

Environmental Protection Agency Essay

Introduction

On the 2nd of December 1970, the USA Congress passed and established rules and regulations that were proposed by President Richard Nixon to ensure the nationals and the environment was safe from harm and health complications. These laws and regulations included protection from harmful contact with hazardous chemicals, noise-control act, marine protection, and air-pollution prevention. It is the work of the Environmental Protection Agency, Washington DC, to administer these laws on the citizens and institutions.

How the EPA came to existence?

The EPA rules came as a result of previous incidents in the USA that threatened human life and destroyed plant life, causing deaths of plantation and people from toxic wastes from industries. Back in the early 1950s, an incident occurred at a city called Love Canal in the surroundings of Niagara Falls, where a chemical company called Hooker Chemical Company sold its damp site filled with waste and covered with clay to a desperate-for-land Love Canal.

The pollution saw its residents lose lives and experience multiple miscarriages during the session, lasting till 1970 after the purchase of the land. Other than these, there were birth defects and vegetation deaths with waste puddles coming up. The residents were helped and evacuated upon President Jimmy Carter's administrative commands. The chemical reeks that came up from underneath in school compounds and crop fields were cleaned up.

Another incident at Times Beach around 1980 led the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) to form Superfund to enhance EPA performance and enable population evacuations. Massive and rampant pollution caught the attention of environmentalists like Rachel Carson, who in 1962 exposed the harmful effects of DDT on wildlife, especially birds. Campaigns sprouted from this marking world revolution, when many activists started to look into the health of the environment, thus the term 'ecology.' She died prematurely in 1964, with followers behind her cause despite skeptical criticism.

EPA at first instituted programs to enact legislation like NEPA, whose primary objective was an improvement of the environment generally. By 1972, the Federal Environment Pesticide Control Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Clean Water Act were enacted by EPA (Stephenson, 2010). Now, more than hundreds of programs are managed by EPA to ensure careful attention is paid to cater to and preserve the natural environment.

There came a time in 1969 when the United Nations got concerned and alerted the general public requesting mankind to avert his ways to prevent a foreseen demise that would occur if he did not change his polluting and destructive habits over the environment. President Nixon appointed a Citizens Advisory Committee and a Cabinet-level Environmental Quality Council, which were both superseded by a White House Committee appointed to empower the first two.

Legal protections of the EPA

A milestone achievement that has been set by the EPA is the introduction of Energy Star, which modifies electrical appliances used in homes reducing their energy consumption and thereby lowering the running costs. This, in turn, minimizes consumer spending and lowers greenhouse gas emissions. Energy Star is an initiative of the United States Department of Energy. A separate initiative of the EPA was set up in 1990, limiting the emission of nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide, dubbed the Acid Rain Program. EPA also came up with the Endangered Species Protection Program for protecting organisms and plants in their natural habitats.

This program limits the use of hazardous chemicals and pesticides that threaten the existence of other organisms. The Food Quality Protection Act also brought up by the EPA, required the use of national pesticides to be looked into to ensure their use does not contravene with the general good health of the environment. Asbestos Program was initiated by EPA to ensure people and industries recognize and limit the use of asbestos.

Before the EPA was formed, there was an unprecedented failure in the implementation of tasks of the ECQ. President Nixon merged a few federal programs into a federal government 's pollution- control apparatus that would later lead to the birth of EPA. He appointed ahead and enforcer for EPA, William Ruckelshaus. William managed to subdue the Union Carbide in Ohio to bring down sulfur oxide emissions from the Marietta plant to 30 percent. This set a new milestone in proving GHG emissions could be brought down in compliance with the Clean Air Act. Some widely alarming air-pollution based incidences that occurred in Donora, Los Angeles, and London led to the deaths and suffocation of more than 4400 people.

The Federal Water Quality Administration was as well-formed due to the heightened levels of untreated sewerage and water pollution, not forgetting drying rivers and natural water reserves, back in 1948. The government got involved in legislation of the EPA regulations in a few major areas, ensuring clean and safe air for the whole planet, safe drinking water, and clean fish habitats, reduced water pollution laws were implemented, protecting endangered species of animals, and wildlife. Other aspects of legislation include the prevention of hazardous waste. These lead to the generation of new laws and regulations geared towards a unilateral effort at maintaining the balance between nature and man (Ahuja, 2009).

Conclusion

Up to date, the EPA has established measures that minimize human encroachment on natural habitats and reduces carbon emissions as well as fuel consumption. Alternative energy sources are being sought with the aim of eliminating fossil fuels. Fossil fuels combust to release energy and carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, and the result is the greenhouse effect, where carbon molecules in the stratosphere prevent penetration of reflected radiation from the earth's surface. The surface warms up, leading to a situation known as global warming. The resulting rise in temperature breaks the water reservoirs at the north and south poles leading to climatic changes. Habitats are destroyed, and deaths arise due to rising sea levels, as well as rampant destructive storms and hurricanes.

Reference list

Ahuja, S. (2009). *Handbook of Water Purity and Quality*. New York: Academic Press.

Stephenson, J. (2010). *Environmental Health: High-Level Strategy and Leadership Needed to Continue Progress Toward Protecting Children from Environmental Threats*. Washington DC: DIANE Publishing.