Current Events

Renewable Energy

The Political Geography

- Hydropower
  - The Tennessee Valley Authority

- Geothermal

- Wind Power

- Solar Power

  The Ivanpah Solar Power Facility

- Biomass

  The Ethanol issue and corn growers
Command and Control: Regulating Air & Water

Command and Control: An order from a government stating what is allowed and what is prohibited

Because government has the legitimate right to use force within its territory, it can use force to make you do what it wants you to do.

Command and control is political because people with clashing priorities both try to get government to use command and control for their purposes.

Citizens who experience bad consequences or risks seek restrictions on polluters for environmental protection

Those who prioritize short term wealth-building (car manufacturers, coal producers, farmers) resist taking responsibility for negative side effects (negative externalities) like smoke or sewerage —push

These clashing priorities result in struggles to control

• Policy Goals

• Criteria for pollution standards

• Enforcement

So “political pressure and conflict flow to wherever administrative discretion exists in the regulatory process” (p. 199)

• “When words, phrases, or policy objectives are unclear”

• “When technical standards must be created or revised”

• “When compliance deadlines are flexible”
So “political pressure and conflict flow to wherever administrative discretion exists in the regulatory process” (197-198)

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Clean Air and Clean Water Policy are Incremental (Rosenbaum pages 43-44)

We know that American government is hard to use, so we should expect government to move gradually -

2 kinds of incrementalism:

- (1) From local to national:
  
  policy starts at the local level and gradually is adopted by state governments and finally the US government

- (2) From weak efforts to strong efforts
  
  US government policy begins with information-gathering, then becomes more active by providing grants to the state and local governments, and finally results in national command & control regulation.

Clean air & clean water policy have developed incrementally
Why is Clean Air so Controversial?

The Situation: Air quality in the cities

Ambient Air quality

- Stationary and Mobile sources of air pollution

- Air pollution became a growing problem in American cities in the 20th century
  “Killer smog”: London 1952

1. Incremental policy development from local government to the federal government

- Local governments move to regulate air pollution:

  St. Louis and air quality in 1940

  Los Angeles

- State Policy Innovation: Post-World War II California because the air pollution problem in southern California was too big for local governments

- national policy innovation when the problem crossed state boundaries

- BUT Interstate competition limits state action – so environmentalists turn to the federal government
2. Incremental Federal Policy Development

- Information Gathering: The Clean Air Act of 1955
- Grants: The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1963
- First steps towards Command & Control: The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1967
  - National rules for mobile sources (cars & trucks)
  - More encouragement for the states to deal with stationary sources (factories)

Command and Control peaks: The Clean Air Act of 1970

Political competition between President Nixon and Edmund Muskie

Cap and Trade regulation: The Clean Air Act of 1990

- Clean air – especially acid rain – gets on the agenda of the GHW Bush administration
  The cap and trade solution to SO₂

- The House of Representatives: Key Detroit Representative compromises
  with a Los Angeles representative

- The Senate: Maine Senator wins a close vote with a West Virginia Senator

Executive action: The Obama administration & clean air