

# **POLITICS AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

## **Introduction**

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Environmental protection in the United States is now a major activity of federal and state governments. The regulations are complex and controversial. No one is satisfied with them, yet there is almost no political support for repeal or for “new” legislative initiatives. Does this reflect public ambivalence about the value of such regulation? Is this a temporary stalemate between powerful lobbies? Has the “institutionalization” of environmental protection made it invulnerable to change? Will the public accept greater limitations on individual activities as population increases, putting greater stress on natural resources? Is environmental protection a “luxury” that is increasingly irrelevant in the global economy?