

Evolution & Efficacy of Policy Instruments

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The (24-Page!) 1970 CAA Relied on Traditional Standard Setting

- EPA to set national air quality standards for “criteria pollutants”
 - States to be responsible for meeting them (flexibility)
- EPA to set national standards for new power plants & motor vehicles, fuels standards optional
- EPA to set emissions standards for (many) “air toxics”

Evolution 1970-1990: *Broadly* Toward More Flexibility, Particularly in Congress Driven to Find Solutions to Practical & Political Problems

- Can't build in non-attainment areas → Trading within, between firms (1974, 1977)
- Can't defeat Eastern coal in Congress → Scrubbers required on new coal plants (1977)
- Major cost differences among lead additive producers → Trading (1982)
- Autos complained at lack of fuels regulation → Standards for fuels (1990)
- Command & Control acid rain bills failed, Bush praised markets → Trading (1990)
- Can't develop emissions standards for air toxics → Back to technology standards (1990)
- No framework for Montreal Protocol phaseout → Cap & trade + tax (1990)

And Then the Music Stopped

- 1970, 1977, and 1990 Amendments were passed with large, bipartisan majorities; the UNFCCC was ratified in 1992 by voice vote
- After 1990, environmental policy, like much else, became increasingly partisan, and new legislation to deal with emerging problems became impossible
- **NO_x/ozone transport:** Interstate trading attempted by EPA 1999+, Courts ruled that CAA did not enable, no interstate trading since 2015
- **Climate:** CO₂ regulation under the CAA required 2007-09; Waxman-Markey failed 2010; Obama's kluge regulations undone by Trump...

A polar bear is perched on a small, isolated piece of white ice in the middle of a vast, dark blue ocean. The water is completely covered with a dense layer of plastic waste, including bottle caps, pieces of plastic, and fishing nets, extending to the horizon. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The overall scene is a powerful visual metaphor for the impact of plastic pollution on marine life and the environment.

Let's Hope That Things Change!