

ESD.864 CLASS CASE: CLEAN AIR

Clean Air

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Air pollution is a widespread environmental and human health concern. Pollutants such as surface ozone and particulate matter cause health impacts, such as respiratory and cardiovascular damages, as well as premature mortalities. In the United States, the Clean Air Act has resulted in much improvement in air quality nationwide since it was enacted in 1970. However, air pollution continues to be a problem both in the U.S. and worldwide. For example, recent severe air pollution has made the news in Salt Lake City: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/24/us/utah-a-nature-lovers-haven-is-plagued-by-dirty-air.html>

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulates air pollutants through the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), which are set to protect public health. For the technical basis of these standards, the EPA receives advice from the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC). (see <http://yosemite.epa.gov/sab/sabpeople.nsf/Webcommittees/CASAC>)

As a group, your task is to look at the ways in which scientific advice is provided by CASAC to EPA in setting air quality standards. Choose a specific aspect of this to narrow your focus. For example, you might look at the steps of the NAAQS review process, <http://yosemite.epa.gov/sab/sabproduct.nsf/WebCASAC/NewNAAQSProcess?OpenDocument>, or you might focus in on one historical case of CASAC advice where the NAAQS were tightened -- the controversy over the most recent ozone standard setting could be particularly interesting. There are many elements to choose from. Do think specifically about the types of experts who serve on the CASAC, the scientific information and/or models that they use, and their relationship with decision-makers at EPA.

The CASAC web site would be a good place to start: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/sab/sabpeople.nsf/WebCommittees/CASAC> . There is a good historical treatment of CASAC in Sheila Jasanoff's book *The Fifth Branch* which may be useful. An article by a chair of CASAC giving some reflections on the process is also available. You are expected and encouraged to do further research on your own.

Remember to follow the general instructions for your memo and presentation.

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