

TAKING SIDES



Clashing Views on Controversial

Environmental Issues

TENTH EDITION

Thomas A. Easton
Theodore D. Goldfarb



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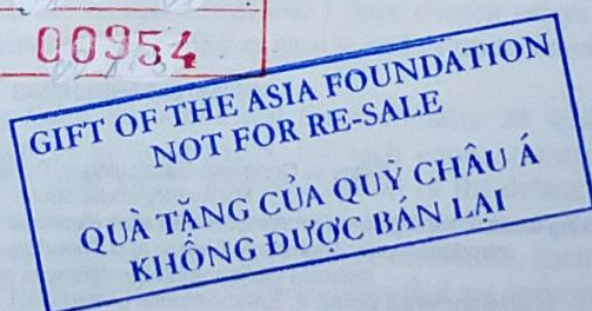
TENTH EDITION

Selected, Edited, and with Introductions by

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Preface

Theodore D. Goldfarb, who was a professor of chemistry at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, ably edited *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Environmental Issues* through its first nine editions. In the spring of 2002, Ted succumbed after a long battle with cancer. I have since been asked to assume the editorship of this book.

I have already edited *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Science, Technology, and Society* through five editions and will continue as editor of that title. As a professor of science at Thomas College, I have taught ecology, environmental science, and environmentalism for many years, so I am very pleased by the many new opportunities presented by editing *Taking Sides: Environmental Issues*.

As Ted noted in the preface to the ninth edition of this book, "Faculty are divided about whether or not it is appropriate to use a classroom to advocate a particular position on a controversial issue. . . . No matter whether the goal is to attempt an objective presentation or to encourage advocacy, it is necessary to present both sides of any argument. To be a successful proponent of any position, it is essential to understand your opponents' arguments."

Which answer to the issue question—yes or no—is the correct answer? Perhaps neither. Perhaps both. Students should read, think about, and discuss the readings and then come to their own conclusions without letting my or their instructor's opinions (which are likely to show at least some of the time!) dictate theirs. The additional readings mentioned in the introductions and postscripts should prove helpful.

It is worth stressing that the issues covered in this book are all live issues; that is, the debates they represent are active and ongoing. Some have been active for years; others are new. All are controversial, and I have chosen essays that show the opposing viewpoints on these issues as clearly and as understandably (nontechnically) as possible.

This edition of *Taking Sides: Environmental Issues* contains 38 readings arranged in pro and con pairs to form 19 issues. For each issue, an *introduction* provides historical background and a brief description of the debate. The *postscript* after each pair of readings offers more recent contributions to the debate, additional references, and sometimes a hint of future directions. Each part is preceded by an *On the Internet* page that lists several links that are appropriate for further pursuing the issues in that part.

Changes to this edition About two-thirds of this book consists of new material. The book's volume introduction is new. Also, there are six completely new issues: *Is Biodiversity Overprotected?* (Issue 2); *Are Environmental Regulations Too Restrictive?* (Issue 3); *Do Environmentalists Overstate Their Case?* (Issue 6); *Should the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Be Opened to Oil Drilling?* (Issue 7);



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PART 1 PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS 1

Issue 1. Should a Price Be Put on the Goods and Services Provided by the World's Ecosystems? 2

YES: Janet N. Abramovitz, from "Putting a Value on Nature's 'Free' Services," *World Watch* (January/February 1998) 4

NO: Marino Gatto and Giulio A. De Leo, from "Pricing Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services: The Never-Ending Story," *BioScience* (April 2000) 16

Janet N. Abramovitz, a senior researcher at the Worldwatch Institute, argues that if we fail to attach economic value to supposedly free services provided by nature, we are more likely to misuse and destroy the ecosystems that provide those services. Professors of applied ecology Marino Gatto and Giulio A. De Leo contend that the pricing approach to valuing nature's services is misleading because it falsely implies that only economic values matter.

Issue 2. Is Biodiversity Overprotected? 26

YES: David N. Laband, from "Regulating Biodiversity: Tragedy in the Political Commons," *Ideas on Liberty* (September 2001) 28

NO: E. O. Wilson, from "Why Biodiversity Matters," interview by Kris Christen, *OECD Observer* (Summer 2001) 32

Professor of economics David N. Laband argues that the public demands excessive amounts of biodiversity largely because decision makers and voters do not have to bear the costs of producing it. In an interview with science writer Kris Christen, biologist E. O. Wilson argues that biodiversity is crucial to human survival and that efforts need to be increased to protect it. He maintains that the loss of species reduces the productivity and stability of natural ecosystems and that with each species lost, potential drugs and other valuable resources are also lost.

Issue 3. Are Environmental Regulations Too Restrictive? 38

YES: Peter W. Huber, from "Saving the Environment From the Environmentalists," *Commentary* (April 1998) 40

NO: Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich, from "Brownlash: The New Environmental Anti-Science," *The Humanist* (November/December 1996) 49

Peter W. Huber, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, argues that the environment is best protected by traditional conservation, which puts

human concerns first. Environmental scientists Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich argue that many objections to environmental protections are self-serving and based in bad or misused science.

Issue 4. Should Environmental Policy Attempt to Cure Environmental Racism? 58

YES: Robert D. Bullard, from "Dismantling Environmental Racism in the USA," *Local Environment* (vol. 4, no. 1, 1999) 60

NO: David Friedman, from "The 'Environmental Racism' Hoax," *The American Enterprise* (November/December 1998) 69

Professor of sociology Robert D. Bullard argues that environmental racism is a genuine phenomenon and that the government must live up to its mandate to protect all people. Writer and social analyst David Friedman denies the existence of environmental racism. He argues that the environmental justice movement is a government-sanctioned political ploy that will hurt urban minorities by driving away industrial jobs.

Issue 5. Is the Precautionary Principle a Sound Basis for International Policy? 76

YES: Paul L. Stein, from "Are Decision-Makers Too Cautious With the Precautionary Principle?" Paper Delivered at the Land and Environment Court of New South Wales Annual Conference (October 14 & 15, 1999) 78

NO: Henry I. Miller and Gregory Conko, from "The Perils of Precaution," *Policy Review* (June & July 2001) 89

Paul L. Stein, a justice of the New South Wales Court of Appeals, argues that the precautionary principle is now a cornerstone of international environmental law and that the courts have a duty to implement the principle even beyond the requirements of legislation. Henry I. Miller, a research fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, and policy analyst Gregory Conko argue that the precautionary principle leads "regulators to abandon the careful balancing of risks and benefits," blocks progress, limits the freedom of scientific researchers, and restricts consumer choice.

Issue 6. Do Environmentalists Overstate Their Case? 102

YES: Ronald Bailey, from "Debunking Green Myths," *Reason* (February 2002) 104

NO: David Pimentel, from "Skeptical of the Skeptical Environmentalist," *Skeptic* (vol. 9, no. 2, 2002) 108

Environmental journalist Ronald Bailey argues that the natural environment is not in trouble, despite the arguments of many environmentalists that it is. He holds that the greatest danger facing the environment is not human activity but "ideological environmentalism, with its hostility to economic growth and technological progress." David Pimentel, a professor of insect ecology and agricultural sciences, argues that those who contend that the environment is not threatened are using data selectively and that the supply of basic resources to support human life is declining rapidly.

PART 2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS 117**Issue 7. Should the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Be Opened to Oil Drilling? 118**

YES: Dwight R. Lee, from "To Drill or Not to Drill: Let the Environmentalists Decide," *The Independent Review* (Fall 2001) 120

NO: Amory B. Lovins and L. Hunter Lovins, from "Fool's Gold in Alaska," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2001) 129

Professor of economics Dwight R. Lee argues that the economic and other benefits of Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) oil are so great that even environmentalists should agree to permit drilling—and they probably would if they stood to benefit directly. Physicist Amory B. Lovins and lawyer L. Hunter Lovins assert that recovering ANWR oil is too costly and too vulnerable to disruption. They hold that alternatives such as developing greater fuel efficiency are wiser choices for meeting future energy needs.

Issue 8. Should DDT Be Banned Worldwide? 138

YES: Anne Platt McGinn, from "Malaria, Mosquitoes, and DDT," *World Watch* (May/June 2002) 140

NO: Roger Bate, from "A Case of the DDTs," *National Review* (May 14, 2001) 149

Anne Platt McGinn, a senior researcher at the Worldwatch Institute, argues that although DDT is still used to fight malaria, there are other, more effective and less environmentally harmful methods. She maintains that DDT should be banned or reserved for emergency use. Roger Bate, director of Africa Fighting Malaria, asserts that DDT is the cheapest and most effective way to combat malaria and that it should remain available for use.

Issue 9. Is Genetic Engineering an Environmentally Sound Way to Increase Food Production? 154

YES: Royal Society of London et al., from "Transgenic Plants and World Agriculture," A Report Prepared Under the Auspices of the Royal Society of London, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, the Brazilian Academy of Sciences, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Indian National Science Academy, the Mexican Academy of Sciences, and the Third World Academy of Sciences (July 2000) 156

NO: Brian Halweil, from "The Emperor's New Crops," *World Watch* (July/August 1999) 171

The national academies of science of the United Kingdom, the United States, Brazil, China, India, Mexico, and the Third World argue that genetically modified crops hold the potential to feed the world during the twenty-first century while also protecting the environment. Brian Halweil, a researcher at the Worldwatch Institute, argues that the genetic modification of crops threatens to produce pesticide-resistant insect pests and herbicide-resistant weeds, will victimize poor farmers, and is unlikely to feed the world.

Issue 10. Do Environmental Hormone Mimics Pose a Potentially Serious Health Threat? 184

YES: Sheldon Krimsky, from "Hormone Disruptors: A Clue to Understanding the Environmental Causes of Disease," *Environment* (June 2001) 186

NO: Stephen H. Safe, from "Environmental and Dietary Estrogens and Human Health: Is There a Problem?" *Environmental Health Perspectives* (April 1995) 197

Professor of urban and environmental policy Sheldon Krimsky summarizes the evidence indicating that many chemicals released to the environment affect the endocrine systems of animals and humans and may threaten human health with cancers, reproductive anomalies, and neurological effects. Toxicologist Stephen H. Safe argues that the suggestion that industrial estrogenic compounds contribute to increased cancer incidence and reproductive problems in humans is not plausible.

Issue 11. Is the Environmental Protection Agency's Decision to Tighten Air Quality Standards for Ozone and Particulates Justified? 208

YES: Carol M. Browner, from Statement Before the Subcommittee on Clean Air, Wetlands, Private Property and Nuclear Safety, Committee on Environment and Public Works, U.S. Senate (February 12, 1997) 210

NO: Daniel B. Menzel, from Statement Before the Subcommittee on Clean Air, Wetlands, Private Property and Nuclear Safety, Committee on Environment and Public Works, U.S. Senate (February 5, 1997) 221

Carol M. Browner, administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), summarizes the evidence and arguments that were the basis for the EPA's proposal for more stringent standards for ozone and particulates. Daniel B. Menzel, a professor of environmental medicine and a researcher on air pollution toxicology, argues that adequate research has not been done to demonstrate that the new standards will result in the additional public health benefits that would justify the difficulty and expense associated with their implementation.

Issue 12. Do Human Activities Threaten to Change the Global Climate? 232

YES: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, from "Climate Change 2001: The Scientific Basis," A Report of Working Group I of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2001) 234

NO: Kevin A. Shapiro, from "Too Darn Hot?" *Commentary* (June 2001) 247

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change states that global warming appears to be real, with strong effects on sea level, ice cover, and rainfall patterns to come, and that human activities—particularly emissions of carbon dioxide—are to blame. Neuroscience researcher Kevin A. Shapiro argues that past global warming predictions have been wrong and

that the data do not support calls for immediate action to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide.

PART 3 DISPOSING OF WASTES 257

Issue 13. Hazardous Waste: Should the "Polluter Pays" Provision of Superfund Be Weakened? 258

YES: Bernard J. Reilly, from "Stop Superfund Waste," *Issues in Science and Technology* (Spring 1993) 260

NO: Ted Williams, from "The Sabotage of Superfund," *Audubon* (July/August 1993) 268

DuPont corporate counsel Bernard J. Reilly argues that the Superfund legislation has led to unfair standards and waste cleanup cost delegation. *Audubon* contributing editor Ted Williams warns against turning Superfund into a public welfare program for polluters.

Issue 14. Municipal Waste: Is Recycling an Environmentally and Economically Sound Waste Management Strategy? 276

YES: Richard A. Denison and John F. Ruston, from "Recycling Is Not Garbage," *Technology Review* (October 1997) 278

NO: Chris Hendrickson, Lester Lave, and Francis McMichael, from "Time to Dump Recycling?" *Issues in Science and Technology* (Spring 1995) 285

Environmental Defense Fund scientist Richard A. Denison and economic analyst John F. Ruston rebut a series of myths that they say have been promoted by industrial opponents in an effort to undermine the environmentally valuable and successful recycling movement. Engineering and economics researchers Chris Hendrickson, Lester Lave, and Francis McMichael assert that ambitious recycling programs are often too costly and are of dubious environmental value.

Issue 15. Nuclear Waste: Should the United States Continue to Focus Plans for Permanent Nuclear Waste Disposal Exclusively at Yucca Mountain? 294

YES: Spencer Abraham, from *Recommendation by the Secretary of Energy Regarding the Suitability of the Yucca Mountain Site for a Repository Under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982* (February 2002) 296

NO: Jon Christensen, from "Nuclear Roulette," *Mother Jones* (September/October 2001) 307

Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham argues that the Yucca Mountain, Nevada, nuclear waste disposal site is suitable technically and scientifically and that its development serves the U.S. national interest in numerous ways. Science writer Jon Christensen argues that it is impossible to forecast with confidence that nuclear waste entombed in Yucca Mountain will not threaten the environment over the next 10,000 (or more) years.

PART 4 POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS 313

Issue 16. Is Limiting Population Growth a Key Factor in Protecting the Global Environment? 314

YES: Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich, from "The Population Explosion: Why We Should Care and What We Should Do About It," *Environmental Law* (vol. 27, no. 4, 1997) 316

NO: Stephen Moore, from "Body Count," *National Review* (October 25, 1999) 326

Population biologists Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich argue that if humanity fails to reduce the impact of population in terms of both numbers and resource consumption, it faces the prospect of environmental disaster. Stephen Moore, director of the Cato Institute, argues that human numbers pose no threat to human survival or the environment but that efforts to control population do threaten human freedom and worth.

Issue 17. Will Pollution Rights Trading Effectively Control Environmental Problems? 334

YES: Charles W. Schmidt, from "The Market for Pollution," *Environmental Health Perspectives* (August 2001) 336

NO: Brian Tokar, from "Trading Away the Earth: Pollution Credits and the Perils of 'Free Market Environmentalism,'" *Dollars & Sense* (March/April 1996) 342

Freelance science writer Charles W. Schmidt argues that economic incentives such as emissions rights trading offer the most useful approaches to reducing pollution. Author, college teacher, and environmental activist Brian Tokar maintains that pollution credits and other market-oriented environmental protection policies do nothing to reduce pollution while transferring the power to protect the environment from the public to large corporate polluters.

Issue 18. Will Voluntary Action by Industry Reduce the Need for Future Environmental Regulation? 350

YES: Raymond J. Patchak and William R. Smith, from *ISO 14000 Perspective: So Long! Command and Control... Hello! ISO 14000* (December 1998) 352

NO: Linda Greer and Christopher van Löben Sels, from "When Pollution Prevention Meets the Bottom Line," *Environmental Science and Technology* (vol. 31, no. 9, 1997) 360

Certified hazardous materials managers Raymond J. Patchak and William R. Smith describe the voluntary ISO 14000 environmental program developed by the International Organization for Standardization. They assert that this initiative will result in increased environmental protection by permitting industry more flexibility in achieving pollution prevention than current "command and control" regulations do. Environmental Defense Fund scientist Linda Greer and project analyst Christopher van Löben Sels conclude from a case study of a Dow Chemical facility that not even projected cost savings will ensure that a corporation will adopt a voluntary pollution prevention plan.

Issue 19. Is Sustainable Development Compatible With Human Welfare? 370

YES: Dinah M. Payne and Cecily A. Raiborn, from "Sustainable Development: The Ethics Support the Economics," *Journal of Business Ethics* (July 2001) 372

NO: Jacqueline R. Kasun, from "Doomsday Every Day: Sustainable Economics, Sustainable Tyranny," *The Independent Review* (Summer 1999) 382

Professor of management Dinah M. Payne and professor of accounting Cecily A. Raiborn argue that environmental responsibility and sustainable development are essential parts of modern business ethics and that only through them can both business and humans thrive. Professor of economics Jacqueline R. Kasun argues that sustainable development poses threats to human freedom, dignity, and material welfare.

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