



# **American Environmental Policy, 1990-2006: Beyond Gridlock (American and Comparative Environmental Policy)**

*Christopher McGrory Klyza, David J. Sousa*

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The "golden era" of American environmental lawmaking, between 1964 and 1980, saw twenty-two pieces of major environmental legislation (including the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act) passed by bipartisan majorities in Congress and signed into law by presidents of both parties. But since then environmental issues have divided the parties and engendered bitter interest-group politics, with most new proposals blocked by legislative gridlock. In this book, Christopher McGrory Klyza and David Sousa argue that this longstanding legislative stalemate at the national level has forced environmental policymaking onto other pathways, both inside and outside government. Despite the congressional impasse, they write, environmental policymaking today is vibrant and complex--although the results fall short of what is needed in the years ahead. Klyza and Sousa identify and analyze five alternative policy paths, which they illustrate with case studies: "appropriations politics" in Congress; executive authority, including the rulemaking process; the role of the courts, whose role in environmental policymaking has grown in the era of legislative gridlock; "next-generation" collaborative experiments (which, the authors argue, should be seen as an important approach but not a panacea); and policymaking at the state level. Their comprehensive analysis of the state of environmental policymaking since 1990 shows that although legislative gridlock is unlikely to dissipate anytime soon, the nation continues to move in the direction favored by environmentalists, largely because of the policy legacies of the 1960s and 1970s that have created an enduring "green state" rooted in statutes, bureaucratic routines, and public expectations. Christopher McGrory Klyza is Robert '35 and Helen '38 Stafford Professor of Public Policy and Professor of Political Science and Environmental Studies at Middlebury College. David Sousa is Professor in the Department of Politics and Government at the University of Puget Sound.

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