid rain
- Clean Water Act 1972
 - regulates surface water; “fishable and swimmable”
- Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974
 - minimum health standards for public water supplies

Major Policies (cont'd)

- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act 1976
 - hazardous waste; cradle to grave
- Toxic Substances Control Act 1976
 - regulates risk of commercial chemicals
- Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act 1972
 - pesticide registration; may not pose risk to humans or environment; modified by Food Quality Protection Act
- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (Superfund)

Major Policies (cont'd)

- All focus on command-and-control regulation
- Standards are set and enforced
- Comparing environmental risks
 - gov't does not always deal w/the riskiest problems; focuses on those in public eye

Do Policies Work?

- Has air quality improved enough?
- Similar issues w/water quality
 - major issues w/nonpoint sources
- Superfund sites
 - many sites cleaned up

Options for the Future

- Market incentives
 - acid rain marketable permits
- Information disclosure
 - Toxic Release Inventory
- Flexible and collaborative approaches
 - reduce conflict and work cooperatively
- Decentralization

Natural Resource Policies

- Developed out of concerns about abuse
- Environmental stewardship
- Policies based on multiple use
- Use of the Antiquities Act to preserve areas
- Endangered Species Act of 1973

Evaluation and Options

- Much land set aside; increase in national park system
- True measure is within the ecosystem, which is more difficult to measure
- Impose user fees
- Reduce or eliminate resource subsidies
- Devolution
- Ecosystem management

Energy Policies

- No real U.S. energy policy
- Subsidies to various industries
- Concerned w/maintaining cheap and abundant energy supply
- Major differences in opinion
- Attempts in policy development following OPEC embargo
- Development of CAFE standards
- Drilling in the ANWR

Climate Change and Energy Policy Alternatives

- Climate change as a major environmental issue
- Should it continued to be studied or should policy be developed based on current knowledge?
- What are the potential concerns?

Climate Change (cont'd)

Economic issues

- Raise energy taxes
 - gasoline taxes are low compared to rest of world
 - incentive to change behavior
- Raise fuel efficiency standards

Climate Change (cont'd)

Political issues

- Politicians will not raise gas taxes or CAFE standards
- Limit individual choice
- State movements
 - CA requiring automakers to limit emissions
 - subsidies for fuel efficient cars

Climate Change (cont'd)

Ethical issues

- Affect on select citizens
 - increase in gas tax
- Role of the U.S. in the world
- Intergenerational equity