

Foreword

As part of its 50th anniversary celebration in 2000, the Aspen Institute convened an Environmental Policy Forum to explore the most important global environmental issues of the next 50 years and to discuss what the United States should do about them now.

A distinguished group of science, business and environment leaders met in Aspen from July 8 to 11. They were asked to assume that they were an advisory group assembled in Camp David early in 2001 to advise the new president on global environmental policy. Fourteen memos to the president prepared by experts on a broad range of subjects were the basis of the discussion. The authors were asked to tell the president “what you should know” and “what you should do.” This method required very knowledgeable scientists and others to write for non-experts. The resulting memos printed here are excellent summaries of complex scientific and policy issues, and they will be valuable to interested citizens as well as policy makers.

The Forum was honored to have as its co-chairs Donald Kennedy and Roger Sant. Their extensive experience across a broad range of environmental issues, their ability to frame the issues in a wide-ranging dialogue, and their deft personal touch allowed them to focus the discussion, explore interconnections, and find broad areas of agreement. Their thematic summary of the group’s broad conclusions, also written as a memo to the president, is the introductory essay in this volume. It is an effort to reflect the views of the group as a whole, but all participants were not asked to agree with its final wording.

The memos in this volume were critical to the success of the Forum, but an equally important element was the lively dialogue and the expert contributions

from all of the participants who are listed in the next section. The Institute is grateful to them for their thoughtful comments, whether to support, supplement, or challenge the recommendations of the authors.

The Aspen Institute seeks to improve the conditions for human well-being by fostering enlightened, responsible leadership and by convening leaders and policy makers to address the structural challenges of the new century. Using the rigorous discipline of informed dialogue and inquiry, the Institute's programs enhance the participants' ability to think clearly about complex issues, mindful of the moral perspective and the value of differing viewpoints. This Forum exemplified that mission.

We also gratefully acknowledge the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Summit Foundation, and the Winslow Foundation for their grants in support of the Forum, and Georgia-Pacific Corporation and Texaco Inc. for financial assistance to publish this book. Without their generosity and confidence in our work, the Forum could not have taken place.

Major portions of the book also benefitted greatly from the skilled editing of Barbara T. Richman and Kristen Paratore of *Environment*, which is publishing many of these memos.

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