

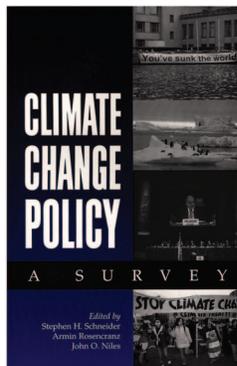
Climate Change Policy: A Survey

Edited by Stephen H. Schneider, Armin Rosencranz, and John O. Niles
 Washington, DC: Island Press, 2002. 368 pp.
 ISBN: 1-55963-880-X, \$60.00 cloth; 1-55963-881-8, \$29.50 paper.

The consequences of rapid and substantial human-induced global climate change on life on Earth could be far-reaching. The impact on society of stringent emission control programs could be enormous, and the efficiency of such action may be highly debatable. The prompt costs and delayed benefits characteristic of climate change have meant that early policy research has focused on analysis of the cost-effectiveness of various greenhouse gas abatement strategies. Consequently, scientific climate research has focused on explorations of the Earth's environment, assuming that the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases continues to increase. Little effort has been expended on exploration of the interactions among various elements of the climate problem, on a systematic evaluation of climate stabilization benefits, or on the costs of adapting to a changed climate.

Because there is an immediate need for policy decisions on how to prevent or adapt to climate change—and how to allocate scarce funds in doing so—we must move beyond isolated studies of the various parts of the climate problem. Many historical cases of isolated environmental problems teach us that the interactions among the various socio-economic, sociocultural, physical, and political processes at play in the anthropogenic enhancement of the greenhouse effect can only be underestimated.

Climate Change Policy: A Survey provides this broader perspective by presenting a collection of chapters addressing issues related to global climate policy. Although the survey presented in the book is interesting (it would be difficult, if not impossible—given the complexity



of the issue—to discuss all aspects in one book) and the chapters vary in detail and scope (e.g., from basic climate science chapters to more technical chapters in the section on energy choices), this book gives readers a better understanding of the nature of global climate change problem in a policy context. The book will therefore be a useful source to anyone professionally engaged in the wide area of global climate change. In particular, it will be of interest to policy makers and policy analysts, and it will contribute to the continuous dialogue between scientists and policy makers.

Science can provide the basis for political action. However, scientific information is not automatically translated into political decisions, but rather goes through a complex process in which stakeholders and decision makers interpret the information and negotiate with each other. Furthermore, the complexity of global climate change cannot be straight-jacketed into a single-discipline harness. The essentials of global climate change cannot be captured by a simple cost-benefit analysis, just as reducing global climate change to a simple emissions reduction game, as in the Kyoto process, does no justice to the complexity of the policy dimension. This book does a great job in challenging readers to study the complexity of the climate problem from different perspectives.

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T. P. Knepper, D. Barceló, P. de Voogt, eds.
 New York: Elsevier Science, 2003. 960 pp. ISBN: 0-444-50935-6, \$395

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International Programme on Chemical Safety
 Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization, 2003. 33 pp. ISBN: 92-4-153047-2, \$11.70

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 Washington, DC: World Resources Institute, 2003. 24 pp. ISBN: 1-56973-545-x, \$5

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 New York: Elsevier Science, 2003. 184 pp.
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