



Assignment 2: Environmental Policy

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Overview

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is a policy enacted in 1973. Its objectives include conserving the threatened and endangered species either plants or animals as well as their natural habitats. The federal government regulates the law through two institutions namely; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) which is responsible for identifying and keeping a list of the species considered under threat. The other one is the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Service.

Major Elements

The first of the listing process which entails the identification of species likely to become extinct. Some of the threats to animal or plant survival include diseases, predation, or overuse in commercial, educational, recreational, or scientific purposes. The second element, the consultation process, requires Federal agencies to get the approval of the Service before engaging in any acts which could jeopardize the existence of species or their habitats. The last element prohibits anyone from taking an endangered species including Federal, state, and local agencies. Each violation attracts a penalty of more than \$25,000. Further, the offender is subject to \$50,000 criminal fine and a maximum of one-year imprisonment or both.

Economic Analysis of ESA

ESA generates millions of dollars annually which benefit the local societies by boosting tourism. The Yellowstone National Park, for example, had suffered an extinction of wolves, but the Act necessitated their return to the facility. As a result, more tourists visited the park which increased revenue. Secondly, the Act helps protect animals and plant species that have medicinal values, for example, the mamala tree contains anti-Aids and cancer properties. In the long run,

the country saves significant healthcare funds which it could channel to other developments (Carolan, 2008).

Third, ESA ensures the habitats for the endangered species are well maintained thus creating an ecological balance. As a result, the state cuts its budget when addressing environmental problems such as erosion. On the same note, these natural habitats provide high-quality resources such as timber, honey, and mushrooms which the government can embrace as tools of the trade. However, ESA has economic disadvantages such as reduced profits when the Federal government restricts development projects such as mineral extraction (Restani & Marzluff, 2011).

Benefits to the Environment

ESA curbs artificial activities that could threaten the natural habitats. As a result, resources such as water, air, and land remain healthy. Secondly, the high-quality natural resources promote growth and development of new plant and animal species. Third, ESA helps create ecological balance, thus keeping away health conditions that arise due to unbalanced ecosystems such as airborne diseases.

Policy Evaluation

ESA is a valid regulation that deserves renewal since it does not only help preserve the endangered plant and animal species but has an economic value as well. In the modern era of financial hardships, states should embrace every opportunity available to minimize their expenses. ESA helps the government save significant costs such as health care since some animal and plant species carry medical values. On the same note, global warming has impacted the nation negatively since lands have become unproductive in supporting animal and plant life due to exposure to harmful chemicals used in industries among other causes.

It is thus essential to have policies such as ESA in place to keep away activities that threaten the productivity of the natural resources. Moreover, ESA is a valid rule economic wise since apart from helping the government save some costs such as in healthcare, the state can make income from the penalties imposed on offenders (Taylor, Suckling, & Rachlinski, 2015). On the same note, although ESA hinders economic development by restricting activities that generate revenue such as mineral extraction, the government can counterattack this challenge by providing alternative resources in the production process (Gibbs & Currie, 2012).



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