

Sixth Edition

Environmental Policy and Politics

Michael E. Kraft

University of Wisconsin, Green Bay

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PREFACE

The 2012 presidential election gave President Barack Obama an additional four years to chart a new direction in U.S. environmental policy. His first term yielded a mixed record on the environment as he struggled with a lagging economy, bitterly contested health care reform, and ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Despite his pledge to tackle climate change, for example, the president found little public and political support to move ahead, and his White House failed to push the Senate to enact a cap-and-trade bill that would match a similar measure the House approved in 2009. Following the 2010 midterm elections that gave the Republicans control of the House, the president faced a largely hostile Congress on nearly every environmental and energy issue, forcing him to rely increasingly on executive actions rather than legislative initiatives. Republicans maintained control of the House after the 2012 elections, setting the stage for continued policy gridlock on the environment and many other issues.

Despite these political obstacles and policy disappointments, the Obama administration pursued a strikingly different environmental policy from that of President George W. Bush's administration. Environmentalists strongly criticized the Bush White House for its reluctance to tackle global climate change, its misuse or disregard of science, and for environmental protection and natural resource policies that strongly favored economic development over public health and resource conservation. President Obama charted a new path of action. It was evident in his appointees to important administrative posts, such as Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administrator, energy secretary, interior secretary, and science adviser in both his first and second terms; his budgetary proposals; and dozens of major regulatory actions on energy, environmental protection, and natural resource use.

In his inaugural address in January 2009, Obama promised to “restore science to its rightful place” and work to “harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories.” The new direction in environmental policy also was clear in Obama's massive economic stimulus package, which Congress approved in February 2009. It included tens of billions of dollars for energy efficiency, research and development of renewable energy sources, and support for mass transit, among other actions.

Although the president failed to gain congressional approval for climate change policy, he did negotiate an historic agreement with the auto industry to raise vehicle fuel economy standards to 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025. In addition, his EPA mounted major regulatory actions on air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and the Interior and Energy Departments sought to reverse the Bush priorities by emphasizing use of renewable energy resources and pursuing a more balanced approach to management of public lands.

Most of this was good news for environmentalists, who generally cheered the administration's new policy agenda even if they remained disappointed with the president's equivocation on the symbolically important Keystone XL

pipeline that was designed to bring Canadian tar sands oil to the United States, and his administration's support of offshore oil and gas development, among other actions. Yet environmental economists and policy analysts of all persuasions would add that the time is ripe for even more significant changes in U.S. environmental policies.

Many of those policies, including the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Endangered Species Act, are over 40 years old and they have remained substantially unchanged since their initial approval despite questions about their effectiveness, efficiency, and equity that date back to the late 1970s. Dozens of major studies have offered trenchant criticisms of the policies and have identified promising new approaches and methods. Indeed, many policy changes already have been adopted at the state and local level, where innovation and experimentation are far easier than they are at the national level of government, and through an array of administrative and judicial actions that required no approval by Congress. Nonetheless, more substantial policy changes are needed to deal effectively with twenty-first-century environmental challenges.

Future achievements depend on securing essential public and political support at a time of competing policy priorities, designing policies that best fit the problems faced, and implementing them effectively. This would be true even if the federal and state governments were flush with funds. But addressing these needs is even more critical in light of the soaring national debt and extraordinary federal budgetary deficits that will be with us for years to come.

If anything, environmental challenges at the global level are even more daunting. The world must learn how to respond creatively and effectively to the risks of global climate change and many other equally complex and difficult issues such as the destruction of forests and soils, the loss of biological diversity, and a surging human population that will likely rise to over 9.5 billion by 2050. No responsibility of government and society will be more difficult over the next generation than accommodating the level of economic development needed to meet human needs and aspirations while simultaneously averting devastating effects on the environmental systems that sustain life.

In industrialized nations such as the United States, this new environmental agenda makes clear the imperative of integrating environmental protection with other social and economic activities, from energy use and transportation to agriculture and urban planning. We can no longer afford to think of environmental policy as an isolated and largely remedial activity of cleaning up the residue of society's careless and wasteful habits. Emphasis must be placed on prevention of future harm through redesign of economic activities around the concept of sustainable development.

Achieving such goals requires that governments work closely with the private sector in partnerships that can spur technological innovations while avoiding the protracted conflicts that have constrained environmental policy in the past. This does not mean that tough regulation should be abandoned when it is necessary to achieve environmental goals. It does signal, however, the need to supplement regulation with other strategies and policy tools such

as information disclosure, market-based incentives, and collaborative decision making that promise to speed the realization of those goals or significantly lower the costs of getting there.

Whether governments and other organizations will succeed in resolving environmental problems of the twenty-first century ultimately will depend on public understanding, support, and actions. A new generation of environmental policies will require significant social and behavioral changes. This is evident if one merely thinks of energy use in homes and our choices in transportation and food. But demands on individuals and businesses will go far beyond these concerns. Meeting these needs is possible only if people educate themselves about the issues and work cooperatively for environmental sustainability. To be effective over the next several decades, environmentalists will need to hone their political skills and forge broader alliances with new constituencies around common interests in sustainability.

New to This Edition

This sixth edition of *Environmental Policy and Politics* has been updated and revised throughout.

- Each chapter includes the latest information about environmental challenges and governmental responses to them, with extensive citation of sources and Web sites that allow students to find the most recent studies and reports.
- Each chapter covers key political and policy decisions through 2013, including presidential appointments, budgetary decisions, major legislative initiatives of the Obama administration, and congressional actions.
- Chapters compare the Obama administration's major environmental, energy, and natural resource policies, and decisions to those of the George W. Bush administration and to earlier presidential administrations.
- The writing and flow of material have been improved throughout to make the chapters more accessible and useful to students.
- Each chapter's case studies have been changed or updated to include the latest developments and examples that should improve their appeal to students.
- Summaries of scientific studies, government reports, and policy analyses have been updated throughout the text to reflect the most current research and information in the field.
- All chapters include updated discussion questions and suggested readings.
- Each chapter introduction includes new statements about learning objectives to facilitate student understanding of key concepts and their applications, arguments advanced over environmental challenges and policies, and the goals and methods of environmental policy analysis.

Like the previous editions, the sixth edition offers a succinct overview and assessment of U.S. environmental policy and politics. It differs from other texts in several respects. It encourages students to judge environmental problems for

themselves, by reviewing evidence of the risk they present to human health and well-being as well as to ecological processes. It summarizes an extensive collection of scientific studies, government reports, and policy analyses to convey the nature of environmental problems, progress in dealing with them, and the implications of keeping or revising present policies. It covers global threats such as climate change and loss of biodiversity as well as national, state, and local problems of environmental pollution, energy use, and natural resource use and conservation. This text is available in a variety of formats—digital and print. To learn more about Pearson’s programs, pricing options and customization, visit www.pearsonhighered.com.

The book offers what most readers would want in any text of this kind. It describes major U.S. environmental and natural resource policies, their origins, the key policy actors who have shaped them, their achievements and deficiencies, and proposals for policy change. It offers a thorough, yet concise, coverage of the U.S. policymaking process, the legislative and administrative settings for policy decisions, and the role of interest groups and public opinion in environmental politics. Rather than offering separate chapters on each environmental problem (air, water, land, toxics, endangered species, energy use, and the like), it organizes the substantive policy material into related clusters of issues dealing with environmental protection and natural resources.

Chapter 1 introduces the subject of environmental policy and places it within the political and economic trends of the early twenty-first century that affect it. It also sets out a modest analytic framework drawn from policy analysis and environmental science that helps connect environmental policy to the political process. Chapter 2 follows up on this introduction by reviewing scientific evidence that speaks to the nature of various environmental problems, the risk they present to the public, and the policy implications.

Chapter 3 helps set the scene for the rest of the book by describing the U.S. policymaking process in broad terms, with a focus on agenda setting and the role of policy entrepreneurs. The chapter also identifies the main features of U.S. government and politics at federal, state, and local levels. Chapter 4 uses the concepts introduced in Chapter 3 to trace the evolution of environmental policy and politics from the earliest days of the nation through the emergence of the modern environmental movement and political reactions to it.

The core of the book, Chapters 5 and 6, turns to the basic character of U.S. environmental, energy, and natural resource policies. Chapter 5 discusses the leading environmental protection statutes administered by the U.S. EPA and their continuing evolution. It also describes and assesses the EPA’s work in implementing these policies, from its staffing and budgetary resources to its relationship with the states to the intricacies of standard setting, rule making, and enforcement actions.

Chapter 6 offers comparable coverage of energy and natural resource policies. The chapter outlines the history of efforts to design national energy policies in the last several presidential administrations, the adoption of new national energy policies in 2005 and 2007, and continuing efforts through 2013. It also

describes the evolution of natural resource policies and the many conflicts between natural resource protection and economic development.

Chapter 7 revisits the major critiques of environmental protection and natural resource policies discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, and it outlines new directions for policy change in the twenty-first century.

Finally, Chapter 8 looks to the future and to the need for global policy action. It describes the remaining policy agenda for the early twenty-first century, explores the goal of sustainable development, and describes the leading international environmental policy actors and institutions as well as limitations on their policymaking capacity.

A book like this has to cover a great deal of technical material on environmental problems and public policies. I have tried to make it all as current as possible, faithful to the scientific literature, and also understandable. If in some instances the text has fallen short of these goals, I hope readers will alert me to important omissions, misinterpretations, and other deficiencies. I can be reached at kraftm@uwgb.edu.

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In preparing a book manuscript one incurs many debts. The University of Wisconsin—Green Bay and its Department of Public and Environmental Affairs supplied me with essential support. The organization of the book and its content owe much to my teaching here. I am grateful to my undergraduate and graduate students, whose interest in environmental policy and politics gave me the opportunity to discuss these issues at length with concerned and attentive people as well as the chance to learn from them. I also have benefited immeasurably from the individuals whose analyses of environmental politics and policy, and U.S. government and politics, make a book like this possible. I hope the extensive references in the text adequately convey my reliance on their scholarship and my gratitude to them.

Reviewers of previous editions of the text, including Craig Allin of Cornell College, Larry Elowitz of Georgia College and State University, Daniel Lipson of SUNY New Paltz, and Leigh Raymond of Purdue University, offered thoughtful suggestions for revision, and I greatly appreciate their assistance. I also want to thank Maggie Brobeck, project manager at Pearson, and Prathiba Rajagopal, Project Manager at PreMedia Global, for her splendid copyediting and production work on the book. Naturally, I assume responsibility for any errors in the text that remain.

This book is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Louis and Pearl Kraft. Their compassion, generosity, and caring for their fellow human beings embodied the social concerns that today are reflected in an environmental ethic. They also provided me and my brothers with the opportunity to grow up in a stunning environment in southern California and experience the wonders of the desert, mountains, and ocean that exist in such close proximity in that part of the country.

Michael E. Kraft