

America's Environmental Report Card: Are We Making the Grade?

Harvey Blatt

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Americans today are increasingly concerned about the state of the environment. Polls show that a remarkable 63 percent would roll back recent tax cuts to finance environmental protection and that fully 95 percent want environmental education included in the public school curriculum. America's Environmental Report Card offers answers to some of our most pressing environmental questions, providing a timely reminder of what we need to accomplish to achieve a sustainable environment. It lays out the scientific facts about water and air pollution, energy, global warming, and the ozone layer in a lively, conversational style, enhanced by illustrations, and charts a course of action for protecting the environment. America's Environmental Report Card focuses on the environmental issues that polls show are most important to Americans today. It looks at water pollution and the safety of the water supply (20 percent of Americans refuse to drink tap water, at least partly because they doubt its safety), the dangers of floods (increased by the clearing of forests for farms and timber), the leaching of garbage buried in landfills, and pesticide runoff in irrigation waters from agriculture. It examines the ways we generate energy and the resulting global warming, air pollution (much of the 2,500 gallons of air we inhale each day contains exhaust fumes, lead, and asbestos), and ozone depletion and its relationship to skin cancer, and offers a detailed account of nuclear energy production and the radioactive waste it generates. Most important, it outlines ways to deal with these problems -- workable and reasonable solutions that individuals, industry, and government can effect without unreasonable hardship, solutions that map the course to a sustainable future.

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