

The Clean Air and Water Acts (cont'd)

Dale H. Easley

University of Dubuque

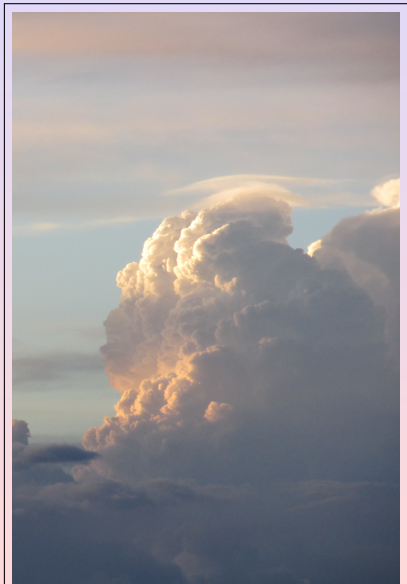


EPA: Executive Branch reorganization

- Separate from natural resource development
- Cabinet-level
- Focused upon pollution control
- Consolidate different programs across government



The Clean Air Act of 1970



- EPA to assume primary responsibility
- Established national air-quality standards
- Bill passed House 374-1 and Senate unanimously
- State implementation plans to follow

The Clean Water Act of 1972

- Tried executive orders first
- Courts involved, requiring EIS policy
- Early focus on municipal water treatment, then industry (point pollution)
- Bill passed Senate 86-0
- Nixon vetoed it but overridden



From legislation to regulation



- Concern about “regulatory capture” (See Andrew Wheeler recently)
- Acts required Feds to set standards
- Required public participation
- Impatience with market forces

Implementation



- Unmet deadlines and delays
- High administrative costs
- Organizational nightmare
- Lack of true support by Nixon
- NPDES

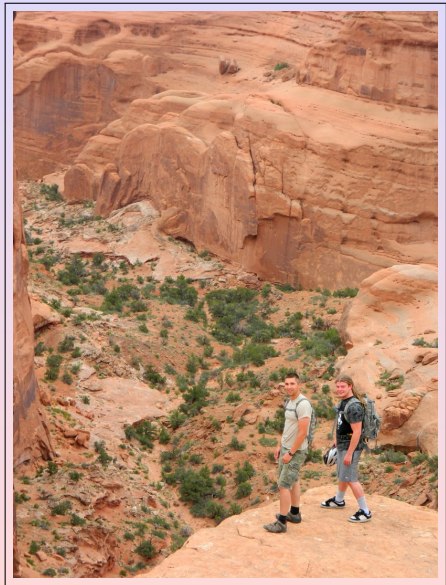
Backlash and a step back

- Energy crisis
- 1977 Amendments
- Move of EPA toward protecting human health



Challenges

- Reagan Administration
- Acid rain and wetlands
- Courts generally sided with regulation



Outcomes



- Progress!
- Not perfection
- Consistent attempts to undermine regulations

Current issues

- Climate change
- Use of public lands
- Political polarization



Making the connections



See how many you can make.