

Lab: The Green President



You are a senator on a committee assigned to review and make recommendations regarding legislation that the president will be introducing. As such, you must look at the needs of your constituents and see if you are representing them properly. If your constituents are unhappy, you may end up jobless!

The Green Legislation

Bill 700: Bye-Bye Beef

Cattle, sheep and other domestic herds will no longer be allowed to graze on federal lands. Farmers leasing federal lands will be required to cull their herds and raise bison, elk, or other indigenous animals to improve the balance of the previous existing ecosystems. Beef still available on the market will be taxed 300%. This tax will be increased to 600% for beef imported from Africa or South America to prevent the land degradation in those countries. The funds raised from this tax will be used to subsidize the education, new techniques and equipment the ranchers will need.

Bill 711: Cooling off the Greenhouse

A gas tax of \$2.00 per gallon for domestic gasoline will be implemented in \$.20 increments semiannually, over the next five years. Revenue from this tax will be used to build an efficient high-speed train system, which link states and cities across the country.

Bill 747: Zero Population Growth

A population policy will be implemented which will encourage small families and provide free birth control and sterilization for those who seek it. Men and women with two or fewer children will receive a 5% tax reduction on their tax bill. Families with more than 2 children will be taxed an additional 2.5% for each child over two. Family planning education and free birth control or sterilization will be available at all public schools (with parent consent for minors) and both juveniles and adults will be encouraged to enroll.

Bill 777: A Place to Put Your Stuff.

Landfills will now charge for dumping at a rate of \$.20 per pound. This cost will be passed on the garbage makers. Revenue collected from this rate will be used to fund research and development for reusable materials, decomposable materials, and garbage law enforcement. No charge will be posted for proper disposal of recyclable materials. Illegal dumping will be changed to a felony punishable by hefty fines and social service cleaning-up roadside litter.

Bill 799: Do We Really Need this Stuff Anyway?

Funding for the Environmental Protection Agency will be increased to provide labs for the independent testing of synthetic and industrial compounds. Once a chemical has been labeled hazardous it will be taxed at a rate which encourages research and development for alternatives and for consumer education programs. All products will be labeled with specific information regarding any potentially dangerous chemicals.

Bill 800: In the Wake of Deepwater Horizon.

A hearing will be held after every accidental chemical spill to determine if the perpetrator has failed to comply with OSHA or EPA standards regarding the safe handling or transport of the materials. If failure to comply can be demonstrated, the perpetrator will be fined for the total cost of clean up and felony charges will be filled against all administrators involved, punishable by up to 5 years in prison.

Bill 888: Let there be Trees!

Communities who encourage the retention or creation of wildlife areas will be given opportunities to apply for grants which will allow them to continue the process. These grants will be funded by the taxation of wood being exported from this country or imported to this country.

Bill 1000: For the Preservation of Wildlife and the Enjoyment of All Americans.

The size of the existing national parks will be doubled and 70 more parks will be added. This will be paid for by a 10% cut in the national defense budget.

Analysis

1. As a senate committee, debate the pros and cons of each bill. For each bill, explain the committee's views and logical rationale for those views (include at least two pros and two cons of each).
2. Identify at least four changes you would make to the collection of bills.
3. Each senator must now write one additional law that addresses an environmental issue. Review and record each law presented in your subcommittee, including the pros and cons of each.
4. Describe the difficulties that politicians have in dealing with environmental issues.
5. How might the difficulties described in question 4 be addressed in the future?