

Environmental Policy and “Going Green”

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What Is Environmental Policy?

Concerned with how to govern the relationship between the environment and humans in a manner that is beneficial to both parties

Goals of Environmental Policy

- Reduce air pollution
- Improve access to clean water
- Promote waste and materials management
- Enhance joint preparedness for environmental response
- Enhance compliance assurance and environmental stewardship



“Going Green”

- Is “going green” a PR Stunt?
 - Can be used by companies to hide their not so eco friendly practices
 - Clothing company can make an eco friendly clothing line but fail to realize they are still a consumption based company
 - Greenwashing - a company claims that their products are “eco-friendly” without checking that they actually are
- Ideas behind “going green”
 - Conserve resources
 - Reduce pollution
 - Conserve energy
 - Reduce consumption
 - Reduce waste



Pros & Cons of Going Green

Pros

- Waste reduction
- Protection of natural resources
- Reduction in deforestation
- Less air pollution
- Less smog
- Improvements in overall health

Cons

- Organic products are generally more expensive
- Needs significant initial investment
- Can be costly for businesses
- Companies may use the term “green” for their own purposes



Federal Environment Legislation

- Clean Air Act - passed in 1963; aimed at reducing pollutants and their sources; national quality standards for ozone, lead, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter
- Clean Water Act - passed in 1972; establishes wastewater standards; makes it illegal to discharge pollutants in navigable waters without a permit through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
- Endangered Species Act - passed in 1973; authorizes listing species as endangered or threatened; federal government cannot take action that would result in the destruction or negatively affect a listed animal or its habitat
- Safe Drinking Water Act - passed in 1974; maintain the quality of water for above ground water and underground drinking water



Federal Agencies Involved

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - formed in 1970; “protect human health and the environment”
- U.S. Department of the Interior - established in 1849; manage natural resources
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) - formed in 1940; “conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.”
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) - formed in 1946; "to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations."



The Importance of Environmental Policy and Going Green

Environmental policy is important because it works to give citizens access to clean air, drinking water, and a healthier environment. It also forces the federal government to analyze the possible environmental impacts of its actions. Also, it holds companies accountable for anything they may do to harm the environment, like dumping toxic waste.

Going green can help reduce pollution (composting lowers greenhouse gas emissions), preserve wildlife (deforestation), and consumption (buying in moderation).



Questions

Do you think it's possible for the United States to “go green”? Can the world?

What are steps you can take to reduce the impact you have on the environment?

Should companies be held accountable for false claims made about their products being “green”? How can we insure that they are eco friendly?



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