

# Coming Clean: Information Disclosure and Environmental Performance (American and Comparative Environmental Policy)

Michael E. Kraft, Mark Stephan, Troy D. Abel

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Coming Clean is the first book to investigate the process of information disclosure as a policy strategy for environmental protection. This process, which requires that firms disclose information about their environmental performance, is part of an approach to environmental protection that eschews the conventional command-and-control regulatory apparatus, which sometimes leads government and industry to focus on meeting only minimal standards. The authors of Coming Clean examine the effectiveness of information disclosure in achieving actual improvements in corporate environmental performance by analyzing data from the federal government's Toxics Release Inventory, or TRI, and drawing on an original set of survey data from corporations and federal, state, and local officials, among other sources. The authors find that TRI -- probably the best-known example of information disclosure--has had a substantial effect over time on the environmental performance of industry. But, drawing on case studies from across the nation, they show that the improvement is not uniform: some facilities have been leaders while others have been laggards. The authors argue that information disclosure has an important role to play in environmental policy -- but only as part of an integrated set of policy tools that includes conventional regulation.



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