

Environment: Air Quality and Global Warming

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Introduction

The topic of air quality and global warming is sensitive in the 21st century due to the changing climatic conditions in the world (Mehmood et al., 2020). For instance, in the United States of America, issues relating to air quality, global warming, and unreliable energy consumption are issues that most families are faced with, creating public concern. However, there is also a need to develop a strong system of national policies to facilitate efforts to address public concerns in America (Burstein, 2003). Most importantly, the issue of air quality and global warming is a public policy issue as it directly impacts the social and economic welfare of the public, creating a need to address the issue. This essay describes the economic influence associated with air quality and global warming and provides an overview of the influence that stakeholders outside the government have on the environment.

Economic Influence

Air pollution and global warming have major impacts on the economy as they compromise the social and economic welfare of the public. First, the issue of air quality and global warming influences the energy that is considered the lifeline and the foundation of any economy. Unconventional energy prices have triggered cases of energy insecurity, threatening America's political and economic stability of America thus creating a need to address these concerns. With this knowledge, policy-makers can choose whether to enforce certain solutions or oppose them more wisely. Consequently, factors are determined solely by forces of supply and demand, which may not be in the best interests of solving the issues of climate change, air pollution, or energy reliability. The World Health Organization currently associates the combined effects of ambient and household air pollution with about 7 million premature deaths each year. Additionally, air quality raises the risk of developing asthma, breathing problems, cardiovascular disease, cancer, hospitalizations, emergency consultations, and interrupted workdays, which reduce productivity, cut funds, and degrade America's economic security.

Air quality and global warming alter the areas where agriculture is feasible, damage ecosystems and biodiversity, and alters the sequence and volume of water supplies. The top five global warming contaminants are carbon dioxide, methane, halocarbons, tropospheric ozone, and nitrogen oxide gas. Cooling particles in the atmosphere have been responsible for nearly half of the global warming that has occurred to date. As these particles are eliminated by improving air quality, the other cause of

global warming will be revealed (Hart & Feldman, 2018). Therefore, it is important to act immediately to combat global warming. The IPCC explains that stabilizing human-induced warming requires reaching net-zero anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions together with strong reductions in other greenhouse gases; a fixed 80% reduction is not a universal stabilization threshold.

Outside Influencers

The role of economic conditions in affecting public policy in America is often evident due to the economic fluctuations that often affect businesses (Burstein, 2003). In the past decades, the American government has been forced to enact and loosen some policies that would negatively or positively affect business success, consequently affecting the American economy. For instance, the Great Recession was a game changer as it created a need for support and interest in incentives and public investments, majorly in renewable energy and energy efficiency, which helped improve air quality, reduce pollutants that enhance global warming, and create employment opportunities for American and international citizens. It is commonly believed that the public and policy-makers often prioritize economic growth over environmental constraints when faced with tough economic conditions (Fang et al., 2019). However, this is only sometimes the case, as research shows that harsh economic conditions and increased unemployment increase the likelihood of supporting policies that support cleaner energy and conservation instead of government spending and new employment creation. In addition, increasing employment has other advantages that result from using greener, more effective technologies and conserving resources. Moreover, energy efficiency, recycling, and even public transit provide more jobs than traditional alternatives, which enhances the American economy's stability (Fang et al., 2019). However, for these environmental and energy policies to succeed, citizen participation and support are important.

Economic Involvement and Importance of Social Worker Engagement in Policymaking

The concerns regarding energy reliability, air quality, and global warming have become important issues for environmental policy-makers, business and other non-governmental organizations. While policy-makers are responsible for formulating policies, most policies fail if they lack the necessary support from individuals and other non-governmental organizations (Holzmann & Jorgensen, 1999). As a result, environmental policy has to include the provision of elements for increasing citizen participation in the policies. Providing support for domestic energy solutions for America will help increase the number of available jobs for the public. For example, in the States of Virginia, Tennessee, Missouri, and Nebraska, the development of nuclear power plants resulted in more than 1300 employment opportunities. Development of an energy strategy will allow companies to make long-term investment decisions that contribute to the domestic energy supply and the economic security of the U.S. Therefore, this will call for increasing the participation of individuals within businesses and

organizations to facilitate the formation of policies that can help solve the issues, create employment opportunities, and facilitate the success of these organizations.

Social workers need to participate in policy-making through engagement, petitioning, and advocating for policies that can promote positive changes regarding air quality and global warming (Mehmood et al., 2020). Through engagement and advocacy, social workers can facilitate the formation of a social equity policy that focuses on environmental protection, especially for the less fortunate in society, to promote their welfare. In addition, social workers can lead community awareness and assessment programs to identify issues of environmental concern and promote community participation in policy-making and implementation. As representatives of vulnerable groups, they can advocate for the most appropriate strategies to deal with the effects of global warming and air pollution to guarantee the interests and the social welfare of the vulnerable in the community.

Conclusion

In conclusion, air quality and global warming are major policy concerns that negatively influence the social welfare and economic welfare of the country. The issues of global warming, air pollution, and unreliable energy compromise America's political and economic stability. Therefore, policy-makers should formulate and implement policies that address these issues while promoting citizen and non-governmental organization participation in formulating and implementing these policies. The participation of social workers in environmental protection policies can help protect the rights of the less fortunate in society and guarantee that the interests and the social welfare of the vulnerable in the community are addressed in policy-making and implementation.

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