

# Day 10: The Political Setting

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# Road map

- Discuss the political settings of environmental policy making

# Groups, Groups, Groups

## Politics is about groups, not individuals

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- How do regulators navigate conflicting demands from groups??

# National Environmental Policy Act

## Key Points

- Passed in 1969
- Goal: increase federal agencies' responsiveness to environmental concerns
- Environmental impact statements required when federal agency actions affect human environment (broadly defined)
- Lots of broad, vague language
- Most litigated piece of federal environmental policy
- Thus, courts have heavily shaped implementation: enforcement, context of EIS, what constitutes "environment"

# Environmental Impact Statements

Not going to go into great depth about impact statements, but happy to discuss them further as we progress through specific policy topics

## One Take-Home Reminder

*“Although NEPA contains both procedural requirements and a number of substantive recommendations, the courts have not enforced any of the substantive language. In effect this means that once the procedures have been followed and the EIS prepared, an agency may then go forward with its plans regardless of the negative impacts these plans may actually have on the environment (Smith 100)”*