

Portney, R. Paul and Robert N. Stavins (eds.) 2000. Public Policy for Environmental Protection (Second edition) Resources for the Future Press. Washington D.C. x + 286 pp. + index. Paper. Price: Unknown.

This is a new edition of Portney's and Stavins' book after a decade. It discusses changes in U.S. environmental policies especially with regard to how debates have expanded and the necessity for the review of policy development. This work is written to compliment texts and other readings in science, economics and politics of the environment.

It basically portrays six trends in environmental policy developments since 1989:

- 1) The increase in market-based instruments for environmental protection.
- 2) Proliferation of information provision programs
- 3) Moderate expansion in the use of benefit/cost analysis under several environmental statutes and executive orders
- 4) Distributional issues on both the benefits and cost sides of the regulatory equation—matters of environmental justice
- 5) Policy debates on global climate change
- 6) Surge of recycling activity—federal waste management.

The book contains an introduction and seven chapters which focus on many aspects of the environmental policy in the United States. The introduction discusses the six trends in environmental policy debates discussed in the U.S. since 1989 and summarizes the other chapters. In chapter 2, Paul R. Portney discusses "United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Evolution of Federal Regulation". Here, the author discusses the grounds for federal government's role in environmental, health and safety regulation. Particularly, the EPA's creation and growth in its responsibility is discussed. The role of EPA intervention in the environmental protection process is critically put to test. Environmental standards and monitoring for compliance as articulated by the EPA are examined and the problems faced by the EPA in an era of high expectation and constant change and public demand are highlighted.

The third chapter, Robert N. Stavins discusses market based environmental policies in which he argues that the choice of an environmental policies, goal and the mechanism of achieving such a goal do indeed have serious political ramifications. He examines the market based policy instruments, their characteristics and categories. This chapter is loaded with discussions of the United States experience with tradable permit programs such as EPA's Emission Trading, Lead Trading, Water Quality Trading, CFC Trading, and SO₂ Allowance Trading.

Paul R. Portney tackles the issues of air pollution policy in chapter four. He traces the history of air pollution control since 1880 through 1980 and gives a solid discussion of the new direction in air pollution control policy. In this chapter, Portney thoroughly explains the role of EPA in air pollution control effort and some of the problems the agency has faced in putting together “good” policy.

One of the emerging issues in the environmental debate is about climate change. The scope of climate change is worldwide and the possible worldwide economic and environmental impacts are enormous. In chapter 5, Jason F. Shogren and Michael A. Tomans examine the economic ramifications of climate change policy. The authors’ chapter focuses on the benefit/cost/risk aspects of climate change policy. The protection against the possible catastrophic impacts of climate change is a highly contested issue since it is unclear as to how exactly the climate is changing. The questions of why cost and benefit are important in the assessment of climate change policies and the uncertainties in measuring impacts, why well designed cost effective climate change policies are imperative in assessing impacts and finally strategically planned international agreements as means for coordinating global efforts for tackling the problem of climate change are central to the theme of this chapter.

A. Myrick Freeman, in chapter six, captures a historical and evolutionary perspective of the federal efforts with regard to water pollution control. The Federal Water Pollution Control Policy established a very comprehensive and ambitious apparatus for controlling the pollutants of U.S. waters. In this chapter, the author highlights the pertinent matters which occurred historically to elevate federal involvement in standard setting.

Chapter seven by Hillary Stigman examines hazardous waste and toxic substances regulation. The criteria for a substance to be considered hazardous are: flammability, corrosivity, reactivity and toxicity; examples of which include acids, bases, heavy metals, solvents, pesticides, phenols, methane, PCBs, disease agents and radio-active isotopes. Stigman provides a general discussion of the management methods of hazardous wastes. She attempts to provide the reader with recent trends in hazardous waste management.

A reader who is familiar with the hazardous waste management literature will recall that the best management option for dealing with hazardous waste is to minimize amount of waste generated by industrial processes, outputs and consumer purchasing behavior. Certainly the two major categories under which hazardous waste is controlled are: waste disposal methods and waste storage method. Sigman did not elaborate on these two categories but provided the reader with a solid and engaging discussion on Federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).

The author's discussion of Toxic Substances Control Act is informative as well as the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, and the Emergency Planning and Community--Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA).

The eighth chapter by Molly Macauley and Margaret Walls is basically a review of solid waste management policies in the United States. It should be recalled that most solid waste in the United States is produced indirectly by agricultural, mining, and industrial activities. The American municipalities produce less than five percent of the solid waste. The authors have concentrated on the generation and composition of the municipal solid waste. There are a number of reasons why federal and state responses to solid waste have focused on municipalities:

- 1) Waste are concentrated in urban areas
- 2) Municipal waste pose serious health hazards and should be sufficient and immediately dealt with
- 3) There is a felt inadequacy in handling the urban waste
- 4) Data is available on municipal waste because of high percentage of collection
- 5) One of the highest budget items of municipalities is the collection and disposal of urban waste

It stands to reason that the authors of the eighth chapter (Macauley and Walls) have put their efforts into reviewing federal efforts in solid waste policies. This is generally a good chapter.

Overall, this book is a must read by environmental policy scholars and should be a recommended text for courses in environmental studies and science.

Valentine James
Southern University
Baton Rouge, Louisiana