The administration of President Ronald Reagan has been regularly and vehemently denounced by environmentalists for its systematic, policy-driven, and ideology-based efforts to dismantle the programs and policies carefully fostered during more than a decade of effort to protect the environment and to develop an ecological consciousness. In the name of "getting the government off of our backs" it delayed and mismanaged the toxic wastes program, and it accelerated coal and oil leasing on the public lands and the outer continental shelf. It endeavored to relax the rules that govern air and water pollution; it failed to move ahead in the development and implementation of measures necessary to protect the groundwater resources of the nation and to ensure against destruction of lakes and streams through runoff from acid rain. It crippled the power of the Environmental Protection Agency by drastically reducing its budget and by appointing individuals to policy-making posts who would participate in this dedicated assault. It protested that its policies were not antienvironmental, but rather "balanced"; yet they clearly diverged from policies perceived necessary by those active in the environmental movement.

But a catalog of the errors of commission and omission by the Reagan administration is only part of the environmental history of the 1980s; nor would a similar listing of environmental policies by administrations in the 1970s suffice to provide an adequate under-
standing of environmental activity during that decade. Environmental policy is not an artifact of administrations, grandly enunciated by presidents, duly enacted by responsive legislatures, and efficiently administered by the executive establishment. It is rather a jerry-built structure in which innumerable individuals, private groups, bureaucrats, politicians, agencies, courts, political parties, and circumstances have laid down the planks, hammered the nails, plastered over the cracks, made sometimes unsightly additions and deletions, and generally defied "holistic" or "ecological" principles of policy design. That environmentally protective policies were adopted and implemented with modest effectiveness is obvious. But equally obvious is the failure of public policy to achieve a consistent and coherent environmental orientation that would withstand the intrusions of well-meaning and not-so-well-meaning interests which have not caught the vision of a terrestrial ecological paradise.

The missing element in this characterization of the Reagan period is the continuous, vigilant, and effective opposition to administration policies, mobilized both within the government and without, by politicians, bureaucrats, and private groups in forums that provide opportunities for effective sabotage of administration policy. The administration's policy to render previous environmental policies ineffective renders itself at least partially ineffective. No administration can expect its program to be adopted unscathed by opponents who are often in control of the Congress, influential in the bureaucracy, and who have access to the media.

That the politics of environmental policymaking is a process of dramatic advances, incomplete movement in the "right" direction, frequent and partial retrogression, sometimes illogical and contradictory combinations of policies, and often excessive cost should come as no surprise to students of American politics. Environmental policies reflect the dominant structures and values of the American political system. Although the Lowi formulation (Lowi 1962) that policies determine politics rather than the other way around has considerable appeal, it is at least arguable that the character and vitality of public policy making in all sectors of the economy—including environmental policy—are the product of the overall institutional structure, i.e., the manner in which private interests relate to government, the channels of communication, the resources they can bring to bear, the access to leadership positions of various groups within society, the internal relations of groups having power within the government, the capacity to generate information, and the strategic opportunities either to advance initiatives or to veto the initiative of others.

Thus, we are led to a consideration of the character of the institutional structure of the American political system and what it bodes for the future of the environmental movement. This examination of the dominant features of the American polity is derived from analyses by some of its leading interpreters, speculation about the future character of the polity, and an analysis of the implications of various future political structures for environmental policy. This study addresses the following questions: Is the fragmentation perceived by most commentators uniformly detrimental to the cause of environmentalism? Would more centralized, coherent, hierarchical structures be preferable? What would be the consequences of institutional change? How likely is it to occur? Who would benefit and who would lose? Can one foresee the consequences or would many unforeseen, and perhaps unwanted, results occur?

The Character of the American Polity

Even to sketch the American political system in its most general outlines is perilous for much lies in the eye of the beholder. Nevertheless, the dominant theme today appears to be the enduring and perhaps increasing fragmentation of social and economic life and the reflection of this societal fragmentation in political life. Kevin Phillips finds that this "Balkanization" of American life reflects the:

- reemergence of ethnicity; the proliferation of sexual preference and religious cults; the new political geography of localism and neighborhoods; the substitution of causes for political parties; the fragmentation of government; the narrowing of personal loyalties in general; the twilight of authority (Phillips 1982, 74).

The institutional response to this societal fragmentation is fragmentation of the structures through which public policy decisions are made. Charles Lindblom states that one of the problems we face in solving social problems by mutual adjustment is:

- that responsibility is excessively fragmented. Policy making is ostensibly a legislative responsibility. Decades ago it became clear that the initiative actually lies with the president. But he can hardly make policy without the cooperation of Congress, and Congress often goes its own way. For that matter, individual committees and their chairmen go their own ways. And the federal government denies responsibilities that it claims should be taken by the states. They
reciprocate by throwing responsibilities onto the federal government. The fragmentation goes even further. On some issues, a likely source of initiative might be a corporation, a union, or some other private organization. But an ordinary citizen often does not know where to look for action. Many of us come to despair that anyone will act, or we believe that if anyone acts, some other person or organization will stand in the way (Lindblom 1977, 345).

Anthony King describes American politics as quintessentially the process of coalition formation: the bringing together of distinctive political formations which themselves have sufficient cohesiveness to constitute blocs out of which majority coalitions can be fashioned. But American politics has become atomized:

American politicians continue to try to create majorities; they have no option. But they are no longer, or at least not very often, in the business of building coalitions. The materials out of which coalitions might be built simply do not exist. Building coalitions in the United States today is like trying to build coalitions out of sand. It cannot be done (King 1978, 391).

Summing up an analysis of the changes in the American polity since the New Deal by a distinguished group of political scientists, King finds that there is indeed a “new” political system. The two major changes have been the decline in the idea that government, particularly the federal government, should solve the country’s ills and the growth of the conviction that ordinary men and women should participate fully in decision making in government (King 1978, 371–73). Accompanying these major changes in public sentiment have been institutional changes that make coalition formation—and therefore the ability to govern—more difficult: a weakened presidency, a further decentralized Congress, a party system in continuing decline, the growth in number and strength of narrowly based interest groups and their political arms, an apathetic electorate more oriented to issues than to parties, and the growth of “issue networks” as substitutes for the formerly more robust and more overtly popular and political instrumentalities of governance (King 1978, 373–80).

What are the consequences of a political system that cannot create majorities through the political party system and that cannot bring together coalitions through a process of wedding substantial blocs of interests and populations on a more or less enduring basis? In addition to the obvious difficulties for leadership, King finds two possible consequences: the increasing difficulty in predicting what the results of one’s actions will be because no one can deliver what he or she promises and, perhaps more importantly, “a tendency to move either very sluggishly or with extreme speed.” On major issues, such as energy questions, it is virtually impossible to obtain political agreement on a rational political and economic package. On others, almost random forces suddenly come together and produce rapid and sometimes totally ill-advised results.

Theodore Lowi describes the existing political system somewhat differently but in terms that are not incongruent with the foregoing analysis. In the second edition of The End of Liberalism, he concludes that the result of interest-group liberalism—that system that promotes the positive state in the interest of a broad range of groups within American society—has been the Second Republic or a state of permanent receivership. This state is one in which the government maintains a steadfast position that any institution large enough to be a significant factor in the community may have its stability underwritten. It is a system of policies that sets a general floor under risk, either by attempting to eliminate risk or to reduce or share the costs of failure. The stress here is on class or power elite. . . . The state of permanent receivership is reassuring for interest groups of any sort. It is also consistent with the goals of large state bureaucracies, because in concept and in practice permanent receivership is deeply conservative. It respects all skills and all existing social contrivances; above all it respects the established jurisdictions of government agencies and the established territories of private corporations and groups (Lowi 1979, 280).

Having granted positive support for wide-ranging and pervasive sets of policies that reduce risk for various interests in society, American government has been virtually immobilized. Every group, including the bureaucracy, has a stake in the existing system and each resists changes that have negative implications of their guaranteed well-being. In effect, there exists a grand coalition consisting of all the major interests in society. On the most important issues, it resists change and thus opposes innovation. Lowi describes its consequences thusly:

Receivership policies permit and encourage economically irrational uses of resources by encouraging expansion beyond demand or by encouraging the retention of inefficient firms or processes. Worse yet, as discretionary policies, they are most likely to partake of all the political tendencies already ascribed to other discretionary policies. . . . (Lowi 1979, 291).
These are closed systems of policy making by professional politicians, with few opportunities for discussion and education regarding policy options and the priorities and moralities that underlie them. Lowi would probably agree with Graeme Duncan's description of such a government as an "arthritic octopus" incapable of governing because the excess of demands over resources leads to "indecisiveness and muddle" (Duncan 1983, 4).

Walter Dean Burnham describes the American polity in terms similar to Lowi: the political capitalist state. Its principal characteristics are the intervention of the state to provide social harmony, and this, in turn, creates "feudalities of political power" in which programs take on lives of their own, carefully shielded from public influence. Mobilized interests and their leadership follow bureaucratic and litigation strategies, avoiding broad public involvement in large part. Lacking broad public support, given regimes suffer serious problems of legitimacy. Burnham states:

> In the absence of overwhelming support for a national agenda, politicization of issues has led to fragmentation both of policy and of political coalitions. The search for social harmony through public sector activity thus negates itself so long as political consciousness and organization are in their present conditions (Burnham 1982, 301).

Despite the gains in material well-being and protection from risk, large segments of the public withdraw their support from the political system, disenchanted with a system that promises much, delivers some, but fails to persuade that there is a rationality and sense of purpose to the entire enterprise.

Burnham sees the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan as a watershed, not itself creating realignments, but "a realignment after the fact" (Burnham 1982, 14). He finds in the election of Reagan:

> not merely the roll-back of the domestic political-capitalist state. Its core is the reversal of both the theory and practice of social harmony that has dominated public policy under administrations of both parties for the past half-century. The right is once again attempting to prove that Marx lives: a one-sided class struggle on behalf of the rich has been proclaimed in place of this social harmony (Burnham 1982, 14).

Burnham does not necessarily foresee the victory of the cause that the Reagan forces represent, but rather a critical period of transition leading to some new political forms for American society.

One of the structural questions that most analysts examine is whether the 1980 Reagan election constitutes a true realignment of the political forces of American life. A realignment presumably would be found in insignificant shifts in major blocs of voters responding to a new set of issues that have become dominant concerns of those blocs. Everyone hedges on this question, but each foresees the possibility that such a realignment has, or is, taking place. Seymour Martin Lipset observes:

> The Republicans have, in effect, built an electorally viable, though unstable, coalition of affluent economic conservatives and less educated, more religious, social conservatives. Inflation, the main economic problem of recent times, fosters acceptance of a conservative solution—cutbacks in government spending and activity—even by the relatively underprivileged (Lipset 1981, 32).

Lipset argues, however, that significant majorities have accepted social-welfare, regulatory, and planning activities as proper. The polls show that the public favors "a more efficient, less wasteful, lower cost version of the welfare state—i.e., reformed but not abolished" (Lipset 1981, 32).

Like Burnham, Samuel Huntington finds the explanation of American politics rooted principally in the attachment of all segments of the public to what he calls the American creed. While diffuse and underdeveloped, the tenets of this creed constitute the "liberal tradition" of American society: majority rule, minority rights, individual liberty, the rule of law, equality, and suspicion of governmental authority. The public refuses to recognize the inconsistencies among these values and refuses to give priority of one over the other (Huntington 1981, 14-16). In contrast to European society, the American consensus is political, not "organic," i.e., based on social cohesion, and it forms the basis of our national identity.

Huntington states: "The essence of the Creed is opposition to power and concentrated authority" (Huntington 1981, 237). Given that:

> No government can exist without some measure of hierarchy, inequality, arbitrary power, secrecy, deception, and established patterns of super-ordination and subordination. The American Creed ... challenges the legitimacy of all these characteristics of government and runs counter to the nature of highly bureaucratized and centralized modern government. Because of the inherently antigovernment character of the American Creed, government that is
strong is illegitimate, government that is legitimate is weak (Huntington 1981, 39).

Huntington questions whether the creed will allow an effective system of government. Tracing the history of the 1960s and 1970s, he finds many of the characteristics noted by others: weakened parties and presidency, and a vast increase in the influence of the media. He finds, in conclusion, “a more equitable society, a more open politics, a more cynical public and a less authoritative and effective government” (Huntington 1981, 220).

Lindblom pointedly asks, “Just what is wrong with the fragmented interaction through which policy is made in the United States?” The answer, in general terms, is the way in which formal and informal vetoes are widely distributed in the polyarchic system. Nearly every initiative is susceptible to the veto by a group that has an intense interest in the issue and that can usually find some strategic location in which to exercise it. But Lindblom finds this system more perilous today because issues and problems are not simply distributive questions of the traditional sort but are increasingly collective in nature. And this leads to the vetoes exercised by private and predominantly business interests:

A market system requires that on many points the enterprise be legally protected in a right to say no to the state. More important, its privileged position permits it to obstruct policies such as those on environmental pollution and decay, energy shortage, inflation and unemployment, and distribution of income and wealth. As we have seen, business need do no more than persuade government officials that reforms will damage business. Their vetoes are powerful and ubiquitous (Lindblom 1977, 347).

A veto system designed to protect civil liberties, to allow opportunities for access to the political system, and even to ensure a reasonably fair distribution of the goods and services of society may be incapable of dealing with issues that involve putting “society on the road to catastrophe” (Lindblom 1977, 349). Like Lindblom, Cigler and Loomis state that the problem of interest-group politics is not just one of responding to specific interests but to the collective needs of society, “and here the success of individual interest may foreclose the possibility of overall responsiveness. The very vibrancy and success of contemporary groups help contribute to a society that finds it increas-

ingly difficult to formulate possible solutions to complex policy questions” (Cigler and Loomis 1983, 78).

Foreseeable American Policy

The previous studies are, for the most part, long on analysis but relatively short on foresight and prediction. Hegel is invoked by Jeane Kirkpatrick in trying to predict the future of the political system, particularly the electoral system. Hegel, she writes, noted that the owl flies only in the gathering dusk and presumably knows when the sun is setting. Political observers, on the other hand, “find it difficult to be sure even when it is high noon” (Kirkpatrick 1978, 285). This is understandable, but lacking the means of judging accurately the nature of future institutional structures means we must rely more on intuition, extrapolations of existing trends, and probably not a little on our own preferences regarding decision-making arrangements.

Burnham refuses to provide specific possibilities for the future and speculates that each of the two present options—political capitalism and neo-laissez-faire capitalism—might fail and be challenged seriously by a large-scale social democratic opposition. Dismissing socialism as unrealistic, Burnham sees only two alternatives on the horizon: a continuation of political capitalism, which he finds bankrupt, and neo-laissez-faire capitalism which he identifies with the forces supporting Ronald Reagan. Political capitalism is bankrupt because it is incapable of making hard choices. It relies on “assured, sustained economic growth, precisely the condition that no longer exists” (Burnham 1982, 310). Neo-laissez-faire capitalism, on the other hand, is prepared to make hard choices and to engage in class warfare. He states that the prospects of success for these forces are not particularly bad. Effective opposition, he concludes, will arise only if it has become radicalized and has accepted the class struggle. But he also holds out the specter of neither major approach succeeding, leaving open the possibility of a full-scale regime crisis “wholly equal in its importance and implications to the greatest such crises in modern world history” (Burnham 1982, 313).

Piven and Cloward echo Burnham in foreseeing the possibility of a social democratic movement arising from the ashes of a failed return to nineteenth-century capitalism (Piven and Cloward 1982, 33-41). They largely agree with Burnham in his analysis of the politics of the 1960s and 1970s as increasing demands for governmental pro-
I. Introduction

Programs and thus threats of overload to the system. But they argue that the principal features of these developments—political participation by previously excluded groups and the grand scale of income transfer programs—have led to a deep ideological transformation. This transformation was found in the recognition by ordinary people that their political and economic rights are intertwined. The less advantaged find government to be an instrument capable of improving the quality of their lives. Piven and Cloward believe there is no majority for revitalization of American capitalism; rather, the underclasses who voted for Reagan are concerned with a revitalization of the social institutions of the past and are in fact a hindrance to the program of the right. The 1980 election confirmed that Americans have gained a profound sense of economic and political entitlement. This consciousness of rights and governmental obligations portends the future victory of these popular forces, building on the inevitable failure of the forces of the right to refurbish capitalism.

As the fog of Republican-right propaganda dissipates, the alternatives become clearer. On the one side, there is the incoherence, the hardship, and the insult of what Burnham calls neo-laissez-faire. On the other side, there is the large opportunity for articulating the convictions already implicit in American political culture, and for strengthening those convictions and giving them programmatic form. On the other side, in short, there is the large opportunity for an American social democratic movement (Piven and Cloward 1982, 41).

Samuel Beer and Anthony King are less apocalyptic in their diagnosis of the state of the republic and therefore less inclined to see such sharply etched alternatives for the United States in the years ahead. Beer traces the decline of the New Deal movement to its breakdown by the 1970s. The 1960s brought technocratic approaches to public policy making and exalted the role of the expert and professional. It also brought the romanticism of the counter-culture, and these merged in the programs of the Great Society with their emphasis on participation. Both approaches contained illusions of perfectability—technological and moral—and both brought a significant measure of disillusionment. Beer describes conservatism as “decentralized activism”; it is derived from a basic concern for liberty and may be distinguished from the rugged individualism of the past. This concern for liberty was also reflected in attacks on bureaucracy, attacks largely shared by strains of liberals who were disappointed in the limited victories of the Great Society. Beer concludes that some vestiges of the old New Deal coalition survive, but they provide “only confused and partial answers and exercise only feeble powers of aggregation.”

Despite all this:

One should not exaggerate. We do not enjoy a public philosophy. But there is such a thing as equilibrium without purpose. The balance of social forces today tends toward a kind of peace. Moreover, a great hinterland of common belief, the American political tradition, helps to hold conflicts within manageable limits and to enable exchange, economic and political, to flourish. The question is whether the nation will be able to elicit from this body of belief the forces of renewal constituting a new public philosophy (Beer 1978, 41).

King observes that in the absence of crisis—he does not specify how severe or how prolonged—the polity may continue to function successfully. Even with a major crisis, he foresees the development of “new, more stable structures and alignments and possibly even a new public philosophy” (Beer 1978, 394). But the one example he points to in response to severe crisis is a movement back toward a more powerful presidency. He does not foresee the survival of political parties in their traditional form, regardless of whether or not there is a crisis. To the question, who is in charge? King replies, “No one.” However:

Such an answer need not be a cause for dejection. Things will go on happening; the United States has shown considerable capacity for running itself. New structures and new leadership will almost certainly emerge. In the meantime, even if the American political landscape is largely new, the old, familiar landmarks still stand. If one feels disoriented, one may also take some reassurance. The republic has endured for more than two hundred years; it seems likely to endure for a good deal longer (Beer 1978, 395).

And probably along lines that we would all recognize as dominant characteristics of the polity today.

Loffe is more inclined to despair. “The costs of the Second Republic are mounting. The specter of an entrenched Second Republic, while not totalitarianism or turmoil, is nevertheless a profound affront to the American dream. It is a nightmare of administrative boredom” (Loffe 1979, 313). Because prescription mixes so substantially with description of the existing system, Loffe’s view of the future is difficult to glean. But he concludes that the possibilities of drastic constitutional change and adoption of his new “juridical democracy” are high.
because of the weaknesses of interest-group liberalism. In contrast with the latter prevailing system, juridical democracy would provide laws that are more precise guides to actions and thus better plans; justice because laws would be based on principles, not expediency; stronger democratic forms because it would restore Congress to its former place of primacy in the political system; and greater power to accomplish the polity’s purposes because the bureaucracy would have the clear mandates. Lowi is entirely unclear about the likelihood that the affront to the American dream will become widely recognized and rejected as a premise for political action or about how high the costs must mount before juridical democracy will be adopted. As such, juridical democracy remains a vision and not a basis for predicting one’s own future prescriptions for the environmental movement.

Huntington sees problems in achieving effective government but doubts that the American people’s attachment to the American creed will diminish significantly. There are epochs of creedral passion throughout our history where one element may achieve the ascendancy, yet:

American values and ideals have demonstrated tremendous persistence and resiliency in the twentieth century. Defined vaguely and abstractly, these ideals have been relatively easily adapted to the needs of successive generations. The constant social change in the United States, indeed, underlies their permanence. Rising social, economic and ethnic groups need to reinvigorate and reinvigorate those values in order to promote their own access to the rewards of American society (Huntington 1981, 230).

Institutional change might occur owing to tensions rising from the ever-present, but intensified, perceptions of the gap between ideals and reality. He predicts unsettling periods of moralism, cynicism, complacency, and hypocrisy typical of the past with consequences no more serious than those in the past. Less likely, but more dangerous, would be moralistic extremism that “could generate a strong tide toward authoritarian institutions” (Huntington 1981, 232). Extremists would weaken government and make it incapable of dealing with the economic, social, and foreign challenges and thus lead to demands, perhaps successful, for authoritarianism. “If Americans ever abandon or destroy these institutions, they are likely to do so in the name of their liberal democratic ideals” (Huntington 1981, 235).

This recapitulation of prevailing opinion portrays a political system founded on public hostility toward government and the exercise of state authority; relatively weak and decentralized political insti-
utions incapable of bearing the burdens of an overloaded agenda; an increasingly bureaucratic system of decision making in which private interests, especially the interests of business, are protected and promoted; and a fragmented polity in which the formation of enduring political coalitions cannot exist.

Estimates of short- and long-run consequences of this state of affairs are widely divergent. Some argue that this situation is likely to prevail into the future, barring severe crisis (a slippery term indeed), and they are complacent about such a possibility. Others see the rise of a capitalist-oriented coalition as a major, positive development, freeing business and the public from stultifying intervention by government. Still others see the rise of social democracy from the ashes of a failed attempt to revise or reinvigorate the political-capitalist state.

Each of us has to make his or her judgment about the future political conditions that will prevail and the time frame in which those conditions will come into being. The remainder of this chapter attempts to tease out of this analysis some implications of these political structures and prevailing public sentiments for environmental policy.

Environmental Policy as an Issue on the Political Agenda

William Ophuls agrees with Huntington’s characterization of the American political system, but severely and eloquently indicts the political system as it applies to environmental policy (Ophuls 1977). He is critical of the acceptance of the marketplace in economics and the marketplace in politics. Both keep ends out of politics and focus on means in order to avoid conflict. Producers dominate both sectors to the detriment of the poor and the environment. He explains:

In reality, the ‘American political system’ is almost a misnomer. What we really have is a congeries of unintegrated and competitive subsystems pursuing conflicting ends—a non-system. And our overall policy of accepting the outcome of due process means that in most particulars we have non-policies. Now, however, just as in economics, the externalities produced by this laissez-faire system of non-policies have become unacceptable. Coping with the consequences of ecological scarcity will require explicit, outcome-oriented political decisions taken in the name of some conception of an ecological, if not a political and social, common interest (Ophuls 1977, 189).
He condemns "muddling through" for its emphasis on short-term solutions, for failing to focus on goals and principles. He laments administrative fragmentation and the overload of both the political and bureaucratic elements of government. He argues that a paradigm change is required, one that rejects growth and abundance as its basic presuppositions. He admits that lack of knowledge and intellectual capacity, as well as uncertainty regarding agreement of values, makes synoptic decision making difficult, but he argues that we must at least in the short run improve the quality of our muddling through.

The new paradigm he finds for the steady state is clearly a rejection of the liberal democratic state. He asserts the primacy of the community over the individual; a movement away from liberty toward authority; albeit limited rules and constitutional rule by the competent rather than by the egalitarian rules of democratic politics; and the abandonment of the marketplace for economic decision making. Ophuls contends that the adoption of this new paradigm does not necessarily lead to the omnicompetent and oppressive state. He tends to reject planning that involves active management by a bureaucracy while accepting governance by design criteria, that is, rigidly enforced rules that would limit in significant ways the manner in which people behave with respect to the environment (licenses for babies, speed limits, energy rations, etc.). According to Ophuls:

The essential task of the political and social philosopher of the steady state is therefore to devise design criteria that will be just as effective and compelling as those of nature in creating an organic and harmonious climax civilization but that are neither so ruthless nor so cruel (Ophuls 1977, 229).

Ultimately he foresees the development of a localistic, decentralized society, frugal, communally oriented, and in balance with the natural world of which it is but a part.

One of the questions environmentalists must address is the place of environmental policy on the political agenda. How salient are environmental issues? Are they issues likely to attract or repel large blocs of voters at election time? To what extent will legislators respond to environmentalist pressure? Will the president make environmental issues a major consideration in his legislative program? What will the president be willing to sacrifice to ensure the protection and enhancement of environmental values?

There is continuing evidence that the public supports a sustained effort to improve the quality of the environment and the elimination of pollution. Public opinion polls show that such preferences remain strong even in the Reagan administration, which has demonstrated beyond doubt its unwillingness to support environmental programs adopted during the 1970s (Harris 1981; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 1980, 28-30).

But it is equally clear that environmental protection is only one issue—perhaps only a subsidiary issue—in the conflict at the electoral level and an issue subject to considerable compromise at policy-making levels in the White House, Congress, and in the bureaucracy. Environmentalism scarcely receives mention among the analysts mentioned above, and it is clearly subsidiary to the dominant issues of economic policy and social relations. Lipset, for example, identifies the dominant economic and social dimension as the principal dimension around which coalitions form: income tax, social security, medical care, antidepressant measures, crime, the family, civil rights and civil liberties, abortion, and even military preparedness. Environmental issues do not find their place in this catalog of issues around which majority and minority factions coalesce (Lipset 1978, 445).

Environmentalism does not easily fit with the set of issues usually associated with liberalism in American politics. Liberals, mostly Democrats, have been principally concerned with expanding the economic pie, especially for purposes of raising the well-being of the dispossessed of American society. The antigrowth characteristics of the environmental movement thus create direct conflicts with liberal goals (Lipset 1979, 24). Ben Wattenberg expresses the conflict vigorously and colorfully:

The environmental agenda—in all its faces—hasn't changed much because the environmental mentality hasn't changed much; they still think something called "the single family home ethic" is rather tacky, that "suburban sprawl" is best likened to cancerous growth, that the "age of abundance is over" even if they have to legislate it out of existence, or create pseudo science to provide self-fulfilling prophecies regarding limits to growth (Wattenberg 1978, 390).

His Vigorous Growth Coalition would consist of labor, business, and the poor. The poor, he argues, are often deluded into thinking that environmentalists are "liberals," but they should look for their help elsewhere.

With the 1980 election, Gerald Pomper concludes, the New Deal coalition came to an end, but he sees no place for the environmental movement in the new coalition that may arise out of the Democrats’ defeat (Pomper et al. 1981). In his extended investigation of the Carter-
Reagan electoral battle, Burnham does not find environmental issues important, although he may have included them among those "government intervention" issues that caused significant alienation among some voters. Instead, he emphasizes traditional economic issues and how they affected various segments of the voting population (Burnham 1982, 268-313).

It may be argued that environmentalism is a significant crosscutting issue, that is, one that does not easily fit into the prevailing issue sets that divide the loyalties of most voters. Both Burnham (1982) and James Sundquist (1973) raise this possibility. But it is clear that environmentalism has not yet become a sufficiently powerful crosscutting force to lead to a structural realignment of voters. Environmentalism as an issue appears to appeal to segments of the voting population in both parties and thus gains its strength from supporters in both parties regardless of which party actually gains the presidency or the ascendancy in Congress. For this reason, it is not surprising—personalities aside—that one of the serious political debacles of the Reagan administration happened in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Major elements within both parties found unacceptable the cutbacks in the efforts of EPA and the rank politicization of its programs. On the other issues concerning the central core of the ideology of the Reagan administration, even revelations such as those in EPA might not have evoked such a response. In 1980, environmentalism was tested as a core organizing issue in Barry Commoner’s campaign for the presidency. Commoner captured a minute fraction of the total popular vote and made no significant difference in the outcome of the electoral vote anywhere.

Fragmentation and Access for Environmentalists

Fragmentation is one of the principal characteristics of the American political system; it is difficult to maintain a coherent, disciplined structure of decision-making; power is too widely diffused, making veto politics, and irrational and incoherent compromises the dominant characteristics of the policy-making process. What does this mean for environmentalists?

Given its inability to demand a place on the policy agenda because of its transcendent importance to voters and politicians, the fragmented structure provides opportunities for environmentalists to undertake initiatives, put together their own ad hoc coalitions, and gain a significant measure of success they might not achieve in a more orderly, coherent process where a clear center of power exists.

Ingram and Ullery have cogently argued this point, using environmental legislation as the focus of their analysis (Ingram and Ullery 1980, 664-82). All policies produce costs and benefits—which may be classified as direct and indirect, structural and symbolic—and the political system must calculate how these will be distributed in fashioning new policy. Ingram and Ullery set forth their argument about costs and benefits in policy making in a number of propositions:

A fragmented policy system facilitates entrepreneurship because the multiplicity of different policy settings and widely dispersed resources increases opportunity and motivation for risk-taking involved in innovative change.

Goal-seeking and problem-solving individuals in diverse settings are accorded both the opportunity and the resources to get a new idea going; a more centralized, hierarchical structure would suppress such efforts:

A fragmented policy structure lowers the cost of policy innovation because it permits different interests to be served along different dimensions.

A fragmented structure permits multiple actors and multiple political units to initiate, participate, and take part in coalitional activity that may produce results where a hierarchical structure might not:

Competition between units in a fragmented political structure prompts the vying units toward commitments in areas of competitive advantage resulting in large policy change.

Competing units in a given policy arena contend for supremacy and thus engage in a process of innovative thinking somewhat akin to entrepreneurs in a private market. More highly centralized and hierarchical decision structures are less likely to feel that competitive impulse:

A fragmented decision system creates greater legitimacy for innovative policy because it facilitates the accommodation of diverse interests.

The costs and benefits of policy can be spread more generally, and perhaps more equitably, by a fragmented structure than by a more
centralized structure that concerns itself with technical or economic rationality.

The history of the environmental movement during the 1970s appears to support this argument. While the rhetoric of the Nixon and Ford administrations was not stridently anti-environmental, their orientation was clearly toward the private sector, business, and, relatively speaking, reduction in the scope and cost of government. Initiatives for environmental legislation clearly lay with the legislative branch. The passages of the Clean Air Act of 1970 and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments in 1972 was the result of the policy entrepreneurship of members of Congress such as Senator Edmund Muskie and Congressman John Blatnik. Passage of the National Environmental Policy Act was also the result of congressional initiative. In fact, virtually all 1970s environmental legislation was either sponsored by members of Congress in association with leading environmental groups—often over the opposition of business groups and with the reluctant acquiescence of Republican administrations—or, in the Carter administration, as a joint effort between committees of Congress and executive agencies.

It may be argued that environmental protection is now part of the permanent agenda of government. Protection of publicly owned resources and abatement of pollution have been, and are likely to remain, substantial responsibilities of both the federal and state governments, even though there will be changes from time to time. In an administration basically unsympathetic to these responsibilities, the leadership in the Reagan administration is yet incapable of turning them away. Its efforts to modify substantially the Clean Water Act have met stony resistance in Congress. Efforts to weaken EPA, both financially and in terms of the scope of its responsibilities, led to the firing of the top leadership of that agency and the return of its first administrator, William Ruckelshaus, who had gained a reputation as a reasonable, but tough, advocate of environmental protection and enforcer of environmental laws.

Events at EPA may have had repercussions in other parts of the government. For example, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which had been lax in its efforts to regulate carcinogens during the first years of the Reagan administration, by mid-1983 began to take a new look at its policies. As one observer stated, “there is mounting evidence that one of the Reagan administration’s most ambitious efforts at deregulation—the easing of controls over cancer-causing substances—has been all but permanently derailed” (Wines 1983, 1264). Former Secretary of the Interior James Watt had some notable successes in opening up the public lands to energy development and redirecting parkland acquisition policy, but then was frustrated, “stymied or reversed by outraged public reactions, by congressional veto or by court-ordered prohibitions” (Mosher 1983, 1230). By the end of the first year of the Reagan administration, environmental groups had launched a broad and coordinated legal assault on “regulatory massive resistance,” covering infractions of the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the Toxic Substances Control Act, the Wilderness Act, oil and gas leasing, and energy development on the public lands (Mosher 1981, 223).

On the other hand, the same fragmented system that provided opportunities for fractional groups when public pressures were sufficiently intense made further progress very difficult after the initial wave had passed and other issues took a more prominent place on the political agenda. The result may be what Cook and Davidson call “deftail politics.” Their examination of political struggles in Congress during the Reagan years leads them to conclude that “reformers who accomplished breakthroughs in environmental issues in the 1970s were replaced by political brokers, bureaucrats and technicians. The mode of decision making shifted from ambitious to incremental, administrative, and technical . . .” (Cook and Davidson 1984, 33). Even though much environmental legislation is recognized as excessively burdensome, often imposing unnecessary costs and administrative complexity:

Congress—cross-pressured, consumed with environmental funding battles, and often at war with itself—has been unable to formulate incremental policy amendments which were appropriate at this stage in the development of environmental law. In a climate of uncertainty and conflict surrounding policy making on conservation measures in the 1980s, Congress succeeded in postponing program revisions on six major environmental bills, keeping them alive simply through continuing appropriations or short-term extensions. (Cook and Davidson 1984, 34)

Thus, the fragmented system betrayed those who had used it so effectively, thwarting their efforts to extend their gains, to fine-tune the policy systems they had created, and to launch new major environmental initiatives dealing with matters like acid rain. While the Reagan program to roll back the environmental gains of the 1970s could not gain ascendancy, neither could his opponents overcome
his opposition to new ventures. As Kraft and Vig conclude in their review of the environmental record in the 1980s, the last part of the decade promises continuity with the first part of the decade and gains will constitute a "tough challenge" (Kraft and Vig 1984, 371).

It may be argued that environmental interests were able to promote environmental causes during the 1970s, riding the crest of popular support for their causes and against the basic grain of the administrations then in power. Having established policies that provide basic tools for dealing with environmental problems, these same interests were able to defend themselves against the most concerted and ideological attack the environmental movement has endured. While not uniformly successful, it seems clear that the major elements in the environmental movement's statutory and administrative structure remain intact.

This is not to say anything about the wisdom of each political action taken during this surge of environmental legislation. In fact, there are reasons to be very critical of the legislative approaches. The Clean Water Act has not been a great success; there is only an illusion of accomplishment (Ingram and Mann 1984; Peskin 1983, 12). It has improved some areas where the need was less—dissolved oxygen—and little where the need was greatest—nutrients, sediment, and toxic substances, much of which comes from runoff. The National Environmental Policy Act is often looked upon as an innocuous and sometimes fraudulent exercise in environmental evaluation but without substantial impact on agencies bent on pursuing their environmentally destructive ways. The Toxic Substances Control Act has found heavy going both because of the inherent difficulties in evaluating the toxicity of given substances, classifying them, and discovering appropriate remedies and because of the determined opposition of the chemical industry.

Nor does this fragmentary process ensure that unsavory coalitions destructive to both the environment and the public treasury may not arise, as in the case of requiring all coal-fired steam plants to install scrubbers to remove sulfur. A coalition of environmentalists and eastern coal interests defied economic rationality as a means of achieving symbolic reassurance for the first group and economic benefits for the latter group at enormous cost to consumers (Ackerman and Haisl 1981). Similarly, the coalition that forged the agreements leading to the passage of the Clean Water Act consisted of environmentalists, who were little concerned with the costs of achieving their water quality goals, and city interests that wanted the federal government to pay for a costly program that promised uncertain benefits (Mann 1975).

Political and Economic Markets and Environmental Policy

Thus far, emphasis has been placed on the extent to which the American political system affords access to political movements that have not achieved a strong position in the dominant coalitions in American politics and allows them to gain influence in the political process. It has been argued that a fragmented system permits entry and considerable opportunity to push an issue onto the political agenda. Furthermore, entry and opportunity have been seized by environmental interests to make major gains in protecting the environment. At the same time, it has been argued that a fragmented system imposes its own controls on such movements as other issues achieve ascendency, making further advances difficult.

But beyond the question of access is the question of substance. Does the nature of the political system teach us anything about the quality or character of policy that is most likely to achieve permanent gains for environmental causes and about the legitimacy of that policy for the public in general and for the major interests that are affected directly and indirectly by it?

Let us return to Huntington's paradoxical statement that in the United States, strong government is illegitimate while legitimate government is weak (Huntington 1981, 39). While having a clever and persuasive ring, the statement is questionable if one examines the definitions of "strong" and "weak." One may agree that "strong" government—government that is efficient, thorough, rapid, and relentless—is likely to be seen as not legitimate. Similarly, if one defines "strong" as having broad and sweeping responsibilities reaching into the daily lives of both major interests and individual citizens, it may be perceived as illegitimate. On the other hand, one could argue that government may be legitimate if it is strong in the first sense and not so in the second, i.e., if it is efficient and thorough in accomplishing public policy goals, but the achievement of them does not involve excessive involvement in the daily lives of those who must submit to its rules.

One of the principal characteristics of a democratic society is the existence of independent, autonomous organizations. As Robert Dahl states, "They are . . . necessary to the functioning of the democratic
process itself, to minimizing government coercion, to political liberty, and to human well-being” (Dahl 1982, 1). The question each pluralistic society must ask is, how much autonomy and how much control? The autonomy permitted may lead to excessive inequalities, distortions of the public agenda, and deformation of public consciousness, all of which are to some extent features of the American polity.

Dahl rejects the concept of a small society of hundreds of thousands of microstates because most people would be far worse off than in the existing nation state. He argues, however, that decentralization of the nation state is necessary, meaning that some decisions must be made by autonomous units, because the centralized state is incapable of making the manifold decisions required in a large-scale and industrialized economy, and because there is a strong association between the existence of autonomous units and democracy itself. He explains:

If market controls were entirely absent, an impossible burden of information and communication would be placed on higher officials responsible for coordinating the decision of officials in the relatively autonomous centers. Moreover, in order to enforce their coordinating decisions higher officials would need effective sanctions, and these would necessarily reduce the autonomy of the various centers (Dahl 1982, 169-70).

Moreover, the bureaucracy can never be made to be simply an agent of democracy; it has too many interests of its own.

But Dahl is concerned about the power of privately owned firms to distort the political process. He argues that decentralized decisions and political resources may support the democratic process but not necessarily privately owned firms (Dahl 1982, 199). If many of the evil features, particularly maldistribution of income, were mitigated, many of the present constraints of the regulatory state could be removed. He holds out socially controlled economic units as the fundamental solution required to remedy the ills of polyarchy.

Lindblom similarly links pluralist structures of polyarchy to the existence of private markets. He conceives of each as reflective of popular control—the market through the exercise of individual choice to buy or not to buy a given product, the public sector through the choice of leaders. Each has its limitations—the market in terms of the privileges that business can exercise through manipulation of the political process and its ability to avoid paying social and environmental costs, the political process in the inability of the public to control the decisions made by their elected leaders. Both the market and public processes are inextricably linked.

The association between liberal constitutional polyarchy and market is clearly no historical accident. Polyarchies were established to win and protect certain liberties: private property, free enterprise, free contract, and occupational choice. Polyarchy also served the more diffuse aspirations of those elites that established it—the end is always individual self-help. For both the specific liberties and for the exercise of self-help, markets in which the options can be exercised are required (Lindblom 1977, 164).

Like Dahl, Lindblom sees the desirability of maintaining the market system both as a complement and a support for polyarchic democracy. He argues that some changes should be made to ensure that the business organizations are responsive to social norms such as environmental quality but that they might take the form of economic incentives, in effect paying business to waive some of its privileges (Lindblom 1977, 349).

Concern about the existence of private centers of decision making and avoidance of excessive reliance on the bureaucracy is expressed by several observers in relationship to the steady-state society. They argue, with Thurow, that the steady state is likely to bring increasing social conflict, which government will have to mediate (Thurow 1980, 117). Heilbroner doubts that these disputes can be resolved short of truly authoritarian measures (Heilbroner 1974, 92). Lipset quotes Olson approvingly that no growth will bring greatly expanded governmental action:

Whether it became so by choice or by necessity, a no-growth society would presumably have stringent regulations and wide-ranging prohibitions against pollution and other external diseconomies, and thus more government control over individual behavior than is now customary in the Western democracies... Thus there is reason to ask how well democracy as we know it would fare amidst the ubiquitous controls that would be involved either in stopping growth now or in adjusting ultimately to the inescapable environmental constraint (Lipset 1978, 101-02).

It may be argued that the increasing political demands from the environmental movement and other groups have, in effect, already overloaded a political system designed to resolve externalities and inequalities in a market-oriented society. If the analogy of the political system to an ecological system has meaning, external pressures
threaten to upset the delicate balance among the various elements in the ecological system, perhaps leading to a serious breakdown which could then lead to a new "climax" in which certain elements already present in the system come to predominate; authoritarian leadership presumably under the control of the president. Given American values, this is not a possibility to be shrugged off.

For this reason, market-oriented solutions should receive serious consideration in the political debate over the appropriate means of achieving environmental goals. The command-and-control system of regulation imposes heavy burdens in the acquisition of information, standard-setting, coordination, enforcement, and general management of complex programs. It necessarily intrudes into the productive activities of private firms, often distorting their processes. Economists emphasize inefficiencies associated with the command-and-control approach of environmental regulation, an allegation that must be weighed seriously (Anderson et al., 1977). The burden of my argument, however, is that economic efficiencies aside, the polity must be concerned about the political ramifications of imposing heavy regulatory burdens on governments.

The alternatives to command-and-control systems are often imaginative and flexible and promise to reduce both the economic and political costs of environmental management and control. These include effluent charges, bubble concepts, creating markets in pollution rights, emission offsets, redefinition of property rights, and reliance on pricing. All of these approaches have been tried in the United States and, although not widely used, there is evidence that regulatory agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency are finding them more attractive. These approaches emphasize the development of economic incentives for the achievement of environmental goals. Individuals are not asked to be good, but rather to calculate the costs and benefits of continuing to behave in environmentally damaging ways. Firms are permitted to adjust their processes in the most economic and efficient ways in order to avoid the charges associated with emissions of different kinds or (large) amounts of substances into the environment.

This is not to say that command-and-control systems are always undesirable, but rather that the appropriate approach is one of environmental design: creating institutions that will create the appropriate incentives for behavior that are benign for the environment. In many cases this means combining command-and-control mechanisms and redefinitions of property rights with economic incentives to achieve these ends. It also means the elimination of traditional programs that create incentives for environmental abuse, such as public works programs, which appear costless because they are funded out of the federal treasury but which are enormously destructive to delicate ecological systems.

Environmentalists are not uniformly opposed to the adoption of marketlike incentives for the achievement of environmental results. Ophuls, for example, distinguishes between planning, which involves active management and may be beyond the competence of public managers, and design, which involves the adoption of simple rules that establish limits but do not require assumptions about on-going management that can seldom be realized in practice (Ophuls 1977, 228-29). Daly argues, with respect to natural resources, that the government may decide the total quantity of scarce resources to be exploited in a given time frame and then allow private interests to compete through an auction system for the privilege of developing and using the resource (Daly 1979, 86-89). Government would thus permit private interests to exercise their entrepreneurial talents in efficiently and economically providing the goods and services to society, while ensuring that the basic resources are protected for future generations.

Marketlike approaches are not as completely distinguishable from regulatory approaches as its proponents often allege (see Russell 1979; Majone 1976; Wenner 1978). Information costs may still be very high, and there is considerable uncertainty regarding the charge levels that should be set in order to achieve both the environmental and economic benefits. Moreover, the final decisions with respect to the level of charges would be no less a political decision, and therefore no less the result of bargaining, than the regulatory approach is at the present time.

Concluding Observations

Environmentalists are prone to apply the ecological principle to all life on this planet. They emphasize that human beings and their activities must be examined within the ecological context, i.e., their behavior should be appropriate in terms of the maintenance of a balance among the various organisms that make up the ecological system. Human beings, with their anthropocentric orientation, continually upset the delicate balance by their own short-term appetites without reckoning with the longer-term impacts of those activities for the health of the system.
be dislodged. The role of environmentalism in the future is an issue that will evolve with the experience of the nation (Wildavsky 1979).

Speaking Truth to Power

For those with the truly apocalyptic vision, this assessment is naturally anathema. The world stands on the brink of disaster and the United States is a major contributor to the worldwide catastrophe. To rely on halting, piecemeal, capitalist-oriented policies is to court the extinction, not only of localized habitats and ecological systems, but the viability of the planet earth. It is a vision I do not share.

The chapters that follow take up some of these general issues—some directly and some obliquely, but all in a challenging way. Let me introduce them in the context of the above discussion but not necessarily in the order in which they appear in this volume.

Kann would largely dispute my argument. He finds the private economy, with its large economic units, the principal malefactor in the pollution of the environment and the failure to mitigate satisfactorily the continuing threats to ecological systems. His ideal solution is decentralized, but truly authoritative, public institutions and public participation in decision making. It is a vision that involves revolutionary alterations of the existing political and economic arrangements of present-day America and expectations of local institutions and political activism that is not likely to occur in the near future. It provides a useful counterpoint to the central argument of this chapter.

The remaining authors do not share Kann’s apocalyptic vision, but none is particularly complacent about the existing state of affairs. Baden and Leuck and Simmons and Dennis are perhaps farthest removed from Kann. Both sets of authors place their principal emphasis on government failure in contrast to market failure. They find that governmental actors, however benign their motives, act under the influence of inappropriate incentives. In effect, they would privatize decision making with respect to the public lands and, by inference, other environmental decision making. The appropriate goal is to establish property rights—at first perhaps on a trial basis in a few places—and allow private incentives of the market to establish the highest priority of use. They are confident, unlike most committed environmentalists, that the marketplace will still recognize environmental values but without the waste arguably associated with governmental administration. This emphasis on multiple decision units and reduc-
1. Introduction

tation in the burden of government in the interests of legitimacy, if not necessarily efficiency, clearly corresponds with this chapter’s argument for establishing appropriate incentives for private actors. But it does not necessarily correspond with its concern for establishing governmental legitimacy in matters where public decision making is clearly required.

Ingersoll and Brockbank challenge the central arguments posed by the preceding sets of authors. They argue that the market is seldom truly competitive and thus is not likely to achieve efficiency, nor can it reflect enduring values in contrast with short-term interests. Despite these reservations about the market, they find a place for markets in the broader context of policy making. They are especially concerned with the need for learning and adjustment, as science provides new information and experience leads to improved policy techniques. They recognize the inadequacy of existing knowledge and techniques and find improvements along these lines that provide a basis for action.

McCurdy is clearly concerned with the larger constitutional issues of interest representation and policy effectiveness. He rejects the “new federalism” of the Reagan administration in all its guises, arguing that the representation of multiple interests, and therefore multiple values, can be achieved only through national administration and not through unitary state administration, which tends to reflect the dominant and usually developmentally oriented interests within each state. His is pure Madisonian theory which would have the support of most environmentalists, except in those instances where the single interests (not theirs, that is) have captured national agencies and programs.

He would appear to accept the basic argument of this chapter regarding the viability and the worthiness of fragmented institutions for all the reasons Madison espoused.

Toxic waste policy provides the policy focus for the papers by Sheehan and Walter and Getz. They are suspicious of the regulatory program for disposal of such wastes but from quite different perspectives. Walter and Getz raise questions regarding the economic efficiency of the disposal program and the distribution of costs and benefits among citizens directly affected and citizens only indirectly affected but who have both a financial and safety stake in safe disposal of these materials. Their principal concern appears to be that these costs be clearly established, known and have influence on the kinds of decisions that are made. Sheehan, on the other hand, is critical of the toxic waste disposal program for its reliance on economic incentives and for its efforts to impose sites on local communities. He argues for a major alteration of the regulatory system: limits on waste production itself akin to the limits on effluents imposed in the clean air and clean water programs; shifts in the legal definitions of liability and burden of proof and elimination of the preemption of local decision making. The authors clearly find regulation of the traditional kinds appropriate in dealing with toxic wastes but raise important questions about the nature of the regulatory controls.

Regulatory programs of the command-and-control variety are inherently bureaucratic: rules must be devised, promoted, applied, enforced, and evaluated. The principal federal agency in this enterprise is, of course, the Environmental Protection Agency. Marcus and Cohen endeavor to evaluate the performance of EPA in achieving environmental goals. The Cohen chapter is a relatively straightforward recapitulation of EPA’s record in terms of its resources and programmatic responsibilities; he finds EPA a “qualified success,” a reasonable conclusion. Marcus, however, asserts there are multiple criteria by which to measure success, and he finds EPA a success along some dimensions—certainly a political success in its role of mediating disputes—but a failure along others, especially with reference to many programmatic goals. These one and a half to two cheers for EPA are a largely predictable judgment about any agency dealing with controversial and expensive programs in American politics.

Many scholars and activists involved in environmental politics expect that the natural sciences and economics—more or less exact sciences—will provide the ultimate answers to environmental issues. Biniek traces the history of cost-benefit analysis in resource and environmental decision making. He concludes, quite properly in my judgment, that it is a useful, if frequently misused and much misapplied, analytical tool. But it is not a substitute for decisions made on the basis of values, values that cannot be calculated in monetary terms.

Finally, Kenski and Ingram evaluate the record of the Reagan administration in the context of the environmental politics of the 1970s. They find that Reagan had a relatively clear environmental agenda, but that his administration has largely failed to implement its agenda because it did not understand the constraints of the political marketplace. That marketplace was characterized by strong support for environmental protection, Congressional opposition to Reagan’s anti-environmental proposals, and groups that had substantial influ-
ence on environmental policy but could not be rallied to his cause. While they conclude that damage has been done, the thrust of their argument, like that of this chapter in general, is that the environmental program of the United States retains sufficient vitality that it will continue to mitigate, in halting but meaningful ways, the current and foreseeable threats to ecological systems and the quality of the environment.

References


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III

The Environment: Public Good or Private Use?